

**TRANSDISCIPLINE: IN THE SEARCH FOR NEW FORMS OF THEATRICAL
EXPRESSION**

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Abstract

This document describes and analyses the process of research and production for the experimental play Via Marina: A woman's journey. Based on a personal experience between the Mexican and the Canadian lifestyles, Via Marina presents a vision toward the benefits of transdisciplinarity for the stage. By definition, transdisciplinarity is a new approach marked by the rapid advance of technology that seeks to create new areas of knowledge working between, across and beyond disciplines. For my Master's project I experimented among New Media, Women's Studies and Theatre Arts to learn to intertwine these disciplines on stage by creating a theatrical production based on a transdisciplinary technique. As a result of two-years of practical and theoretical research, the creation of the production Via Marina tries to break the conventional theatre forms using a transdisciplinary mixture of video, dance and feminist exploration of gender roles. It is just the beginning of the development of a new language transcending disciplines in my work as actress, director, artist - woman.

To my son Gael, who provided the wings for this journey;
To Lidia Tamayo and Arturo Márquez, my parents, who supported our fly;
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1. Introduction

Throughout my career I have been interested in the integration of artistic disciplines to find new expressions on stage while not losing the basics of performance. I have worked on shows of music, dance and video reflecting emotions and thoughts to express significant moments in our lives. As a result, I became an interdisciplinary actress and director gathering ideas along side of various artists. However, I wanted to move forward and see what other results I could achieve by combining different disciplines. For instance, what would happen if I not only participate with a scientist, a philosopher or a sculptor in a performance, but I also acquire the essential elements of their disciplines? How could I express an emotion on stage through a computer? I live in a technological revolution that is evolving and rapidly transcending the interaction of disciplines into a deeper field of knowledge. Interdisciplinarity is evolving into transdisciplinarity. A term that not only gathers but crosses the disciplines providing new results, “its goal is the understanding of the present world, of which one of the imperatives is the unity of knowledge” (Nicolescu 3). Would I be able to create a new approach by transgressing the disciplines? Does transdisciplinarity relate only to science and other disciplines? Would it be possible to apply this method only between artistic disciplines?

The goal of my Master’s program consisted of transforming the different resources that intervene in the mounting of a play to obtain alternatives of artistic expression based on a transdisciplinary movement in contemporary theatre. To do so, during the course of two years I worked on the creation and direction of a transdisciplinary play based on Mexican and Canadian societies bringing out the points of

view of men toward the feminist movement of today. The purpose was to involve different doctrines on feminism in the creation of the story that would interact with New Media elements on stage. By choosing these three disciplines –Women’s Studies, New Media and Theatre - I would be creating a transdisciplinary product that would generate alternatives of theatrical expression.

Consequently, my supervisor and I planned a study program that would support these goals. In the first year of studies, I worked on an independent course called New Media in Live Performance facilitated by Lisa Doolittle and Daniela Sirbu in which I did research on video and stage productions learning the new media language while also auditing a basic course with Gerald Prost called New Media Technology. During this time I interacted with a compilation of videos, readings and practical experiments which led to a brief video work exploring the new tools acquired. The next term was made up of a Voice and Movement Studio with Lisa Doolittle and Doug McArthur, a practical study of different techniques to establish voice and body as one. In this course I presented a monologue from A Midsummer Night’s Dream and two short scenes from The Tempest by Shakespeare. Also during this second term, I participated in an independent study with Carol Williams and Shelley Scott called Feminism in the Arts in Canada and Mexico that was supported by Williams’ class Feminist Theory. In this class, I participated in a radio series by producing two shows on the university radio station exposing important female figures throughout Canadian and Mexican history. And finally in 2005, my third semester, I studied Choreography with Lisa Doolittle and learned different techniques for producing movement, using the scenic space, and being creative. In addition, I was in charge of a Collective Creation Workshop, working toward the final production of my

proposal. I worked with four drama students presenting two brief scenes and we also opened a session to external artists in order to gather different views on corporal movement surrounding gender issues. Each class taken set a series of question that led me to develop an analytical process, helping me to create transdisciplinary statements. By going beyond Theatre Arts to cross into New Media and Women's Studies, a trans-artistic experience arose in between these three disciplines developed by the differences and similarities of each one. This experience generated a transdisciplinary foundation that helped me construct the script of the final play.

Taking the most important elements of each class, in the summer of 2005, I started working toward the theatrical production that would be the result of my research. This document describes the theoretical work base for the creation of the show Via Marina: A women's journey. It describes the definition of transdisciplinarity and the research I completed in New Media, Women's Studies and Choreography - disciplines that were chosen for this project. I also explain the creative process experienced throughout my two years of study including the collective creation workshop, a detailed explanation on how the ideas became tangible, the video production, and the choreography process, which led towards the show. And finally, chapter four illustrates the production design developed for the final play.

This journey toward a transdisciplinary language developed a passion of discovery and exploration that strengthened my artistic constitution. By observing different cultures, different ideas, different languages and different climates I now have a better understanding of who I am, who I want to be and who can I be in the broad world of art.

2. Transdiscipline: The new expression

Knowledge is a treasure sought by many. As Francois Taddai says: “No discipline knows more than all disciplines” (Nowotny 1). By blending perspectives through several disciplines new areas of knowledge come alive in a century where technology is one of the means of expression. For example, in today’s university programs one can find “environmental psychology (which may involve psychology, sociology, geography and architecture); cultural geography (that may encompass geography, sociology and anthropology); neuroscience (may involve psychology, biology and computer science)” (Ramadier 1). It is imperative nowadays to be willing to understand different concepts that could feed the old structures into an open range of possibilities for the resolution of a problem. As the disciplines share their basic formulas a new approach arose at the end of the 20th century: transdisciplinarity. Basarab Nicolescu¹ explains that “transdisciplinarity concerns that which is at once between the disciplines, across the different disciplines, and beyond all discipline. Its goal is the understanding of the present world, of which one of the imperatives is the unity of knowledge” (3). In other words, transdisciplinarity is the result of the merging of different areas of knowledge giving as a result a new one:

$$A + B + C = X.$$

Transdisciplinarity requires new modes of collaboration and interaction between researchers leading to qualities and skills of communication, synthesis and teamwork that produce a transdisciplinary language (Russell 1). Furthermore, Jozef Colpaert states that we do not only need interdisciplinary teams, but that we also need “transdisciplinary concepts that serve to unify the knowledge being applied from areas that cut across the trenches that mark traditional disciplinary boundaries [Francois, 2002, paraphrasing Peter

Checkland]” (470). By doing so, a new theoretical framework arises in each discipline giving space to creativity, imagination and discovery.

Art in the past century has also been borrowing elements of different disciplines creating as a result new ones. What was marked in Aristotle’s Poetics with the statement “the differences in the arts are defined by how we do this imitation” (4), is now difficult to distinguish due to the merging of artistic disciplines. “The indispensable need for bridges between the different disciplines is attested to by interdisciplinarity around the middle of the 20th century” (Nicolescu 2). For instance, sculpture transforms into installations, paintings into photography, photography into films, radio into internet. Not only that but also in time, disciplines started to gather themselves forming new ones like Theatre, Dance and Visual Arts creating Performance Art; Theatre, Dance and Visual Art into Physical Theatre; Television and Art into Video Art; Computers with Animation producing 3D computer animation and so on. The integration of the arts came as a result of the basic need to gain knowledge of different methodologies and to experiment with it through personal expressions. Stated by musician Tod Machover “our art, and our aesthetic visions, serve to convey our truest knowledge of the world we live in, of our own times, and of our hopes for the future” (5).

Thus, I decided to approach my theatre arts vision with languages I could reach in the short period of two years. By studying two different disciplines that could transect my ideas on stage, I would be able to accomplish a transdisciplinary result that would bring a new approach to the theatrical arts. Therefore I chose to learn the video basics - a modern language that not only would enrich the aesthetics of this project but would also provide me with new abilities for future productions. Alternatively, I wanted to understand the

feminist movement where I grew up and create a story based on this study that would allow social input in the play. Moreover, I would be able to deepen my knowledge in Physical Theatre and allow these two disciplines to converge in a common space: the stage. Next, I will give a brief description of the study completed during this period of time towards the understanding of New Media, Women's Studies and Physical Theatre and how I merged these to convey transdisciplinary aesthetics.

2.1 New Media.

*I think that artists got to keep track of new technology.
They should exploit it - transform it, because technology is an agent of change.
It creates new styles and transforms the old.*
(Robert Lepage, The Seven Faces of Robert Lepage, video)

Technology has become a great influence in society creating a new way of life in the 20th century that has transformed every aspect of our lifestyle. For instance, children will now be seated quietly for a 3 hour trip watching a movie or playing a video game while their parents are driving a 4 wheel car on a smooth road. Contrast this with the journey my great-grandmother had to make when our family needed to travel for supplies from the farm to the city at the end of the 19th century. The technological Revolution that started with a simple black box called Daguerreotype² in 1839 has evolved into “numerical representations as collections of discrete samples known as pixels” (Manovich 30). Computers are an enormous influence that transformed verbal and non-verbal communication in society. According to Michael Rush, the history of New Media has yet to be written, “largely because it is always developing” (9). Since the 1980s, artists all over the world have been exploring new forms of expression using computers as a tool. Today's technology is allowing the generation of an electronic movement

where artists are creating a new approach. As musician Todd Machover describes it:

Technology is particularly well-suited to helping us express such a paradoxical aesthetic vision. As a medium, technology – especially computer based- is neutral, imposing no physical constraints on materials used, or on manipulations or transformations of that material. In this sense, technology represents a sort of meta-system that can serve to relate and organize objects or categories otherwise distinct in the physical world. (6)

Similarly for video artist Bill Viola “technology is simultaneously the obstacle and the path to realizing the impetus that drives one to express one self” (4). This compatibility between artists and technology made possible a new generation of art-work built by the incorporation of art techniques into a computer software.

For artists, the capacity that computers have nowadays has opened a wide range of options to develop art. In Viola’s words, “yes, video is the medium of choice for both creating art and narrating alternative history, and it’s now in the hands of the people, and that’s exciting” (5). This accessibility of computer software has encouraged artists to get involved in Video Art, Video Installation Art, Performance Art, Digital Art, Electronic Music, Interdisciplinary Collaborations among others. Though New Media embraces many artistic fields, for my project I decided that video and digital photography would be used to transcend theatre language because of the visual sense of intimacy they create, the conceptual thinking they can portray, the fact they are a “manageable means to communicate personal messages” (Rush 108) and because I have seen the power of the visual manifestations of theatrical arts, and am profoundly interested in investigating their further use in live theatre settings.

Thus, I began studying the magical realism of Pedro Meyer, a Spanish born Mexican digital photographer who used Photoshop software to create a surreal

environment in his work. “Meyer’s approach comes out of a critical reflection about the nature of the photographic medium and the mutation from its photo-chemical origin or its electronic stage” (quoted in Meyer 9).



Fig. 1. Pedro Meyer. The Temptation of the Angel. Mexico, 1991.

Meyer’s computer definition is seen as “electronic edifices, which allow us to enter new spaces and witness things never heard, nor seen, nor even dreamed of” (108).

According to Meyer, he was able to restore the picture to his own memory making visual what actually happened (110). The fantasy placed in an ordinary space to create a dreamlike image, appeals to my Mexican identity. Because of this, Pedro Meyer’s technique of photographic manipulation, taught me a new surrealistic approach to the development of my video production, which will be described later on in this document.

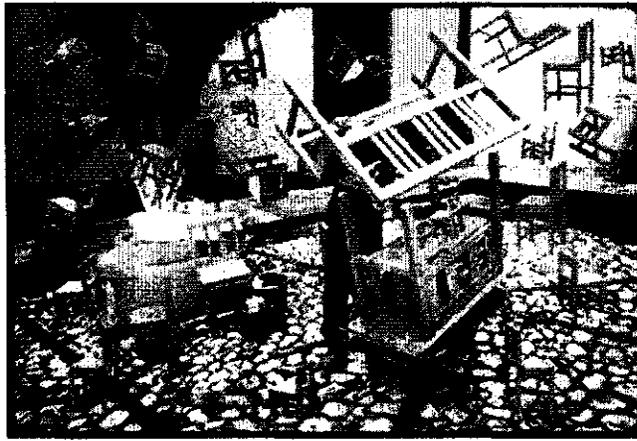


Fig. 2. Pedro Meyer. The explosion of the Green Chairs. Oaxaca-Mexico, 1991.

Another exceptional media artist I took as reference was Laurie Anderson. Originally from Chicago, Anderson developed her artistic language by being a violin player, sculpting, doing street performance, installations, composing, singing, and story-telling. She became the first resident artist in NASA producing the solo performance piece The End of the Moon that was presented in January, 2005 at the One Yellow Rabbit's High Performance Rodeo in Calgary. Kime states that as a "multi-layered format that incorporated visuals, spoken word, lyrics, music and choreography, Anderson's primary concern has always been to invent, or create a performance, that has something beyond plain theatre, whether through technological or inventory means" (9-10). The subject of the majority of Anderson's performances is related to communication. From her story-telling to the visuals, Anderson articulates the benefits and faults of today's means of expressions. According to Van Dorton, in Anderson's use of "paradox, collage and reflexiveness, she explores her obsessive fascination with language and its failure to communicate our most basic fears, longings, and sensory impressions" (6). In doing so, Anderson creates characters, scenarios and music allowing them to touch the audience with a specific issue either social or political. In her own words she states: "I

have the sense that people are very restless these days, and that's always a good sign. Because it means they're questioning and some of the answers are making them uncomfortable, and that's the only way things ever get better on a large scale" (Anderson quoted in Ross 5).

In most of her works for example, Anderson's representation of the female body and voice is an obvious protest to the way society employs it as a form for profit. Using technological means, she embodies a neutral being covering up the womanly attributes and lowering her voice. Along with the effect of presenting a neutral symbol to criticize society, her body responds to repeated movement creating a smooth atmosphere within the show, such as in Home of the Brave. As Birringer describes her, in the beginning of this film "she masks her female gender by performing a more androgynous, uncertain, and in between body, when she enters with a violin and bow completely hidden in a white astronaut's suit." (65) In addition, Anderson's performances incorporate high technology in order to critique the influence of it in society. According to Kime "she does not just use technology to create a non-literal performance, she is using artistic expression to portray the story she wants to communicate, and something that Goldberg maintains is the accepted medium for performance art" (10).

The film, Home of the Brave, had as a priority the creation of an art piece through experimentation with the technology available in those days (1980s). Anderson not only achieved this goal, but also the film's technological innovation became a breakthrough. By using the numerology 0 and 1, in a very clever way, she presented the beginning of a computer-based society combining it with rhythm and voice: "Not so much space in between us" she mentions in the film. From her electro-acoustic violin, the costumes, the

screen, the lyrics and the corporal movement, Anderson created the beginning of an original form of art: multimedia. As she describes it in the video magazine ART/NY to Paul Tschinkel, “my work critiques technology. I don’t hate technology. It’s a love and hate relationship”.

Laurie Anderson is an artist that through time has been able to transgress boundaries in order to express herself. Done through old or new media, the importance of any kind of performance depends on the artist’s need for expression. Anderson is a transdisciplinary artist who achieves transdisciplinarity by melting technology, music, storytelling and dance on stage, in order to express communication issues, feminism, and political issues to an audience.

A final example of transdisciplinary new media artists are visual artist Victor Pilon and theatrical artist Michael Lemiux who in 1983 founded 4D Art, a company that combines New Media in stage production, creating holograms and visual effects in their shows. In their words:

For 4D art, the multidisciplinary arts are primarily a medium of integration through which the artist searches out the relationships between things, the bonds that unite all forms of artistic expression. Our procedure led us to the creation of a sort of hybrid performances that brings together the real and the virtual, that merges the performing arts and new media. We are seeking to render invisible borders that separate the numerous forms of artistic expression such as performance, scenography, cinema, video, dance, poetry, the visual arts, lighting design, music and sound explorations (Mandate 1).

Along with choreographers/dancers Pierre-Paul Savoie and Jeff Hall, they created the dance production called Poles which offered:

...a parallel portrait of two unrooted beings, two silhouettes merging into a fabulous universe each confronted by their differences. The piece twists and turns among the metaphoric lives of these individuals’ duality, fragility, hope and tolerance. A strange encounter reveals poetry and

magic, a glimpse into the riches of the human soul (Poles 1).

By creating a choreography based on the abstract shape of emotions, Poles presents two dancers interacting with a holographic image to emphasize the duality of the self. The result is a hybrid dance performance that combines video and holograms presenting two realities on stage: the real and the virtual. 4D Art is also seeking transdisciplinary results giving me insight into important elements of the use of projections and integration of these with performers while using the stage as mediator for both languages.

Meyer's photography that creates a poetical environment of the Mexican culture, Anderson's works that embodies today's technological revolution by narrative, music and characterization and 4D Art's hybrid explorations on stage that interact with video images and live performance are some of the artistic work I used as a reference for the video creation for my production.

2.2 Women in Canadian and Mexican Performance Arts

Theories are ideas- everyone has them- and new ideas are formed all the time.
(Devon Abbot Mihesuah, Indigenous American Women, 27)

In the fall of 2004 I did an independent study of Canadian and Mexican Women Artists supervised by Carol Williams and Shelley Scott and I also audited Feminist Theory with Professor Williams to learn more about the women's movement. It was here I learned about Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Ida Wells Barnet from the United States. Their activism in the 19th century allowed the next generations of women to speak out on their rights as women. I learned about Anna Mae Aquash's work in the American Indian Movement (AIM) and of her murder in 1976, still unsolved. I also restudied the work of Sor Juana Inés de La Cruz in Mexico in the 17th century, whose

poems are a constant questioning of the role of women among society. During this period of time, I became aware of the sacrifice made by remarkable women through out history who have contributed to my freedom.

Since the 1970s women have expressed themselves “to demand equal rights with men, agitating especially on four basic issues: equal pay, equal education and opportunity, twenty-four hour nurseries and reproductive rights and control” (Aston 40). Though legally these issues have been slowly addressed, the reality concealed under the legal papers is still somehow different. In theatre, for example, feminists started to create their own spaces in which “they could explore women’s issues in a more developed way” (Aston 41) underlying the irregularities of the issues named above. Hale states that Canada has been in a particularly advantageous position to engender feminist art due to the co-emergence of Canadian nationalism and feminism in the late 1960s. Most of the plays produced in Canada had few roles for women, such as the plays written by Harold Pinter, Neil Simon, Chekov, Shakespeare, and in these works “women were represented as ‘belonging’ to men” (Aston 42). In reaction to this lack of opportunity, women turned to the creation of collective plays where women artists could “de-emphasize specialization, breaking down the hierarchical structure of traditional theatre” (Hale 82). Some women employed the Brechtian A-effect³ because the political theatre produced and therefore used by feminist performers caused a visible gap between the “real” and the representational in a “not that”, resistant style of playing (Aston 43). Feminists replaced Brecht’s model of class with gender. In addition, the number of women playwrights has increased, “since in the late 1980s and early 1990s, theatre became one of the most exciting areas of feminist practice” (Aston 39). By becoming the playwright, women

capture power, since “they do not have to work on a ‘big daddy’ script. Women have now the opportunity to practice theatre collaboratively and democratically” (Aston 50-51).

The Canadian playwright Banuta Rubess said:

I discovered that there were no scripts or roles I wanted to play. Eventually the acting choice become the least attractive, compared to writing and directing, because any actor is vulnerable to another’s will. I’ve almost only acted within collective creations. In other words, I’ve had an input and I’ve retained all my dignity and independence. I’ve never felt like just a puppet (Quoted in Much 54).

Banuta Rubess participated in one of the most important feminist gatherings in Canada, Nightwood Company, which since the year 1979 has been working on the production of Canadian innovative theatre by doing it through collective creation. Such is the case of the play This for you Anna: A Spectacle of Revenge by Banuta Rubess, Ann-Marie MacDonald, Maureen White, Suzanne Khuri, Aida Jordao and Patricia Nichols. The Anna Project, which was also mounted by University of Lethbridge students directed by Shelley Scott in 2004, presents the true story of a woman who killed her daughter’s assassin. The mother is divided into four characters that play in and out through symbolism her thoughts, feelings and actions. In my opinion, one of the strongest symbols of the play is the glass of milk to which the main character alludes through out the play. Only at the end did I realize that the milk symbolized the blood of her daughter, which is spilled in the last scene. Presented as a puzzle solved at the end of the show, This is for you Anna represents the lack of justice women have in today’s society.

Moving to the middle of the American Continent, justice is also a theme taken by Mexican theatre in the past decade. Mexican feminists have also adopted collective creation as a specific form to express gender, abortion and equality issues. Moreover, women artists focus on the political issues creating stereotypical characters to emphasize

the humor and allow the audience to laugh about their tragic political matters. The Mexican Cabaret is a very popular kind of theatre performed in a regular bar as a satire against the current context of political, social and economic issues. Today, the Mexican Cabaret is living through the works of Tito Vasconcelos – in a drag-queen format, Astrid Hadad who holds ranchero shows wearing colorful self designed costumes, and Jesusa Rodriguez and Liliana Felipe who 14 years ago opened a ‘cultural’ bar called “El Hábito”, in the popular location of Coyacán in the south of Mexico City. Jesusa Rodriguez and Liliana Felipe have produced approximately 400 shows in this theatre bar (El Habito 1). Every month people can see a different play exposing a particular issue in Mexican or international society. Their work takes a stand for the homosexual community; criticizes the political context of Mexican, American, and world events; and expresses social issues including women’s issues. For instance, The Genetic Pastorela⁴: It was a girl (1992) was a play where she presented Jesus as girl (which becomes Jesusa), including herself in the actual political events of the 1990s in Mexico, while playing with the controversial issue of science being equal to God. She also created Human Rights: The husband arrived by DHL (1990); and Donna Giovanni adapted from the opera Don Giovanni of Mozart, to name a few.

In the 1970s the feminist movement everywhere was manifested “on the streets, with demonstrations against the oppression of women” (Case 17). “Feminists made ‘spectacles’ of themselves to object to how women were objectified in dominant social and cultural systems of representation” (Aston 41). An example is the ad created by feminist artist Lynda Benglis from the November issue of Art Forum in 1974. It was a picture of herself naked, covered with oil to underline the curves of the body while

grabbing a long penis with her right hand. The ad created controversy between the feminist and the artistic community because of the playboy image she expresses in the picture because “American feminists tended to frame pornography as oppressive if not outright dangerous to women” Benglis was a self-described satirist of “the art-star system, and the way artist use themselves, their persona, to sell work” (Meyer R. 73-74). Although made with a different intention, Benglis’s ad portrays a controversial taboo in society: sexuality, eroticism, power and transgender, creating a strong reaction in all who viewed it.

In her video on performance art, Tanya Mars describes her work “with a sense of humor, a sense of play, a questioning of what happens in the politics, socially in my environment” (Mars). After creating a series of street and gallery performance, emphasizing a woman’s role in society, Mars got involved in the making of experimental theatre creating the stage play called Theatre Picnic in the reel. In this work, she characterizes three feminist archetypes: Queen Elizabeth, chosen by Mars because “feminists today are [as Queen Elizabeth] also given out a lot” (Mars) - the queen, as Mars sees it, is a figure of power; Mae West, because of her “female sexuality and desire”; and Alice in Wonderland who instead of looking for the rabbit is looking “for her lost penis and in doing so she runs into Freud among other characters” (Mars).

In Mexico, one of the pioneers of feminist performance art is Maris Bustamante. At the end of the 1970s, Bustamante joined a performing group called El No-Grupo (The Not-group), creating a performative display every year which resulted in over 300 performances. Bustamante is well known for the use of her own image as object and subject of her work, the reiteration of iconographic and conceptual references, and an

ironic style. Having all these elements, the piece Navidad para todos (Christmas for everyone) installation created in 1994, shows a store display of a real size cow with her offspring in front of her. The cow and the calf are looking toward the front of the display. In the left half of the display there is a female figure with her mouth wide open, maybe singing, holding the hand of a girl in a bathing suit. Both of their bodies resemble those figures cut out of a magazine, and shown in human scale. On the back of the display there is fake sky painted on the wall as well as on the ceiling. Hanging from the painted sky was women's white underwear. To decorate this installation, Bustamante puts Christmas lights on the top of the front display window, as well as on the bottom. Navidad para todos is carefully shown in white and black, using the red color at specific points such as in the girl's bathing suit, and in the left and right side of the blue sky. This installation represents a mirror of womanhood in general because on one side people can see a fake representation of a mother and daughter reflecting on the other as real cow and calf; it is a metaphor on the use of women in society. A cow gives milk, it feeds its calf. On the other hand the red color on the girl as well as on the sides reminds me on how the future is still untouched. Bustamante has been working on transdisciplinary arts for the past two years. As she understands the term, transdiscipline, "is to reverse the idea of separating the rational from the affective, art from science. In order to do this, we must get to know performance to realize that it is much more magical and interesting!" (Quoted in Ramos 4).

Learning Bustamante's ideas about transdisciplinary research, I realized why it is so important for me to learn about works in performing arts. Like performance art that was born from artists who wanted to experiment on different surfaces, I too believe that

the fusion between different disciplines is still in its early stage. Mars and Bustamante, as well as those performing artists of the 1970s and 1980s are the resources for my generation who are on the way to experiencing new ways of creation, building from their legacy.

Art expression is one of the strongest languages used as a protest form because of its combination of symbolism and reality, as seen in Rubess's or Bustamante's works. The multidisciplinary approaches of artists like Mars or places like El Habito reinvent life from a different perspective to produce laughter from our tragedies. From stages to galleries to streets, the colors and sounds combine to build a product that engages an audience who, while watching, become aware of the many issues women have to struggle with day to day. I still have many questions in mind about my labor as a feminist. However, I have learned about a common goal between two different cultures that are still fighting for the respect of the female residents in both societies. I have observed the historical influence that drama, performance art and multidisciplinary groups have in the Canadian and Mexican nations. The history and theory I have learned throughout this period of time, is forcing me to question traditional ways of making theatre to express women's issues. Developing a collective creation project that will explore the role of women and men in today's society, will help me to find my own position on the several issues that feminism has raised in the past thirty years.

2.3 The Moving Body

*The language is not intellectual,
it goes straight to the body, to the senses, to the soul.*
(De la Guarda, "El show", 1)

The Dramatic Arts have been of an interdisciplinary nature since their origins. Because of its entertainment characteristic it can involve dance, music, visual arts, social studies, and science. The knowledge I have gained from readings by theatre masters has influenced my views on theatrical expressions. The Russian director Constantin Stanislavsky whose legacy still survives in theatre schools all over the world teaches actors to develop their emotional memory, the objective and the super-objective, and the substitution to portray a realistic character on stage. The Italian theatre artist Eugenio Barba based his acting training in theatrical anthropology where physical, vocal and cultural elements are unified in the body. The Polish director Jerzy Grotowski worked toward a “poor theatre” where the main goal was on leaving out the expensive scenography made by sets, lightings, costumes or special effects to only portray the work of the actors to the audience. French critic Antonin Artaud developed a theory about a violent theatre that could transgress the edges of mediocrity. The work of French teacher, actor and theatre creator Jacques Lecoq developed an actor training that engages the human body, the physical movement and the language of mime. Teachers have instructed me throughout my career and have established in me an experimental pattern that tries to assimilate all elements that surround me to create the aesthetic needed for each performance, always constructing from a corporal foundation. Movement was an element that held a priority since the conception of this project.

Because of this priority I engaged in a Movement and Voice class with Lisa Doolittle and Douglas McArthur, and learned the basis of Choreography with Lisa Doolittle, in order to achieve through both classes a Physical Theatre language. The majority of the work I did was practical, building my ideas and strengthening my training

in theatrical physicalities. By mixing Shakespeare and movement during the Movement and Voice sessions I learned to develop a group choreography coming from a sound impulse, and to articulate English and corporality with a given monologue. Then in 2005, during the Choreography class I specialized in forms, variations and the use of space by working on different choreographic techniques in collective and individual creations. There we also commented on the shows we watched in Lethbridge brought by the Now Showing Live Art Series, such as the show ¡Bulla! by Decidedly Jazz Danceworks company and the show Big Bang by a the Montreal Danse company. Artistic director Kathy Casey of Montreal Danse gave us a workshop session on choreography. The company presented a performance of three dance pieces created by Venezuelan choreographer Jose Navas, Belgian Karine Ponties, and South Korean Ae-Soon Ahn. I could easily relate to these professional contemporary movement performances presented in the University Theatre. They gave me material to apply to my future exercises. These productions and a series of videos of great choreographers and dancers such as Margie Gillis, Corpus, Blues Brothers, Kaeja d' Dance among others, gave me an urge to explore complex Physical Theatre more deeply in order to better understand its function on stage.

Throughout my studies of dance these past two years space, time and variations have given me a whole new experience to develop on the stage. Though it is obvious for some, to me constructing a show using a dance language was completely new in terms of choreography even when coming from a Physical Theatre background. In the film European Dance Theatre, the producers emphasized the difference between Theatre-Dance and Physical Theatre. To dancers, Theatre-Dance is based on a corporal movement given by a series of actions that explores a meaning. In Physical Theatre, the corporal

movement is created sometimes with props in order to create a visual metaphor about the meaning, leading to a scenic composition built by the performers and the set. According to playwright and performer Dymphna Callery's definition of Physical Theatre she states that "it is a theatre where the primary means of creation occurs through the body rather than through the mind" (4). For spectators, Physical Theatre accentuates the imaginative involvement and engagement with what is taking place on stage.

For instance, audiences can identify with the works of DV8 Physical Theatre because of its ingenious creations on stage production and film. Founded in 1986 by Australian Lloyd Newson, DV8 is a Physical Theatre company "by an independent collective of dancers who had become frustrated and disillusioned with the preoccupation and direction of most dance. The company has produced fifteen highly acclaimed dance pieces, which have toured internationally, and ... four award-winning films for television" (About DV8 1). One of Newson's recent films called The Cost of Living in 2004 shows a story of two street performers - one of them having no legs. Though the narrative seemed very simple it had a great impact as the visual images created by actions ended up being a dance choreography. They engaged the audience through the film, in physical situations produced by loneliness, love, jealousy and survival. "Unlike many choreographers, Newson encouraged his dancers to create rather than simply interpret" (Callery 6) and the powerful performances of all characters in the film provide evidence supporting this statement. I was fascinated by the image composition created by the physicalities of the performers on each scene, thinking that this could be an element to use as reference for my future performances.

Another example of Physical Theatre is one performed by Argentina's theatrical

show De la Guarda by producers Jeffrey Seller, Kevin McCollum, David Binder, and Daryl Roth⁵ on Broadway. In this production the combination of experimental and traditional languages came to life in a multidisciplinary show that has traveled worldwide. Its tour included Mexico City where I had the privilege of attending. The place had a pop disco environment and when the audience entered the theatre we found there were no seats. The audience was impatient for the play to start as we stood in the dark for the first six minutes. The first surprise came as a shadow running from one side of the roof to the other producing a symphony of colors and shadows above our heads. The next surprise came when one of the dancers breaks through the surface of the roof to grab one member of the audience and lift them into the air. The performers ran on walls, roofs, floors and flew over our heads constantly grabbing our attention throughout their seventy minute-long performance in a passionate search for love. When the show was done, I realized the amount of energy I received by having contact with the dynamic of the performers. By making the audience stand through the whole show, we became part of their story, not as a group, but as individuals. The audience formed part of the cast, each of us contributing to the show by giving our own reaction to the situation we were enfolded in. By erasing the line between the stage and the audience space they could express a strong statement to the viewers about their search for love. De la Guarda brought one surprise after another creating a new world that released my need to seek a different approach in theatre.

A unique aspect which both companies (DV8 and De la Guarda) share is the small amount of text used which made it necessary to understand the actions through the physical movement of the actors. Both companies carried a strong subtext conveyed by

corporal means, a subtext which can only be created by improvisation and experimentation. This brings me to the statement made by Callery, that “in theatre, experiments constitute a constant search which will never reach a qualitative conclusion: ‘it works or it doesn’t’ is the maxim where the measuring stick is an informed artistic sensibility” (13). The only way of knowing if it works, is by doing it. Fall and stand up over and over until it turns out right. By studying movement, by looking at these examples and by practicing my personal impulses, I finally was ready to begin my own process of the merging of Physical Theatre, New Media and Women’s Studies to give openness to a transdisciplinary product.

To conclude, learning about some of the different aspects of transdisciplinary products given by the concrete examples throughout this chapter, gave an insight to my creative ideas toward the production of the play. I learned not to be afraid of experimenting beyond disciplines since, as seen in this research, transdisciplinary experiments invariably resulted in the creation of a new product with a new impact on performer / audience communication. With a deeper knowledge of the kinds of transdisciplinary experiments occurring in contemporary performances, I was convinced the value of working simultaneously on computers, feminist theories, and corporal movement, I wanted to find out what would be the result of merging these disciplines, and if it is possible to create a transdisciplinary product in theatre arts. But, exactly how was I going to go beyond Women’s Studies, New Media and Physical Theatre without losing the core of each discipline? I felt the need to have more than one opinion to create a strong assertion for each one of these disciplines. In order to collect different points of view I offered an open invitation to students to form part of a Collective Creation

Workshop that was meant to obtain practical results by gathering feminist material through the practice of Physical Theatre. This workshop will be described in the next chapter. New Media, on the other hand, would engage in a different way providing both disciplines a graphical environment to enrich the aesthetic of the show. Could I truly produce an artistic transdisciplinary effect with these three disciplines? Does transdisciplinarity mean to go beyond completely opposite disciplines in order to create a truly transdisciplinary effect? Where does Women's Studies end and New Media begin? What result do I expect to produce? The answers will come in the process of creation and in the final production that aims to convey the different disciplines to develop an authentic transdisciplinary environment.

3. Creative Process: Towards the final selection

Every great journey begins with disorientation.
(Anne Bogart, A Director Prepares, 70)

The year 2005 enabled one of the most important creative processes of my career. While studying I began to work on the content of the production that would have transdisciplinary results using feminism, video, and Physical Theatre. I knew it was an ambitious project. My lack of socialization skills and my broken English brought me many communication problems especially when the production was at its final stage. This project was meant to be of a collective nature based on feminism, yet as it evolved I realized that my personal experience in Lethbridge was becoming a significant issue I needed to address as well. Though it was very difficult for me to explain to the participants the origin of my dramatic choices, I found in the end that my intuition on the selection of the material used for this production generated trust and enthusiasm in them. By creating an environment of trust, the actors were able to come up with their own proposals for the construction of the final production. Looking back today, I applaud the courage and strength of the people involved for entering blindfolded into this difficult process.

This chapter describes the creative process I experienced during the year leading to the production of my play. It analyzes each selection for the final showing. To begin the creation process I initiated a Collective Creation Workshop in the spring semester of 2005 that allowed me to generate ideas on feminism and formulate sketches approaching this issue. The next step was submitting the project to TheatreXtra, which was to produce the show, and it is this which forced me to create a first outline that described the scenes

of the final show. Subsequently, I worked on the video production for the show. And finally, this chapter concludes with a brief description of the rehearsal process with the final cast for Via Marina.

3.1 Collective Creation Workshop

A word does not begin as a word...it begins as an impulse.
(Peter Brook, The Empty Space, 12)

The Collective Creation Workshop had as a goal the gathering of students interested in feminist issues and stage experimentation. The final group included drama students Ben Hart, Devon Pollock, Jouelle Brick, and multidisciplinary art student Rebecca John. The sessions were fairly short (ninety minutes) leading me to begin each one with a consistent plan in order to get the best out of the time spent in the workshop. Consequently, I divided the workshop into two important stages: the first was an exploration of personal thoughts of feminism, and the second was based on character creation.

During the first stage, I used authentic movement as a basic tool in order to awaken the corporal movement and its connections with the imagination in the participants. Originated by therapy dancer Mary Whitehouse in the 1940s, authentic movement was founded on the principles of Jungian analysis⁶ and was built for patients to “dance out their feelings about an internal image, often one that can help them understand their past or their current life struggles” (Dance Therapy 2). I find this exercise uniquely effective for developing unconscious movement and to break barriers that block your own impulses. For a period of ten to fifteen minutes, the mover keeps their eyes closed in order to connect mind and body and to react to their impulses, while

another person observes, taking note of the important moments of the partner's movements. This exercise is a movement practice that expands and grounds our consciousness and perceptions. Authentic movement aims to help us surrender to our own uniquely "authored" impulse within that which moves us. This training creatively expresses our authentic responses to moving and witnessing. As a mover, the person listens for an impulse to move and goes with that until it leads to another impulse. As a witness the person gives open attention to one of the mover, recognizing the physicalities of the mover (Allen 1).

Parallel to this exercise, each workshop participant wrote a series of questions about feminism, and then created an individual scene about their thoughts on the theme. Using the material taken from authentic movement and the individual scenes, we presented a short piece to Professors Lisa Doolittle, Shelley Scott and Carol Williams. The action took place in a set filled with chairs. We pulled them apart to have an open space to move in while I sang a ranchero song at the back of the stage. Following this, Devon started a monologue about fashion magazines. We then ended the piece with all of us taking out a red apple and eating it at the same time.

Because of the limited time and students' busy schedules I took the concept of a collective creation into a more direct process in the second part of the workshop. During this time, I implemented the creation of characters based on objects chosen by the participants to get a different perspective of feminism. Each of them worked on the object's texture, form, color and temperature to then develop those sensations into their body. In participant Rebecca John's words, "we were also given the chance to create individual characterizations, drawing their basis from found household objects. I felt that

this was one of the most productive parts of the collective creation process, resulting in four materialized characters.” By implementing this exercise, the participants broke down their day-to-day movement into more stylized movement leading them into the construction of a whole new character. This was to be part of our dance sketch presented at the end of the term to Lisa Doolittle as part of my work for the Choreography class. This sketch was an attempt to transform the proposed action into a dance movement combining some of the creations of text made by the participants.

Overall, I had the chance to explore different ways of directing students by suggesting thematic ideas, and giving them space to come up with their own creation, I guided some of the exercises to let the students build a sensorial process, and I also put into practice the choreographic elements I was learning at the time. This workshop allowed me to listen to the students’ ideas about feminism, and it brought a solid direction for the development of the outline for the final play.

3.2 Concretizing the ideas

The second step to accomplishing my transdisciplinary goals was to submit a project to TheatreXtra, which would provide an alternative opportunity for students “to stimulate theatre under simulated ‘real world’ circumstances” at the University of Lethbridge (TheatreXtra, 1). Since I had heard of the Masters program at this university I had been interested in being part of this activity, for it not only provides students the space but also gives opportunities to other students to be part of the production and to be supervised by teachers of the Theatre and Dramatic Art department. Furthermore every student that participated in TheatreXtra has the choice to apply for credit toward their

bachelor degree. In addition, the faculty will support the production with a \$1,000 budget for set, costume, lighting and sound designs. Becoming part of TheatreXtra was one of the great experiences of living in Canada since this not only gave me the opportunity to learn the pre-production structure, but also gave me the opportunity to work with talented Canadian students who helped me create Via Marina.

In March of 2005, after submitting the project to TheatreXtra, which was more a proposal and less of a definitive script, I was asked to write a tentative outline of the structure of the play as a starting point. This outline not only helped me in my creative process, but it was designed mainly for the production staff of TheatreXtra to have an idea of what I had in mind. The outline was as follows:

Summary:

Presented by La Malinche in a timeless symbolic environment, the stereotypical couple of Mexico and couple from Canada combine perspectives on the feminist movement of the 20th Century throughout this play.

Detailed Outline:

Note: Texts and movement will be created with the final cast.

Characters:

Canadian Woman
Mexican Woman
Canadian Man
Mexican Man
La Malinche

Picture 1. Not All Plants Need a Lot of Water*.

In the middle of the stage, La Malinche is sitting down singing to a cactus on her lap. After a moment, water falls from the ceiling onto her.

Lights out.

Picture 2. Mexican Way of Life (Tequila)*.

* These titles were projected on the screen during the final performances.

This scene will have a series of actions and texts created with the final cast, which will represent a Mexican couple stereotypically and their point of view of the female's role and the male's role in society.

Lights out.

Picture 3. Canadian Way of Life (Celebrating Diversity)*.

With a palette of actions and texts made with the final cast, here will be the presentation of a stereotypical Canadian couple, also giving their point of view of the female and male roles in society.

Lights out.

Picture 4. Fertility (Nostalgia)*.

Along with a projection, La Malinche tells the story of the creation of woman and man according to the Mayan myth and the Blackfoot legend.

Lights out.

Picture 5. "Dame todo el Poder"*.

Both couples switch gender roles in a set full of school chairs. Women will have control while men observe the change.

Picture 6. "Windows"*.

La Malinche interacts with a video image highlighting the relationship between technology and society. At the end of the scene, she will plug in the monitors that are placed in the chest of the 2 couples.

Picture 7. "Neo-Tradition"*.

With the monitors plugged into their chest, the couples led by La Malinche will exchange their historical background, re-evaluating gender issues and cultural roles.

Lights out.

Picture 8. "Not All Plants Need a Lot of Sun"*.

In the middle of the stage of chairs, La Malinche is sitting down singing to a cactus and a bonsai maple on her lap. She makes a pause looking at the ceiling, takes out an umbrella. She keeps singing while taking out her own water to then feed the plants.

Lights out.

As described above each scene is portrayed as 'Picture' since that was all I had at that moment - a still image of what could happen on stage. As the process went on, the use of the word 'Picture' became synonymous with 'scene', and was used by the members of

the show. To me that was a peculiarity of this production, yet it also caused a bit of confusion to some of the technical participants. I will refer to the scenes of this production as 'pictures' through out the rest of this document as I feel it better reflects the final form of our creation. In addition to this, some of the 'pictures' changed their names to better fit the situations of the final stages of the production.

This basic outline gave solid ground to my ideas and allowed others to understand the overall concept of this show. Without this description the production would have demanded much more time for its creation.

Once I had the outline I began to think about a title. The search for the title was an overwhelming task since I was unsure about the content of the show. In other words, I was afraid to make a final decision on a name when I was not sure how the production was going to turn out. However, by seeking the title I found more aspects on the content adding meaning to the play.

From Aguamarina to Tierramarina, my thoughts were immersed in definitions in Spanish and English that could describe land, journey, borders or loneliness. Finally, I decided to name it Via Marina because of the double meaning given by these words. In Spanish, Via Marina is translated as 'the way of the sea' corresponding to the feeling I had toward my family and country. On the other hand, in English according to Webster's Dictionary "Via" means 'by way of; through the medium of; by means of', while the definition of Marina is "a dock or basin providing secure moorings for motorboats and yachts often offering supply, repair, and other facilities" which corresponded with the culture shock I was experiencing, and my urge to seek a "mooring" that would bring me a sense of security.

In addition, Marina is a woman's name in both English and Spanish. Yet, she wasn't just any woman. Marina was the Christian name given to Malintzin, a Mexican woman born in 1502 near the East Coast of Mexico. As a child, she was sold as a slave by her family to a Mayan tribe, where she learned the Mayan language. Later she was given as a gift to the conquerer, Hernán Cortés who soon discovered her abilities in Mayan and Náhuatl dialects. Shortly after she learned the Spanish language she enabled the Spanish army to access Mexican land and she also became the mistress of Captain Cortés (Somonte 11-13 & 113). Doña Marina – known today as La Malinche- was the symbol of a nation that was burst apart by the hands of mercenaries.

Nowadays, her story is creating controversy among intellectuals because of her helping attitude toward the Spanish assassins. Some Mexicans consider her a whore and traitor. Yet I am more in favor of the opinion of Somonte who states that:

Doña Marina didn't betray the Mexicans. The Mexican nation didn't exist as we know it today. The ones who lived in Tenochtitlan⁷ had under their power many small villages that didn't speak their language, nor were they of the same race. During the reign of Moctezuma II⁸, the people were not all under the same political system. People lived separated, hating and frightened of each other. Which of these towns did La Malinche betray? She falls in love for the first time and she subordinates herself to him, as any woman in love would do. It is a biological need. It is natural. She was a slave, an object. He was a powerful man who respected her and preached that there should only be one woman at home (131).

Like Somontes, I also believe that La Malinche acted on her survival instinct. La Malinche and her cross-cultural liaison marked the beginning of an era that would last more than 500 years. Nowadays, Mexican people who live abroad are sometimes called 'Malinchistas' because of their attachment to a different culture, and for those despising the Mexican society (Academia Mexicana de la Lengua Española 2).

The experience I was living while being a resident in Canada felt somehow close to La Malinche's betrayal. I felt the need to be silent to understand a new way of life. Although I also came from a Western culture, Canada's social organization felt very safe and yet strange compared to my old way of life. While being silent, I did not defend my Mexican background and I allowed the new customs into my life. In the eyes of some of the Mexican people I am betraying my country – I am selling my soul to foreigners. And yet, I was also struggling to keep values and allow new ones to influence my old traditions. Because of all this I chose to portray my experience through La Malinche's character since: 1. Both of us had to assimilate different cultures in order to survive (under extremely different circumstances); 2. La Malinche is an important symbolic representation of the Mexican society; and 3. Because the interpretations given to her such as whore, traitor, survivor and woman, are a reiteration of my own experienced as an immigrant single mother. The first and third reason above became stronger as the process went on.

To conclude this section, the creation of the title and the outline was an important stage of analysis that took me to a deeper statement of the production. I took the decision to bring my self-portrait into the structure of the play. By making the production content more personal, I was able to more creatively examine my understanding and questioning of the feminist statements. The production came to have a twist on the original concept that was only to have the two couples, inserting a new character: La Malinche. The final title then, Via Marina: A woman's journey is because of the English and Spanish meaning of the word Via Marina, and the next sentence is a corroboration of the autobiographical issues in this play.

3.3 Video

The idea for using videos in Via Marina was to be able to present the thoughts of the character La Malinche. By making her inner state visible in a video piece, I could play with different dimensional languages, which would allow transdisciplinarity to play out on stage. The idea of having a screen on stage was to allow us to transgress realities moving back and forth between screen and live action.

To create the videos, the practical experience I had with Gerald Prost in the class New Media Techniques in the summer of 2004 was vital. He taught me how to use the software Photoshop that edits photographic material, and Premiere that edits moving images. The assessment of Denton Fredrickson, teacher of video at this university, was also valuable. He guided me to a more artistic understanding of the capture and creation of video. Another useful source of inspiration was the study of works by the photographers Pedro Meyer and the early experiments of Eadweard Muybridge, the Mexican paintings of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera, the Canadian animations of Norman McLaren, and the early films of French filmmaker George Méliès.

According to my outline, the scenes that would contain video participation were in Picture 4: Nostalgia, Picture 6: Windows and Picture 7: New-Tradition. It was hard to start working on the video without having a detailed script. Having a detailed sequence of the on-stage actions could simplify the labor of the selection of images for the video. Yet, it was difficult for me to construct a script at this point of the project since I was not certain about the actions on stage or of how to develop this in collaboration with performers who had not yet been selected. Therefore I chose to go with my intuition,

following inner images, and juxtaposing different photographs taken from the web and from my digital camera. This method allowed the videos to have an unexpected personal style in the image composition. By constructing frame by frame I developed a series of images producing a surreal sequence making the video unique in its content, what Pedro Meyer would explain in his words, “I was able to restore [with digital technology] the picture to my memory of what actually happened...when I create an image or alter parts of it, I am actually restoring to it that which I can recall” (110). Using Final Cut as the main software on a Macintosh G5 during a three month period, I created a five minute and then a ten minute video exploring the visual language to express the transition I was experiencing between Mexican and Canadian societies. The third video for Picture 6, was created by Lethbridge visual artist Kelly Andres and it was meant to show how we hide our solitude in today’s technology.

3.3.1 *Nostalgia*

The video I was most concerned with was the one to be set for Picture 4 since it was meant to represent La Malinche’s ideas on feminism. Assuming that it would be the beginning of the climax of the show, I had trouble deciding where to begin. My first idea was to present a brief animation on the evolution of the roles played by women through history and it was named ‘Fertility’. However, the personal situations I was experiencing seemed to be stronger to me than the one set in the outline leading me to name it Nostalgia. I then transformed my previous idea into an autobiography about culture shock, the determination of moving forward, and nationalism -themes I had been experiencing for the past two years. Once I made the choice of talking about my personal

experience instead of generalizing feminist history, images and sequences came to be clearer as the work progressed.

The first part of Nostalgia presents the physical body and its interaction with emotion, bringing the Mexican cliché of a cactus and a heart to represent my identity. The first series of images are made with the juxtaposition of my naked chest struck by the shape of a heart that appears on the screen in different dimensions and times. The heart then transforms into a cactus that appears and disappears through a series of Final Cut effects.



Fig. 3. Lily Marquez. "Part 1" from the video Nostalgia. Lethbridge, 2005.

The second part presents the indecisive moment of the decision I made to come to Canada, and is given by the breaking of a finger into the picture of a Galaxy giving entrance to the whole hand, which then transforms into the planet Earth. With a sequence of fades, images go from Earth to Mexico, Mexico to Mexico City, city to park, park to grass, grass to one human shadow, one human shadow to two human shadows then back to one shadow, then to bare feet, to a beach where the hand animation used in the galaxy is now used on the beach. In this part of the video, the image of a hand that is metaphor for creation, transforms itself from a vast world into my own feet, feet that will take me to an unknown journey.

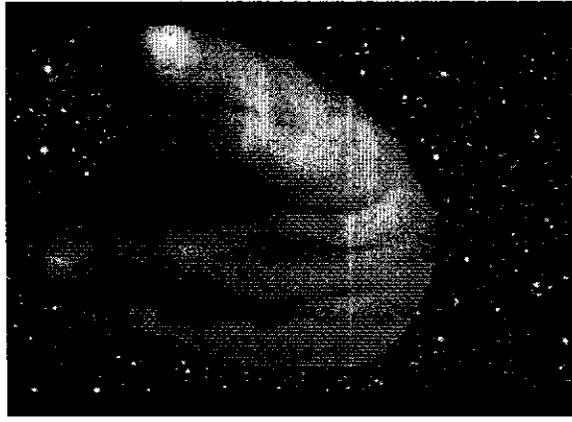


Fig. 4. Lily Marquez. "Part 2" from the video Nostalgia. Lethbridge, 2005.

A short pause is given before the third part that shows the act of moving on, leaving some of my cultural background behind but also taking it with me as I push it toward this journey. It is expressed by the animation of my feet walking over common Mexican symbols and concepts, until the animation of the photographic series by Eadweard Muybridge Descending Stairs and Turning Around (1884-85).



Fig. 5. Lily Marquez. "Part 3" from the video Nostalgia. Lethbridge, 2005.

The fourth part is doubt about this decision. A photograph of my eye is pulled by the beat of the image of an electronic sacred heart fading into the painting of El Sueño de la Malinche by Antonio Ruiz that shows La Malinche lying on a bed covered by a city, in a dirty room. The animation of an eagle appears, picking up La Malinche until a wavy transition fades in, leaving a sepia image of the beach along with the eagle and the hands

positioned as a bird. The idea of this image was to create my version of the Mexican flag, that officially is represented by the ensign of an eagle devouring a snake that is placed in a cactus in the middle of the flag in a white background, symmetrically complemented by a green color on the left side and a red one on the right side. Based on this representation, I had successfully portrayed my own image of what a national flag would represent to me. The image came up to be like this:



Fig. 6. Lily Marquez. "Part 4" from the video Nostalgia. Lethbridge, 2005.

Leaving the composition of the bird made by the hands, the fifth part of the video is the final journey. Revisiting the idea of creation made at the beginning of this video, the presence of the hand replays its role this time in the shape of a bird. It gathers my national symbol made by the eagle and my feet taking them into a new world. The bird - hand- flies toward a window to the open sky, that turns into a snowy road.

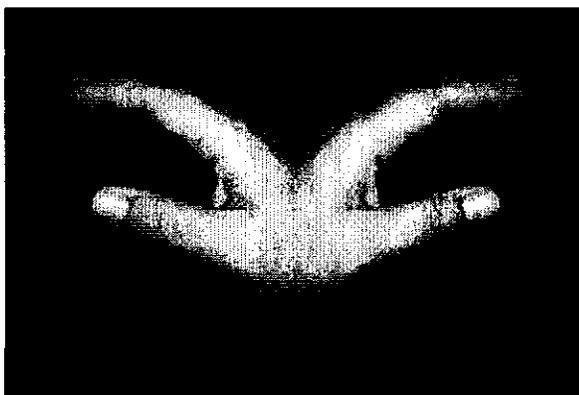


Fig. 7. Lily Marquez. "Part 5" from the video Nostalgia. Lethbridge, 2005.

Parallel to the work of images, sequences and transitions, I chose the music of Lila Downs, native of the South of Mexico using fragments of three of her songs: Tiempo, Canción Mixteca, and Yanu Yucu Ninu emphasizing my cultural background and taste. The end product of Nostalgia fulfilled my expectations since I had achieved my desire to work in an animated format.

Once I had the final video I showed it to different professors from different areas to obtain some feedback. Thanks to their observations I improved the pasting and quality of the images of Picture 4. Through their comments I clearly recognized the different perspectives of Visual, Dramatic or Feminist disciplines. Visual Art professors were questioning the relationship between the juxtaposition and meaning, composition, pasting, transitions and techniques from one image to the other while Feminist teachers were asking where were the gender issues I set in my proposal. Drama teachers were asking what I wanted to say in this production. All their comments helped me to enrich the final production of Via Marina.

3.3.2 Neo-Tradition

The second video created for the show was ten minutes in duration and was to be inserted in Picture 7: Neo-Tradition. The main idea was to present landscapes from Mexico City and Lethbridge to provide a background for the situations created by the actors on stage throughout this scene. I then solicited my cousin, Loxá Tamayo, to capture images from Mexico City. I did not want to have subjects in these images, I was interested to show the streets and some of the popular symbolism in the Mexican culture.

Being that Loxá has traveled and lived in many places, my request was well comprehended. Once I had the images, I edited them using as a source my daily routine - home to work- from when I lived there. Then I thought about inserting still images, symbolizing the places I yearned, for places where I wanted to be while I was driving from my house to work. These insertions added a 'breathing' effect to the constant movement of the images from the car.



Fig. 8. Loxá Tamayo. "Mexican" part of video Neo-Tradition. Mexico, 2005.

This video presented a continuous trajectory showing a different way of living from my Canadian lifestyle. Using this video as the basis, I then produced another one from a Lethbridge perspective to contrast the images from Mexico City. Using the daily routine I had in Lethbridge, I also inserted still images (from my family) set at different points to produce a counterpoint effect throughout both videos – Mexican and Canadian.



Fig. 9. Lily Marquez. "Canadian" part of video Neo-Tradition. Lethbridge, 2005.

Afterward, I pasted both videos together to create a counterpoint between the Mexican and Canadian lifestyles. For instance, I juxtaposed a shot of waiting for the blue man crossing under the street light -meaning that you are now allow to cross the street- in the Canadian side, with, in the Mexican side, an image of hundreds of clothes drying on the top of a building, contrasting everyday aspects between the two countries. In another case, the image of the Lethbridge clock tower plays along with the Mexican image of a busy street, together symbolizing my urge to arrive to work knowing that I still had a traffic jam to get through, to then see the running image of my feet in the street of Lethbridge while there is a block traffic in the Mexican side. Combining these statements the Neo-Tradition video, the final pasting was to be used on the big screen set on stage for the production, in conjunction with live action.

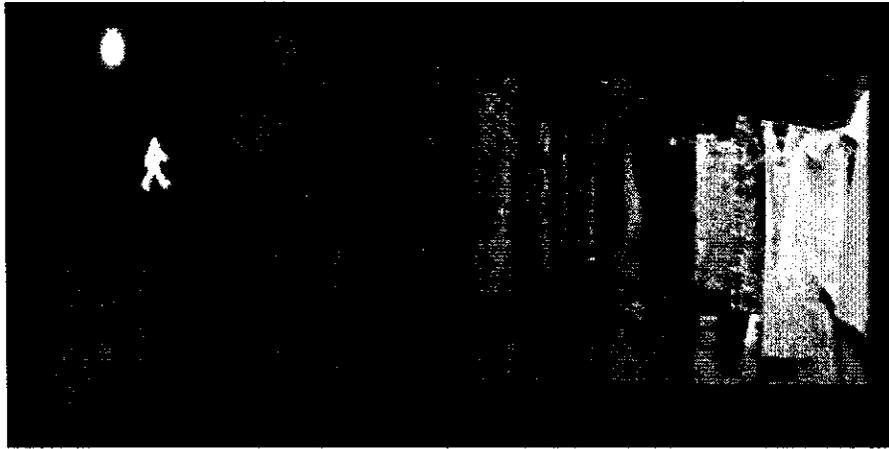




Fig. 10. Lily Marquez. "Mexi-Can" six stills from the final video Neo-Tradition. The left image is from Lethbridge and the right one from Mexico City. Lethbridge, 2005.

3.3.3 *Windows*

The third and last video was produced by Kelly Andres, a Visual Artist from the University of Lethbridge involved in the (...)ette Collective and recently beginning her Master's degree in Women Studies at this University. The (...)ette Collective came together as a group of art students from the University of Lethbridge, who were questioning the origins of feminism and why it is still such an important issue nowadays. Andres's collaboration for this production was outstanding due to her experience in gender issues and videographic work. She participated after rehearsals started and was able to produce the video in conjunction with the selected music and choreography for the final production. Using the ideas of the actors, Andres created a five minute video presenting images of a trapeze artist followed by the image of an astronaut walking on the moon, a shadow of a woman juxtaposed with a flying bird, and the shadow of a flag. These images were accompanied by the music of Load, The Hill. In Andres's words:

Via (2005), is based on the thematic of departure, loss and transition. To function as a set within the dramatic dance I employed the formal aesthetic of the moving painting or the digital landscape allowing the piece to transition between the static earthly ground and the volatile atmosphere. Utilizing my interpretation of the dance segment and the assigned audio composition I collected and organized imagery that introduced saturated color and emotion while strictly adhering to the existing pacing of the dance and soundtrack. Thematically, I was attempting to link the imagery to the notion of distance both psychologically and geographically. Distance, can be a term applied to the feeling of void or lack within my cultural understanding and is given an enormous amount of attention in attempts to eradicate, lessen or ignore. When in a skeptical, pessimistic mood, I believe this obsession is futile given the impossibility of ever achieving closeness with someone or something that is not socially fabricated, shallow or fleeting. However, as my mind has never adhered to logic, linear-ality, or a chronic cynical analysis, I prescribe to the saccharine : distance is the only motivation for being together.

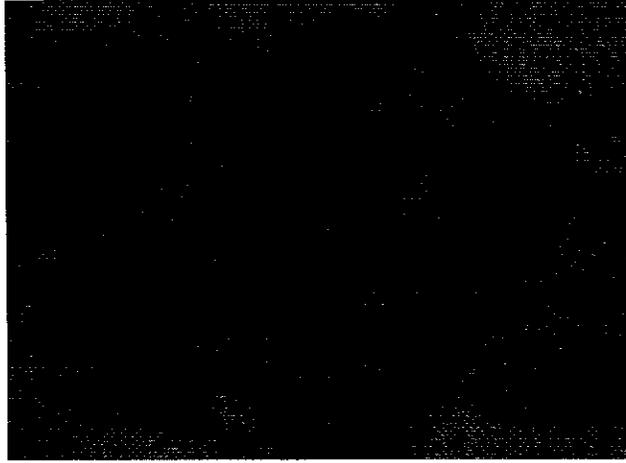


Fig. 11. Kelly Andres. Still from the video Via. Lethbridge, 2005.

Andres's understanding of the thematic used in Via Marina's production was accurate and her unique style nourished the performance. In the end, one of my favorite parts of the show was the development of Picture 6.

To conclude this section, the creation of the videos allowed me to position myself in a vulnerable state that I had not experienced before. Instead of building a connection with another human, I engaged in conversations with my thoughts, training my fingers to dance on a keyboard that sends commands to the hard disk of a computer. While doing these videos I hid for three months in the basement of my house with a computer – my rehearsing space. I managed to express myself through the numerical pixels situated on a screen. I also collaborated with a video artist who instead of asking for a script, grabbed her video camera to capture the choreographic scenes to produce her video. While Andres was crossing her visual arts into the theatrical, I was transgressing into a visual language by the making of the videos. The collaboration and process in the creation of videos led us to a transdisciplinary expression.

3.4 Creation of the movement script

*Rehearsal is not about forcing things to happen,
rather rehearsal is about listening*
(Anne Bogart, A Director Prepares, 125)

In this particular project, the creation of the show was based on the proposals of the performers. The engagement level needed from the actors was vital for its success. As shown in the outline, the idea was to have two actors playing the Mexican couple, two playing the Canadian, and I was willing to perform La Malinche. However, only four people came to the auditions, leaving me with the selection of two women and one man for the final cast—Amanda Stephenson, Christina Calgaro and Nathan Loitz. Along with our stage manager Charlotte Nixon, we started rehearsals trying to figure out how to adapt the situations set in the outline of couples from the two countries without losing the core of each scene. After much thinking through the first week of rehearsals, I decided to develop a basic love-hate relationship between a man and woman. Thinking about the stories created by couples such as Tristan and Isolde, Romeo and Juliet, Rhett Butler and Scarlett O’Hara, Tony and Maria, Pocahontas and John Smith, La Malinche and Hernán Cortez, I thought of the common and effective structure presented by them. The effectiveness of these structures has engaged audiences for centuries by exposing the power of love against incomprehension and miscommunication, resulting in tragedy. How could you (the audience) not get involved in it? These couples represent feelings that people hide underneath their skin. Taking the tragic element out of them, the idea of using this structure felt right. While in these stories love was the force that united the cultural differences, I thought of adding the women’s determination to gain respect as the trigger that would separate the couple, as seen in my own experience.

After some improvisations, the actors and I (based on the structure above) came up with the story of a man and a woman falling in love, marrying, finding themselves in a routine that would emphasize women's and men's stereotypical roles. Then the woman pushes the man into her daily routine while she adopts his. This leads to a battle of power and finally shows both of them engaging in the cyber world to comfort their solitudes. Throughout the play, La Malinche participated as an oracle who leads the couple to question their situation. Though we only had a brief outline of the show it helped us move in the right direction for the development of Via Marina.

3.4.1 Characters

Once we had this simple, basic story I allocated each of them a character in order to start constructing the live performance elements for Via Marina. Because of her dance abilities and style, I chose Christina to be the Woman, Nathan the Man, and Amanda would be performing La Malinche. At the time, I was still unsure about the cross-cultural issues –Mexican and Canadian, and about the relationship of La Malinche with the couple. After a few rehearsals, I decided to give the woman a Canadian status and the man would have Mexican citizenship. I also decided to work on stereotypical characters since they could be easily recognize by the audience and it would accentuate the differences in gender as well as creating a contrast with the character La Malinche. According to theatrical director Anne Bogart, “it is better to set the exterior (the form, the action) and allow the interior (the quality of being, the ever-altering emotion landscape) freedom to move and change in every repetition” (103). I realized that by using stereotypes I was jeopardizing the substance of the characters. If approaching stereotypes

by the surface, they became shallow and caricatured. However if the right approach is used, “stereotypes become containers for memory history and assumption” (Bogart 104). By developing the stereotype of a macho⁹ Mexican man who is represented by a tough charro¹⁰ wearing his black shiny sombrero, guns and spurs, and by creating the southern Alberta cowgirl look of a sexy woman, both stereotypes would create the effect needed to portray the similarities and differences between genders and between the Mexican and Canadian culture. Also, by using stereotypes the actors would have the freedom to go beyond the features I wanted for each character, allowing them to be the creators of their own particular character. This tactic of creating stereotypes was successful in some ways, but also emerged as one of the major points of controversy in post-performance discussions about Via Marina.

I worked on the female cliché of “sexy”, thinking about women portrayed by the media as sexually objectified. When I lived in northern Mexico and here in Canada as well, I met female students that pretend to be shallow in order to qualify for the requirements of becoming a “good wife”. Because of this, I chose to expose the cowgirl stereotype trying to evolve this image by having her reject her role and take on the man’s role, and I also tried to find a profound transformation in the women’s character. My idea for Via Marina was to express my personal perspective on how women and men are switching traditional roles and by doing that the status between genders is altered. Gender is going through an adjustment period that is generating questions about human behavior. I do not know where this leading, nor what is the answer to this lack of balance, and I failed to clearly establish my questioning around this matter in the final script of Via Marina. The outcome was exposing a woman’s character that appeared to be shallow and

superficial throughout the play. It was hard for me to see the overall effect while being inside of the creation of the play. I needed to step back and analyze the result from Via Marina's process and presentation. There were many changes during rehearsals that brought a higher level of difficulty to the performers' creation of characters –characters that were built by the imaginative work of the cast without being given an adequate theoretical or historical background. And due to the shortness of time, I was not allowed to make more modifications to the final blocking (which was done two weeks prior to the opening night). I needed more time to develop my own ideas and to be able to express them to the performers.

In addition, it was difficult for the performers to have the freedom to create their characters. Nathan Loitz who created the men's character in this play, said "there was no text and how we developed our characters was different from what I was used to. I was panicking. But as we developed the piece I began to understand how it was coming together, and I started to get an idea of what was wanted from me and how I could contribute to the work in a positive way".

Creating an entire play in a two month period was overwhelming for all of us. I felt at times confused about how to guide the actors into this project. I felt I needed at least another fifteen years of experience as a director to obtain a specific emotion from the actors. Yet, the freedom the cast had in this play I believe taught them another aspect of performing arts. Nathan commented on his development through this process in an e-mail, that:

As the rehearsal process continued I tried to embrace the freedom given to the performers by overcoming my own insecurities and digging deep within myself and trying to bring something unique, personal and valuable to the show. After I did this I felt my personal development was easier for

me to explore. This is when I began to "let go" and let the piece develop in a more organic way and also I began to enjoy it a lot more.

Though being in touch with actors and dancers was not unusual to me, this experience of trying to build a transdisciplinary language with performers enhanced my development as director and creator.

3.4.2 Text

The text for this production came from a selection of readings I gathered throughout this last year. I selected Mexican poet and essayist Octavio Paz (winner of the Nobel prize for literature in 1990), well-known Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes, Mexican feminist poet of the 17th Century Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, the Uruguayan journalist Eduardo Galeano, Canadian writers Leonard Cohen, bpNichol, and Audrey Thomas as well as the Canadian native story of the Blackfoot Genesis. From these authors I chose different statements that I found useful to the meaning of this show. Using some of these materials, the cast and I tried to develop a broad outline of actions to give sense to what each one of us wanted to say in this production. As a result the beginning of Picture 3 turned out to be a collage of phrases given by these important authors, creating with it a transdisciplinary approach to social narratives. The final text which was recited by La Malinche's character while using a set of physical postures reads as follows:

Foreigners bore me, Miss... [Leonard Cohen]
It is enough to travel by land from Mexico City to New York to notice a quality ruined in both countries...[Carlos Fuentes] Canada, where are you?
...but of course, men wrote it down. How were they to know? ... [Audrey Thomas]
What can we know of women but that women are philosophy in the kitchen? [Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz]
If we are those who we feel different, what makes us different? and what are these differences? [Octavio Paz]

We are alone... [Octavio Paz]

Following the form produced in the video of a juxtaposition of images, this final text came to be also a juxtaposition of narratives of different authors. However, I did not know how to acknowledge the authors for each phrase. Looking at this scene it felt as if those phrases were written by us instead of coming from these important writers.

Although I gave reference to the authors in the program, I didn't think of a better solution to highlight the authors that I so carefully picked for this specific show. This ownership error is something to think about for my future productions. Furthermore, it was very important to stage the words of great writers such as Octavio Paz, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, and those mentioned earlier, since I share their ideas and I use them to create a collage throughout the play. By including their words I am building a transdisciplinary script thinking of each of their phrases as a piece of art: The art of writing.

The text for this play was created as rehearsals and scenes were created. I was clear that La Malinche was the one who would have the biggest text-based performance. Given that texts were placed and replaced constantly in this process, I applaud Amanda's determination in getting it memorized. For instance, during the first month of rehearsals I was determined to incorporate the famous description of the Mexican way of life by Carlos Fuentes in the book Tiempos Mexicanos (Mexican Times), where he analyses our traditions:

In the Mexican popular way of life, in their definitive acts of love and death, of passion and revolution, art and celebration, the opposites meet: the death will be life, the revolution will be a celebration, the passion will be an art, the spirit will be matter, the accident will be art, the body will be soul, You will be I. A disguise or a dance is enough to obtain the wished beauty, courage, sensuality, identification: I will be You... The western world had to pass by Marne, Dachau and Hiroshima to begin to understand this. In Mexico, the danger, the rareness and the violence of

Centuries created in people an alert to meet destiny around the corner, in the form of a straight bullet, an accidental encounter, an outbreak of rage, the simple disease, the simple hunger, the simple slavery...(13-14)

Although I identify myself in this paragraph, the written style of it was not fitting into the aesthetics developed from the choreography and characters. Amanda (who performed La Malinche) was having a hard time relating herself to it, leading me to write my own version based on Fuentes text that was to be inserted in scene 1:

I was born under Mexican skies.
Warm nest of legacies beneath the earth.
A continuous heritage of a life style I did not choose.
A land where tragedies, miracles, accidents, corruption, justice - meet the requirements to celebrate life.
A society where the word "Familia" is defined by protection and love. It is the law.
A place where we find ourselves lost in the multitude.
Where the line between the rich and the poor is clear and strong.
A country where voices can be heard by millions and yet be forgotten by the next day.
My land, my streets, my air, my mountains, my people, my traditions, my self.
I need to go the distance.
I need to see who's behind the frontier.
To see what's happening across the horizon.
Distance to understand, to grow.
A place where I can start over.
An Answer. An experience. A story.
Who am I?
I will be you.
You
Will
Be
Me.

Developing this text was more accurate in what we wanted to express and it helped Amanda to have a better understanding of La Malinche's character.

Additionally, Picture 8 needed another text insertion by La Malinche that would conclude the play. This text was written two weeks before the presentation, leaving

Amanda a very short time for memorization. Amanda's determination and professionalism allowed her to engage in the final text insertions. Also, the texts allowed for a better understanding of the content of the play. By enriching the choreography and video, the spoken text enhanced the meaning of our production.

3.4.3 Choreography

The most difficult part for me throughout the whole process was the choreographic creation, once we had the storyline for this play. How could I lead the performers to produce movement? How could I bring each move to create a compelling composition on stage? How could I translate our ideas into a physical language?

We started by exploring Authentic Movement in the same form I had used it during the Collective Creation Workshop. This exercise would provide us with movement material to use for the construction of the choreography. Through this brief training, the three performers found some actions to use in the creation of their characters. Yet I didn't know how to develop these actions in space, nor how to lead the performers to evolve the actions by the use of movement variations. Even though they were good physical material, they were pretty static. We needed more than this method for the creation of an hour-long show.

Using a formalist provided by the workshop session with artistic director Kathy Casey of Montreal Dance during my studies in Choreography in Spring of 2005, I set a series of letters and two sentences to be transformed into actions by the actors to create a movement phrase. Again they did it. Yet I was not sure how to move this phrase through space, nor how to position performers into a meaningful shape in space. I noticed the

difference between the concept of 'me doing it' and 'telling them how to do it'. Christina and Amanda - who have been and currently are involved in dancing activities- got involved in this matter and created some of the choreographic parts of the play.

Another experiment for the creation of movement was for the three performers to make a list of verbs describing the content for each scene. This idea came to me when John Farwell –supervisor of the set design from the Dramatic and Theatre Arts Department- came to the first rehearsal and asked the designers to write their ideas with adjectives. Since I needed actions more than colors, I decided to transform the adjectives into verbs. Once we had the list of all scenes, we set the verbs together and the performers began to create a still corporal image in each scene. Once they had their corporal position for each action, I made them go from one to the other producing a movement sequence. Finally, with the help of my supervisor Lisa Doolittle we moved this sequence into the space in different qualities (slow, fast) working into a 'cut and paste' composition, producing variations throughout space and time to construct the final part of the show.

After studying Physical Theatre, during this production I realized that one of the most important elements I wanted to create was the significance of the poetic image, which I believe is why it was so hard for me to develop the movement. I was able to create the still image yet I found it difficult to evolve it. Instead of creating from the movement I created from a concrete and static image. Furthermore, I did not know how to solve some of the technical difficulties that the actors were experiencing leaving them on their own throughout this aspect. We walked with our inner-instinct toward the development of living impulses. The drama students, more used to scripted theatre, were

at times confused by so many changes made through the whole process. For Christina Calgaro, who is used to working in dance, the difficulty came to be to relate movement to the music that was selected after the performers created the movement. In Calgaro's words, "I had many ideas worked out, but once the music was added, everything was different. It was hard to relate after I created the movement and emotion. I needed to rebuild the connection". Even for someone that is used to this form of theatre, changes are still unpredictable and scary as well since they are still an exploration toward an unknown result. In a process where experimentation is the medium for creation, changes have to be welcome to open possibilities for enriching the content of the play.

To conclude this chapter, the creation of Via Marina was a journey that gathered physical, visual and written structures, and transformed the various ideas into an organized series of events that were translated into a theatrical language. Living through this process, I found a union of intuition, reason, and body in my own creative process. Making a video, searching for answers to build a script, constructing characters, working on the delicate art of moving bodies in the theatrical space, and through the process of giving birth to a full production, I strengthened the transdisciplinary process I set myself from the beginning. After the creative journey, I strongly believe that by interweaving the process of the video, the dramatic structure and having the collaboration between video artists, dancers and actors, we accomplished a transdisciplinary language that allowed us to go beyond the borders of the disciplines involved. Though there were moments I felt overwhelmed, the passion for expressing personal situations clarified the main motivation

I have as a theatre artist. The transgressing process of creation that I accomplished this year, made me comprehend my unique style for acting and directing.

4. Production design: The final touch

*What you do now, what you make of your present circumstances
will determine the quality and scope of your future endeavors.
And at the same time, be patient.*

(Anne Bogart, A Director Prepares, 155)

Parallel to the process of creation, the production meetings played a big part in the Via Marina journey. I am used to playing the many roles involved in a theatre production –actress, creator, set, costume and sound designer. In an interview for the university press release of Via Marina, I stated that “I was used to working in the ‘poor theatre’ tradition, where money and workers are both in short supply.” Indeed I tried to recycle props, costumes and sets as much as possible, trying to give the proper aesthetics to each one of my projects. Coming from a non-monetary style of theatre I learned the use of imagination while recycling materials to obtain good results. However, I found myself in a different situation for this production, a situation where I had both access and restrictions to various resources for the presentations of Via Marina scheduled from November 3rd to 5th, 2005 in the David Spinks Theatre at the University of Lethbridge.

Coming from a ‘do it all by yourself’ system, delegating responsibilities was a difficult thing to deal with for me. Throughout this project I learned to step away and respect the tasks each member is responsible for in the production of a show. It was very encouraging working with the technical crew who showed their professional standards from the beginning to end. However, directing so many people through a non-scripted production was not easy. And even though this project had a small amount of video requirements my use of this medium was unfamiliar to many in the production staff. I found myself engaged in a more technical language that I tried to translate into my artistic needs. In addition, I had to resolve the technical requirements as soon as possible

to calm the technical crew's doubts. While there were difficult moments, the production meetings led to a well-organized and almost perfect development of Via Marina. With the technical side of the production in hand, the designers began on the creation of costume, set and sound under the supervision of the technical professors of the Department of Theatre and Dramatic Arts.

4.1 Set

Rebecca John, a multidisciplinary student (who as mentioned earlier participated in the Collective Creation Workshop in the Spring Term of 2005) was the designer of the set. Via Marina's design came to be a clear presentation of realities delineated by the empty stage and the screen. It was rewarding for me to work with Rebecca since she had understood my aesthetics from the beginning of the initial workshop. To conceive Via Marina's scenography, we based our ideas on the surrealism of painter Remedios Varo, a Spanish-Mexican artist who was influenced by the surreal movement in France in the mid 1930s. With a feminist consciousness, her design sought to represent solitude, love, science, fantasy, nature, alchemy, and women as the foundation of sensibility (Cortez 1). Her unique style was exactly what I was looking for as the basis of our set design. Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Gabriela Iturbide, and Varo, represent the Mexican spirit because of the symbolic style used in their paintings. As I see it, this combination of perfection and roughness creates an environment that accentuates the reality hidden under our skins, as well as develops a peculiarity of the Mexican lifestyle.

Another aspect I wanted to emphasize for a transdisciplinary result was the use of a screen. Even though at the beginning of the process I was not certain about the use of it,

the screen would be an important part of the relationship between the performers and the set giving me and the actors an opportunity to transform the traditional way of projecting images on a screen. In my conception that was all I wanted to have on stage: the screen and the actors. The screen was an element we had to work on a lot during this process. Measuring its size, deciding where it would stand, and determining from what location we would project the image. After this was done, we began to experiment with fabrics. One thing I knew for sure was that we needed a translucent cloth in order to project a rear image, knowing that some of the audience might get the light of the projector in their eyes. This was an issue that slipped my mind but became evident once technical rehearsals started. After some tests made with different fabric and the video images, we noticed how each one created a unique texture and color to the image without losing its quality. Because of the amount needed to fit the screen size, we decided to divide the screen into three different pieces of cloth. Then we thought about using a simple rope to hold the three pieces in a way that the actors could move the fabric up and down with the rope throughout the scenes. This was an effective idea since it created more movement material for the actors. Also, the different qualities of fabric selected, gave the video projection a unique feature where the images gained attributes of the fabric.

The idea of wanting to create an installation environment to break the boundaries between stage and visual art was not complete with the screen. Therefore, I brought the idea from the Collective Creation Workshop of using twenty classroom chairs that as well as being used in one of the scenes came to form part of the set. Also, a TV set presenting the videos on some parts of the stage was used as a decoration element but also would fulfill the idea of installation I was looking for.

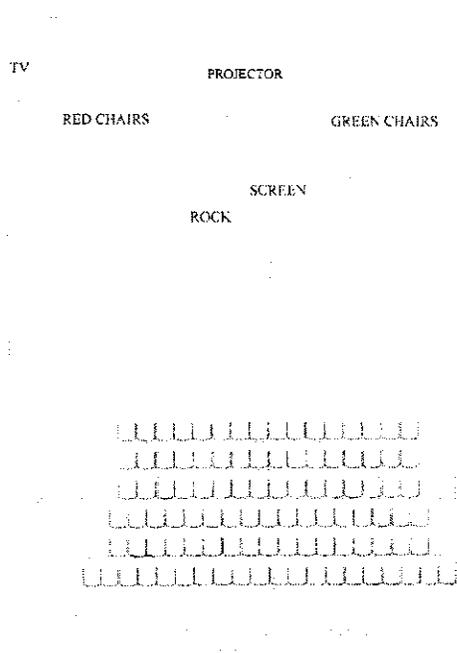


Fig. 12. Rebecca John and Lily Marquez. "Set design scheme". Via Marina: A women's journey. Lethbridge, 2005.

It was decided to paint ten of the chairs red to symbolize Canada as portrayed by the woman, and the other ten would be green for the Mexican side represented by the man. Each side would have lighting from a bare light bulb set overhead. This created a nice composition since they were positioned at each side of the screen, making the screen and the chairs represent a flag. Furthermore, Rebecca proposed to have a rock, to show a distinction between La Malinche and the couple. The rock would stand under the screen, with a chair on it where La Malinche would assume different positions while reciting her text. Without the use of black curtains to cover the theatre's fixed features, like the catwalk, exit signs, and lighting instruments, nor to mask the movements of the technical crew behind the scenes, we could create a simple yet symbolic space.

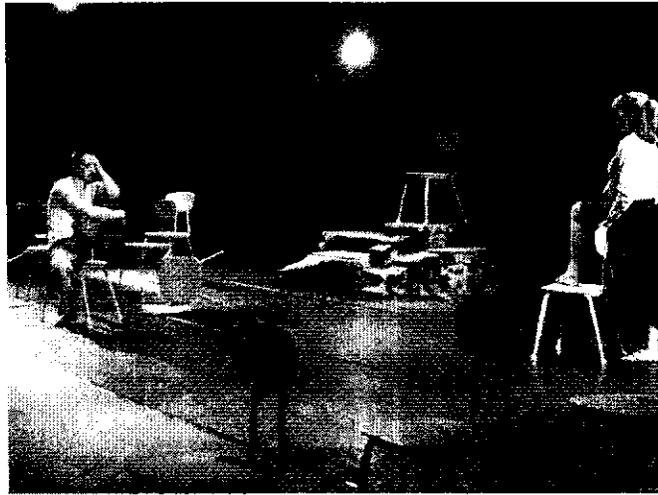


Fig. 13. Lily Marquez. "Picture 5" Via Marina. Lethbridge, 2005.

The set was an invitation to four different levels of reality: fictional, dreamed, desired, and present. In the fictional areas the dancers filled each space with movement making a synthesis of a Man and Woman's relationship, the screen and chairs represented my dreams, the desired was positioned in the far TV monitor up on the catwalk and on the monitors held by the Woman and Man which projected my dreams that were coming to a reality, and finally the present time was revealed by the technical crew who appeared on stage with their headphones and in their common clothes. Though there were details I did not see until the presentations occurred - such as the nonexistent cable coming out of the DVD player that the Woman had in Picture 7- our ideas came through as best as we knew how to involve these realities. In contrast with productions based on a given script, Via Marina's setting evolved through the needs of situations which developed during rehearsals and which were enacted by the performers, making an organic conjunction between the theatrical and the visual art.

4.2 Sound

Along with sound designer Ben Hart, the music selection would be a great part of the show. Between Ben and myself, we gathered different styles of Canadian and Mexican music from country to alternative songs. I wanted to create a dialogue from one song to the other in order to express clearly my multicultural ideas. I also wanted to emphasize the different languages involved in Mexico and Canada. I tried to portray English, Spanish, French, and Indian dialects from the two countries. Once I had selected some of the songs I tried them with the dancing material to see if the sound would fit the criteria I was looking for. We had so much great music on hand that it was hard for me to think of putting aside most of it. In order to keep some of the material I decided to produce a collage out of some of the music. This opened the option of producing sound experimentation by combining some of the songs creating a chaotic effect as a result. We decided to use this effect for two of the two last scenes.

After working with the different soundtracks we gathered, the end product included: Guillermo Velázquez, Mexican huapanguero known by his Sones Huastecos along with Los Leones de la Sierra de Xichu and who had done a lot of political work through their popular music; Shania Twain, popular Canadian country singer/composer; Pedro Infante, idol from the 1950s who is still an important figure for Mexican society; Jennifer Hanson, American country singer raised in a Latin neighborhood in Los Angeles; King Chango, popular Mexican rock band; The New Meanies, Canadian popular heavy rock band; Los de Abajo, Mexican popular rock band; Jann Arden, Canadian singer; Lila Downs, Mexican singer who emphasizes indigenous music; Moodyman, electronic tech music; Metric, Load, and Be Good Tanyas a few of the many

Canadian alternative bands; Delinquent Habits, Chicano rock band; Lidia Tamayo, Mexican Contemporary harpist (and my mother); Carla Bruni, French singer born in Italy; Brazil Jazz singer Mario Joao; and Los Amigos Invisibles Rock band from Venezuela. The choices given in the final product were to create a broad range of musical selection between Canada and Mexico. For instance, in the Mexican side I tried to come up with popular and contemporary songs to portray political and social issues of the Mexican society nowadays. The soundtrack for Picture 7 by harpist Lidia Tamayo performing a piece by composer Arturo Marquez, was inspired by the Spanish Conquest theme describing the mixing of Spanish and Azteca races creating our actual Mexican society. On the Canadian side -though I did not know much about the Canadian music- Ben Hart brought a variety selection where I chose the best suited for this performance, trying to expose the English and the French languages, presenting the multicultural Canadian society.

In addition, in the first scene because I wanted to portray thoughts about women and men, I had initially asked the performers to improvise phrases to portray these ideas but it didn't work as I wanted it to. So later on, Ben made a recording edition of female and male voices using the opinions of different students, and edited these, ending with a magnificent juxtaposition of phrases portraying current gender issues. This edited collage of phrases was one of the best products of this project. In Ben's words about his experienced working in this show:

I just started mixing things that sounded good together and then re-arranging them based on what you wanted. I tried to set the tone and use music that you listed properly. But engineering sound without knowing the content [of the play], it is difficult to fully justify all my choices. However, being that content was reliant on the music, I am glad you were

able to make decisions. I made the practical choice to see these as justified and tried to work with the choices you already made.

Born into a family of musicians, I had been given the training to choose music for stage productions since childhood. I find that I do not allow other people to intervene with my music selections unless I can't find the right sound that fulfills my expectations. Ben's patience was exemplary, working through rehearsals trying to capture what I wanted for the show. The final sound design was an exquisite collage of Mexican and Canadian culture that enriched the development of the choreographies.

4.3 Lighting

One of the biggest problems I have faced throughout my career is my lack of expertise in theatrical lighting. However, on this occasion, with the help of my supervisor Lisa Doolittle and the interest of Alex Beavis (designer), this part of the production came to be another strong feature. I was very keen to see Alex's work since I knew it would be his first experience as a lighting designer, and I recall his anxiety to have the script as soon as possible. Along with Rebecca John, he was one of the members that came most often to rehearsals making him understand more closely what the piece was about. His observations throughout rehearsals were reflected in the lighting plot produced for this play.

The starting point for the lighting design was set by a color denomination for each scene. Overall we had a mixing of turquoise, brown, red, orange, yellow and blue, colors that in my mind could accentuate the sensations produced in each scene. With this in mind, Doolittle made me build a series of drawings that sketched out where performers moved on stage throughout each scene, to clarify where I wanted the light to come from.

This outline helped the designer realize the number of bulbs and their positions in space. I noticed the use of the sides to create a more profound space on stage making visual every movement of the performers.



Fig. 14. Lily Marquez. “La Malinche in Picture 6”. [Via Marina](#). Lethbridge, 2005.

In Alex’s words about the lighting design concept, “I want to create a mood and a feeling that went along with the style of the scene and to create colors that would make the audience feel what the characters were going through. They were there to make sure that the actors were lit on stage”. He continues describing that having to work in a non-scripted production “allowed him to think outside the box. While frustrating at times it also allowed [him] to use unconventional techniques in terms of color and position” (Beavis 1).



Fig. 15. Lily Marquez. "Woman in Picture 6". Via Marina. Lethbridge, 2005.

The final design came to be a balanced combination of turquoise, amber, red and green colors harmonized on stage. The designer's concern about the projections and their influence on space and light levels, made him integrate each given element to enrich the situation presented on stage.

4.4 Costumes

Costumes were to be strictly representative of the stereotypes of women and man, yet giving a complex element to each of them. With designer Rebecca John, we discussed different possibilities as to what would fit visually for each character, again trying to maintain the recycling idea I implemented in the set design. With this in mind and once I had cast the characters, Rebecca started finding the appropriate image for each of them:

- Woman: This character was to be representative in an obvious way of the stereotypical Canadian cowgirl from Lethbridge. Therefore, her costume was made of a blue skirt, a white cowboy shirt, and black jazz character shoes.

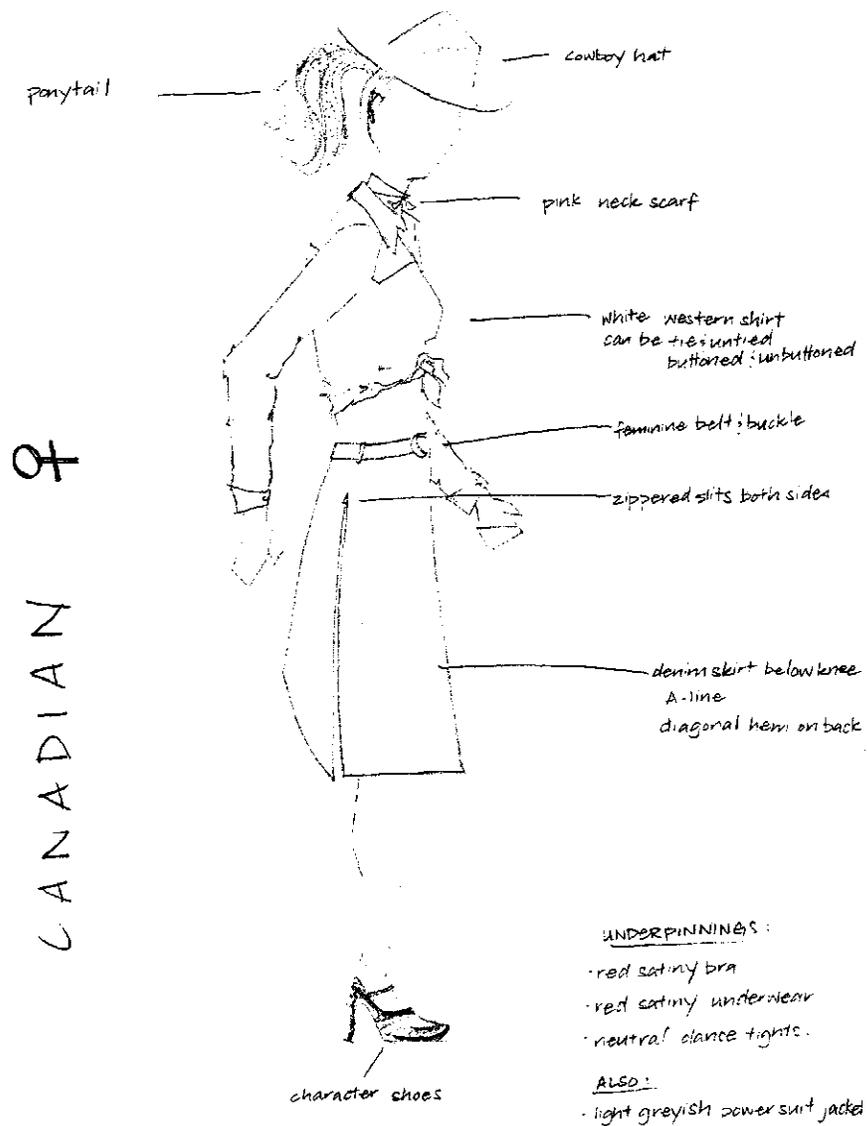


Fig. 16. Rebecca John. Woman's costume. Lethbridge, 2005.

- Man: He is a stereotypical Mexican Macho character yet taking it more into a 'Cholo'¹¹ style. He ended up having baggy long blue jeans, a white undershirt, a tie, he used a suit jacket for Picture 3, and wore black jazz character shoes.

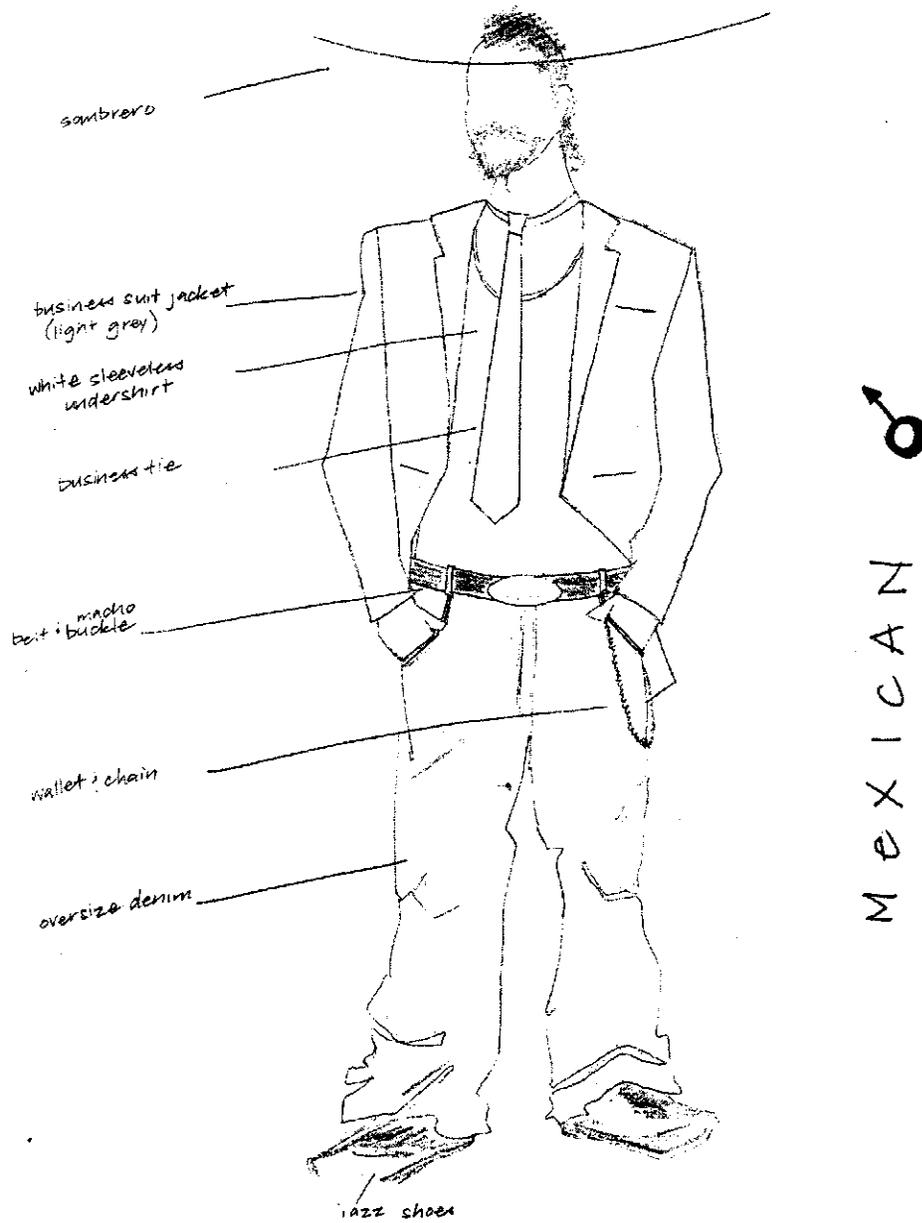


Fig. 17. Rebecca John. Man's costume. Lethbridge, 2005.

- La Malinche: She portrayed a typical Mexican Indian by having a white huipil¹² over a green dress. For the end of the play she put on a coat and mittens representative of her time in Canada.

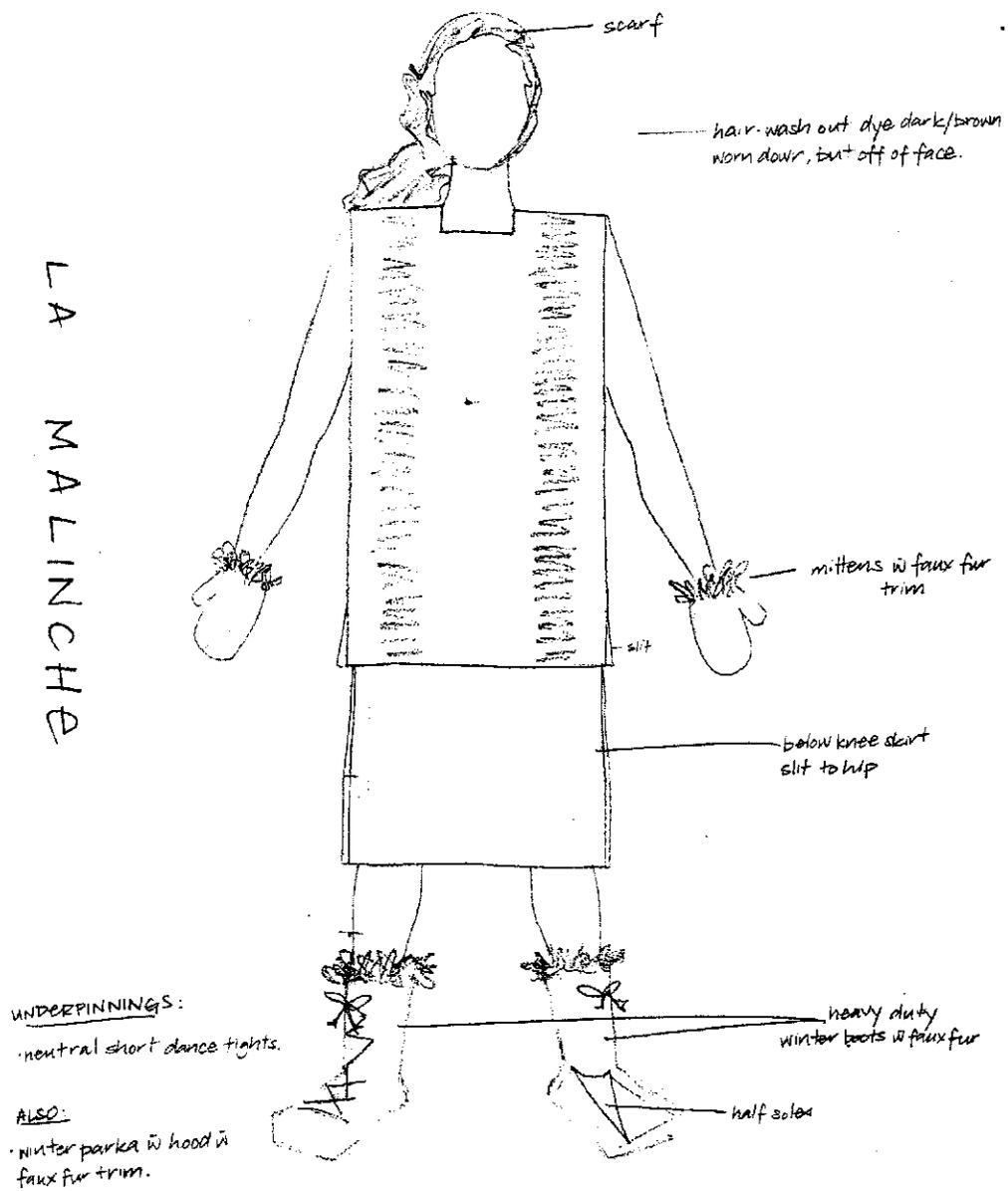


Fig. 18. Rebecca John. La Malinche's costume. Lethbridge, 2005.

This next figure shows the final costume design:



Fig. 19. Katherine Wasiak. "Picture 2". Via Marina. Lethbridge, 2005.

Once we had them in the basic costume, we then decided to study the artistic work of performing artist Guillermo Gomez Peña (a Mexican living in the United States) and Astrid Hadad (Mexican) as a reference for the costumes in picture 7. Basing their work on the symbols of the Mexican culture, both artists recreate a series of art work expressing political and social issues. For instance, in a photograph titled "The Postponed Event" along with Cuco Fusco, Gomez Peña dresses as an Aztec Indian holding a hamburger while Fusco, also dressed as an Indian, holds a Mickey Mouse in her hand creating a strong statement on the symbiosis between the American and the Mexican culture which exists nowadays. Another example is in the portrait of Gomez Peña dressed with the American Football harness, a Mexican Sombrero and a blond wig with the inscription on his stomach "I am not an Iraqi" as a protest of the racial events happening after September 11th, 2001 in New York.



Fig. 20. Eric Fogleman. "Guillermo Gomez-Peña". [n.d.]

Like Guillermo Gomez Peña, Astrid Hadad also combines symbolism through her costumes during her singing performances. She creates a unique style, filled with colorful costumes made up with hearts and eyes, cactus and pineapples, while she adopts a traditional posture of a ranchero singer. Inspired by Brecht and Weill, she becomes a woman in a man's world. She has stuffed "all of Mexican political and cultural history into a dress and laced it up with a feminist attitude" (City of women 1). Some described her presentations as "vulgar, ironical, crude or kitsch" (Zurita 1), others as "one of the most provocative stage acts..." (City of women 1), while Haddad states "the things I do are very natural, I am guided by intuition. What I do is a product of series of ideas and things that surround me." (Haddad 3) Although she doesn't consider herself a feminist, her work speaks in favor and in support of Mexican women. Described in the video [The Bleeding Heart](#), Astrid Haddad's work reflects the way Mexican women are: "Suffering, helpless, abandoned, and mistreated by life and by love" (Bogdanov).



Fig. 21. Mario Filipe Pires. "Astrid Hadad: Bushofóbica". Portugal, 2005.

Gomez Peña and Hadad create a unique symbolism through costume, portraying a political statement through their clothes. Because picture 7 was planned to be an exploration of the self in a symbolic form, I wanted to produce the same effect these artists create. I wanted to ridicule, to some extent, the women's image acquired in history as well as portraying the stereotypical mask used by the macho man. I wanted to transform the actors into a symbolic statement that would critique these stereotyped images. But our time was limited, so Rebecca ended up inserting some elements into the woman's and in the man's costume. Along with these inserted elements, the monitors placed on their chest would carry out an important transdisciplinary approach. While carrying the Canadian images by the Mexican man, and the Mexican images by the Canadian woman, their attire presents an understanding of a new lifestyle, of a new vision that will transform the women's and men's attitudes toward gender, the different cultures, and will also acknowledge technology as part of their selves.

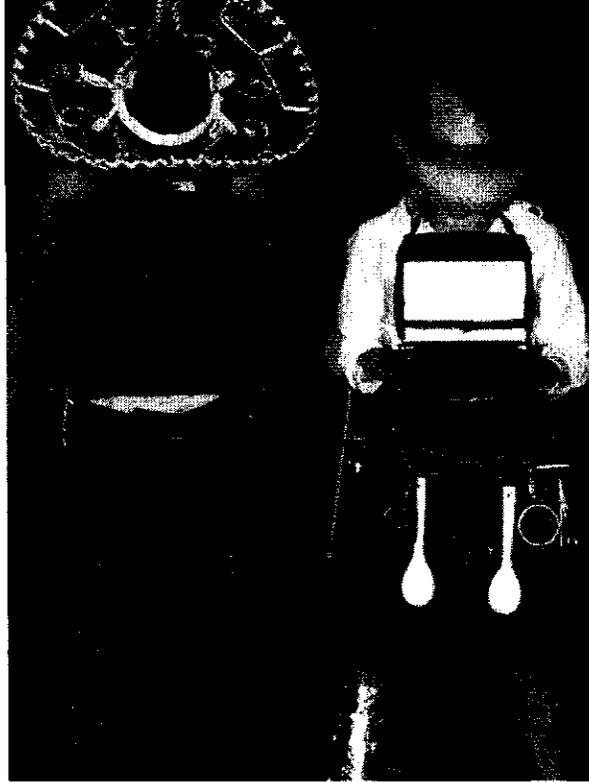


Fig. 22. Lily Marquez. "Woman and Man in Picture 7". Via Marina. Lethbridge, 2005.

We knew that the demands of the actions of each character were an important consideration in creating the costumes. However, we didn't know about the best materials to use for dance. In my eyes it was enough for them to be able to move. Yet I didn't think about the problems that a certain quality of fabric selected for the performers movement might create. For instance, the women's costume, a blue jean skirt to show the cowboy stereotype we proposed, was creating a distraction. While the woman rolled on the floor trying to create a smooth transition, the effect was opposite to this idea due to the roughness and stiffness of the material. Therefore we need to implement a new skirt with a different texture, which solved the problem. Though simple, the costumes represented the characters as best as possible.

As a final point in this chapter, the technical week came as a complete surprise to me since I was used to having to solve many of the elements in the last week before the presentations. The production meetings eliminated most of the issues related to the set. It was a pleasure to observe the crew carrying out their given tasks, doing them as best as possible. I must recognize the work of Charlotte Nixon, our stage manager who patiently stood by my side from the beginning of the process in September. Though she also had a difficult time trying to figure out my ideas, she gave herself over to this production. At first it was very difficult for me to hand over my ideas to her because of not being used to doing this. Yet she did a wonderful job managing this production and calming the nerves of a full room of demanding people.

The development of the production design provided another aspect to the transdisciplinary language established by the creative process in the previous chapter. We created a light plot to expose the core of the movement statement. We constructed a set based on installation art. We combined the languages of music and voice. We dressed performers in order to accentuate the cultural differences. Transdisciplinarity was present throughout this process as well. However, I could not manage to bring our transdisciplinary process into the final product. In many parts of the show, Via Marina came to be simply an interdisciplinary production. During this phase, I needed to solve rather than experiment. Though I tried to go between, beyond, and across, I had a deadline on the technical, performance, and scenographic issues that meant I set aside my experimentation to present a product as best as possible. However, it was a first step toward a long run of future transdisciplinary experimentations.

This time I learned to develop a theatrical language under the organization of a production team in a Canadian theatre. For this occasion, I learned new ways to replace ideas that could not be included in the final product for various reasons. Finding new ways to portray these ideas helped me develop my creativity and my skills as director. As theatrical director Anne Bogart says; “work with what you have right now. Work with the people around you right now. Work with the architecture you see around you right now” (155). As the performance dates approached, I allowed some ideas to be replaced, and eliminated some of the early thoughts I had about the script. This process of elimination and change resulted in an organic construction of the various elements in Via Marina.

5. Conclusions.

Throughout the two years of research and production I have constantly questioned the transdisciplinary nature of this project thinking that I was perhaps only creating an interdisciplinary play. As I mentioned in the introduction, interdiscipline is about integrating different disciplines for a common goal. Transdiscipline, on the other hand, is about going beyond and across the different disciplines, and my research seemed to show that transdiscipline was mainly associated with scientific areas. Working with a combination of New Media, Women's Studies and Dance was very familiar to me, and it was difficult for me to see the line that divided one discipline from the other. At times, the 'trans' effect I wanted to create seemed to be distant since I was only engaging in art and social disciplines. It wasn't until I saw the end product that I realized the transdisciplinary nature of my work. Coming from a theatre background it was normal to carry dramatic elements into the process. This confused me because theatre is by nature an interdisciplinary form. However, sitting through the final presentations I realized that the video interaction on stage and the whole creative process of the construction of Via Marina were of a transdisciplinary nature. This process caused a personal transgression made through the development of the structure, the creation of videos, the creation of the movement script, and the production design. By going through this process I learned to weave the visual, the corporal, the cultural and the personal concepts into a common language. This resulted in a transdisciplinary process.

In the final technical rehearsals of Via Marina, I could see in some of the scenes the transdisciplinary achievements. For instance, in Picture 6, Andres' video runs on the screen while the performers dance the dramatic situation of the video images. The

intimate projection developed a sense of solitude and hope while the live dancers expressed this feeling through movement, presenting two languages, video and dance, in a common situation. In picture 4, when the Nostalgia video ends, La Malinche enters carrying a suitcase that contains a monitor showing the same image as the larger screen: the shape of my hands in a flying bird. The idea was to transpose the huge image of the flying hands to a miniature image in La Malinche's suitcase creating a visual metaphor about taking Mexican culture in a small yet heavy suitcase to come to Canada. In a more personal way, it aimed to represent my idea of pulling out my strength from the screen to be able to bring it with me to Canada to help me overcome my fears. Though the idea sounded great, the reality was somehow different than what I imagined. The technical difficulties involved in inserting a heavy monitor into a moving suitcase did not help the aesthetics of this scene. However, for a brief period of time, picture 4 embodied a transdisciplinary concept through the interaction of video and actress. Finally, I believed that the best 'trans' moment was produced in Picture 7. La Malinche dances both on the stage and behind the screen where the video Neo-Tradition is projected, allowing her shadow to interact with the Mexican and Canadian images. Parallel to her solo dance, the couple is moving with the monitors attached to their chests. The Canadian woman's monitor projects the Mexican video while Mexican man's monitor projects the Canadian one. The dance presented by La Malinche moving across the screen juxtaposed with the couple created a strong statement about gender and cultural relationships. Though now I would shorten the scene to improve the pace, picture 7 was the beginning of an authentic example of transdisciplinary language.

As I watched the shows, observing the work done throughout a year, I saw some of my ideas come to life on the stage while others that were developed in my creative process did not get directly performed in the show, yet they eventually affected the final product. My transdisciplinary approach to performance creation contributes to new forms of theatrical expression by: 1. Including different disciplines from the beginning of the project. 2. Researching, 3. Experimenting, 4. Practicing, 5. Presenting and 6. Analyzing the making of a play. This led towards building an alternative theatrical expression. I was also extremely nervous as I was exposing an aspect of my persona, and yet I knew I had to do it. As Anne Bogart says “A director cannot hide from an audience because intentions are always visible, palpable. You cannot hide” (119). Knowing this, I felt very nervous about the audience’s reaction because of the experimental language created for this show, the non-linear actions throughout the play, the fact that the scenes and characters could use two more weeks worth of work, and also because this was my first production as director in Lethbridge, Canada. Fortunately, after the second show presentation there was a “Question and Answer” session, which gave us a chance to listen to the audience’s opinion. The designers, performers, and I began a discussion about stereotypes, the creative process, and the fears and expectations that every member of the play had. I heard the comments of some viewers that were touched by the show, while others asked me about the abstract concepts of it. By having this discussion I realized that the work we had undertaken through this period of time was not in vain since it awakened an interest in experimental theatre within the audience.

During my research I tried to go beyond Women’s Studies, New Media and Theatre Arts without losing their core, yet I could not reach a full understanding of

Women's Studies. And I have just begun to explore the potential applications of New Media in live stage performances. I still have a lot of work to do in order to create a fully transdisciplinary product. Throughout this research I realized that I needed more time. More time to have a better manipulation of the video language, time to keep learning about the women's movement, time to engage a group of artists in my ideas, time to construct a script, time to understand the Canadian way of living and to reflect on my position as a Mexican. However, the pressure developed by the shortness of time pushed us to come up with Via Marina, where we managed to interweave different disciplines creating a new product. I learned to take risks that brought both faults and achievements. During this time of theoretical, creative, and productive practice I tried to weave different methodologies to develop a new form of theatrical expression through videos, dance and feminism. This process marked the beginning of a journey amongst the Theatrical Arts and the transdisciplinary movement. I know that my approach is still an early phase of development. It was the beginning of a new stage in my formation as an artist.

Notes

¹ Theoretical physicist at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris, President and founder of the International Center for Transdisciplinary Research and Studies and co-founder with René Berger of the Study Group on Transidisciplinarity at UNESCO in 1992, and is the author of “Transdisciplinarity: Manifesto”.

² Early type of photography that came as a result of other camera experimentation and “was one of the first to permanently record and affix an image with exposure time compatible with portrait photography, and became the first commercially used photographic process” (Daguerreotype 1).

³ The Brechtian A-effect consists of turning an object from something ordinary and immediately accessible into something peculiar, striking, and unexpected. By alienating (not simply rejecting) iconicity, by foregrounding expectation of resemblance the ideology of gender is exposed and thrown back to the spectator (Aston 56).

⁴ Traditional plays born with the Spanish conquest that talk about the birth of Jesus. Because it comes from a mestizo sources, these plays are open to create political issues. For example, instead of the devil, some would put the actual President of Mexico.

⁵ Seller and McCollum are the producers of the Broadway show Rent, Binder of Guys and Dolls and Roth of Who’s afraid of Virginia Wolf?

⁶ Jungian analysis – a method of psychological treatment where the patient strives to understand the internal, often mythic images in his thoughts and dreams.

⁷ Capital of the Aztec empire when the Spanish arrived.

⁸ An Aztec ruler during the Spanish Conquest.

⁹ Macho- Spanish noun referring to a strong or exaggerated sense of masculinity, physical strength, virility, domination of woman, and aggressiveness (“Machismo” 1).

¹⁰ Mexican cowboy.

¹¹ Mexican Gangster.

¹² Mayan traditional shirt.

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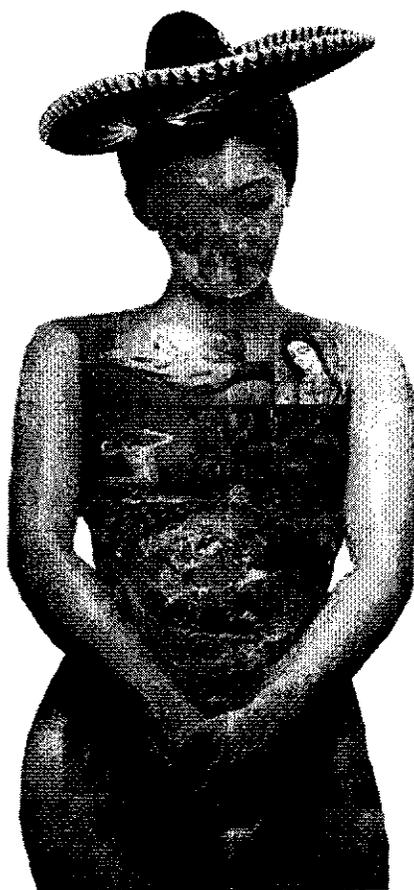
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Appendix

Via Marina: A Woman's Journey

By Lily Marquez



(Poster design by Lily Marquez)

Cast:

La Malinche

Canadian Woman

Mexican Man

This version was conceived by the creative work of actors Christina Calgaro, Amanda Stephenson, and Nathan Loitz as well as by designers Rebecca John, Ben Hart and Alex Beavis and by the support and observations of our Stage Manager Charlotte Nixon during the TheatreXtra presentation from November 3rd to 5th, 2005 at the David Spinks Theatre
– University of Lethbridge.

Set.

In the center back of the stage area there is a rock with a white chair is sitting on it. On the back of the chair hanging from the roof there is rug functioning as the middle screen where the titles and images are going to take place. Later on, another two rugs will be put on the rope to widen it.

On the left side of the stage there are 9 red chairs and 1 white making a triangle shape lighted by a bulb.

On the right side of the stage there are 9 green chairs and 1 white gathered in a pile lighted by a bulb.

A TV monitor is set far back behind the chairs and rock. A projector is set a few feet back of the rug.

Costume.

Malinche: Beneath a beige Huipil [Indian Mexican blouse] she wears a loose yet tight dark green dress to below her knees. She is barefoot.

Woman: A white shirt open and held with a knot in the front. A red bra. Blue skirt above her knees with a long wide slit in it. Character dance shoes.

Man: Loose baggy jeans. White undershirt.

Lights.

Lights designed with blues, reds, ambers, and whites. The bulbs on the left and right side stage were used in and out of the scenes.

Picture 1. Not All Plants Need a Lot of Water

Video shows title on screen and TV. Simultaneously, the recording of voices from women and men talking about their views on relationships are played on the speakers.

Lights on the rock where La Malinche is sitting.

Woman is sitting showing her back in the white chair where the red chairs are placed (left side). Man is sitting showing his back in the white chair where the green chairs are (right side).

Malinche: *I was born under Mexican skies.
Warm nest of legacies beneath the earth.
A continuous heritage of a life style I did not choose.
A land where tragedies, miracles, accidents, corruption, justice - meet the requirements to celebrate life.
A society where the word "Familia" is defined by protection and love. It is the law.
A place where we find ourselves lost in the multitude.
Where the line between the rich and the poor is clear and strong.
A country where voices can be heard by millions and yet be forgotten by the next day.
My land, my streets, my air, my mountains, my people, my traditions, my self.*

*I need to go the distance.
I need to see who's behind the frontier.
To see what's happening across the horizon.
Distance to understand, to grow.
A place where I can start over.
An Answer. An experience. A story.*

Who am I?



[Photo by Katherine Wasiak]

I will be you.

You

Will

Be

Me.

Lights out.

Video shows next title on screen and TV. Off.

Picture 2. **Tequila.**

Lights on for the Mexican side.

Music on. The score is an edition of popular Canadian and Mexican music.

When Man dances it is a Mexican selection. When Woman dances
music will be Canadian Selections.

[This time we used Guillermo Velazquez, Shania Twain, Pedro Infante, Jennifer Hanson,
King Chango, The New Meanies, Los de Abajo and Jann Arden selections]

Light will illuminate the Canadian and Mexican side leaving a dark space in the middle
of the stage.

Man and Woman simultaneously dance on their sides of the world.

Music ends.

Woman and Man dance together without music. Fall on the floor facing each other.

Lights out.

Video shows next title on screen and TV. Off.

Picture 3. **Celebrating diversity**

Lights on center stage.

Music on with the song “Perhaps” by Lila Downs.

Couple dance salsa exposing a game of “I want, but not really”.

When music is ending, they end up together.

Music ends.

Man goes for the white chair on the Canadian side and sets it on the center back.

Woman: (After sitting down) *I do*

Man then goes for the white chair on the Mexican side and sets it besides the Woman.

He puts on a dress jacket.

Man: (After sitting down) *Acepto.*

La Malinche then starts the next text changing her position in the chair with each citation.

Meanwhile Man and Woman simultaneously create a score of action
representing the happy life a married couple has at the beginning
and how this happy feeling starts to vanish with the daily routine.

Malinche: *Man and Woman dreamt that god was dreaming of them.*

You must be people, said the Old Man (Na'pi) to the clay.

In every human mind there are areas of ignorance. With some it is mathematics, with others mechanics or linguistics or with some even science. Within the zone which everyone possesses there is a room for almost infinite distortion.

Woman: SEX

Malinche: *Foreigners bore me, Miss...*

She made him roar and shout...

It is enough to travel by land from Mexico City to New York to notice a quality ruined in both countries. The North American ruins are mechanical, are ruins of promises done and fulfilled and soon left by the time and time in enormous scrap iron accumulations, cemeteries of automobiles, asphyxiated cities and factories of the origin, promised vital projects and soon left or destroyed by other projects natural or human, but always near the glances of innocence only known to identify with a perpetually original force. The paradox of the promises in Mexico is that when being fulfilled, they are destroyed and when remaining unfulfilled, live eternally. Canada, where are you?

...but of course, men wrote it down. How were they to know?...

What can we know of women but that women are philosophy in the kitchen?

If we are those who we feel different, what makes us different? and what are these differences?

Hope as the most persistent of mirages.

We are alone. The solitude, bottom where the anguish appears, began the day in which we came off ourselves from the maternal scope and we felt in a weird and hostile world

To live alone, without witnesses. In the solitude one only dares to be.

*Just Keep swimming...keep moving forward...rely on instinct...your sense of direction...don't look back or forward...there isn't time for foolish speculation...
No more time, rest.*

The three characters put their heads down.

An electronic music starts accentuating the routine of each character.

Woman and Man create actions on diagonals, while La Malinche walks straight.

La Malinche then turns to the Woman's place and sings.

Woman takes over the Man's chair and starts doing his chores while Man goes to the

Woman's space.

Both of them are using one part of the screen as a cloth in their different activities.

When music is over, Woman and Man face each other.



[Photo by Lily Marquez]

Woman takes away the cloth and puts it on the cable along with La Malinche who is singing to her.

Man exits.

When the screen is up, Woman takes her hand to her heart and hands it to La Malinche who receives it.

Women exits.

Lights out.

Video shows next title on screen and TV.

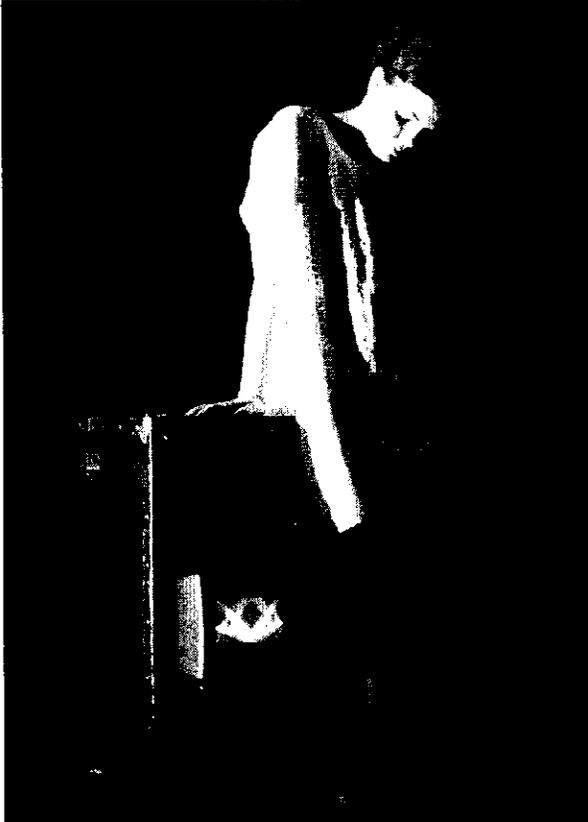
Picture 4. Nostalgia

Video on.

The video shows in a collage style the Mexican thoughts of La Malinche. Along with the voice of Lila Downs whose singing voice describes the time that goes by as well as how much she wants to cry because she is very far away from the land she was born in, images of hands, feet, eyes and beaches are reflected on the three pieces screen set at the center of the stage.

At the end of the video, a hand animation cut in the form of a bird starts flying. La Malinche enters carrying a suitcase. She stands in the middle of the screen and takes the image to put it then in her suitcase.

She grabs it and walks now showing the side of the suitcase where the monitor is, showing the image of the big screen.



[Photo by Katherine Wasiak]

She stands in the right corner of the stage then exits.

Lights out.

Video shows the title of the next scene. Off.

Picture 5. **Dame todo el Power**

Lights on.

Man and Woman enter running from each corner into the middle of the stage where as if by accident they bump into each other, fall.

Then they present a choreography expressing a fight.

One pulls the other in different directions creating a visual tension in their bodies.

Shifting weights into one and other.

Jumping, running, falling, clapping.



[Photo by Katherine Wasiak]

Then the Woman goes to get a right green chair carrying it to the front of the right side stage. She uses the chair as an extension of her body simultaneously saying:

Woman: *Battle.*

Man runs to get one of the red chairs from the left side stage and set it on the left side stage creating a movement action while saying:

Man: *Challenge.*

Woman gets another green chair says the text then man reacts by getting a red chair and saying the text.

One after the other, creating different movement actions while saying these next lines while increasing their speed.

Woman will be setting the green chair in a perfect vertical line on the right side of the stage.

Man will set the red chairs in a disordered pattern on the left side of the stage.

Woman: *Us.*

Man: *Talk.*

Woman: *More time.*

Man: *Enough.*

Woman: *Tension.*

Man: *Me.*

Woman: *Separate.*

Man: *Stop.*
Woman: *Escape.*
Man: *You.*
Woman: *Confront.*
Man: *More?*
Woman: *Pain.*
Man: *Rage.*
Woman: *Leave.*
Man: *Us.*
Woman: *Concentrate. (Stands looking at the man with the white chair)*
Man: *Again?*

Man looks at her and walks toward the perfect green chairs. He pushes them as far back
as he can.

Woman then takes one of the right ones into the right side of the stage.

Lights out.

Chairs are removed by Man and crew putting them in the starting position
while Woman sits on the right side of the stage with her laptop on letting the light of the
computer light her face.

Video shows next title on screen and TV.

*Picture 6. **Windows***

Music on, featuring at the beginning a mixing of voices and sounds fading out into “The
Hill” by Load.

Kelly Andres video begins showing a repeated scene of a trapeze artist. Then an astronaut
appears giving entrance to a bird in the sky fading into a woman’s breast. Then a
juxtaposition of a woman’s shadow and a bird flying in the sky to finally end the five
minutes video in a flag shadow.

Light will be focusing on the bottom of the stage to see the dancers move.
When music begins, Woman dances exposing how she is dragged into a tech world. Man
is just sitting down facing the back of the stage. La Malinche enters looking at both of
them and collapses making movement actions on the floor.

Woman rolls hitting the Man's chair who falls rolling into the front of the right side of the stage.



[Photo by Katherine Wasiak]

La Malinche and Woman dance together while Man snatches the laptop from the Woman.

Man is sitting with the computer while both Women dance on the left side stage. At the end of this scene, Woman takes the laptop back and circles the stage then Man catches up with her and pulls it away.

Lights out.

Video shows next title on screen and TV. Off.

Picture 7. **Neo-Tradition**

La Malinche is sitting on the rock, Man and Woman are standing on the left side of the stage.

Music starts with a mixture composed of Canadian and Mexican songs. Crew enters carrying and making the custom changes for Woman and Man.

Man will have a monitor on his chest plugged to a VHS player, two strips of black fabric that is holding two lines of screws and on his head a big black and shiny sombrero as worn by the typical Charro Mexicano.

Woman will be wearing a DVD player on her chest, a cowboy hat, a belt made of kitchen utensils like spoons, knives, etc. and on her feet a silver strap resembling a cactus.

Video starts on screen and TV when crew enters. It shows two images that simultaneously expose Lethbridge streets on the left side of the screen and Mexican streets on the right side. Man will be showing only the Canadian part while Woman will be having the Mexican part.

For her part, La Malinche is sitting on the side of the rock taking the “huipil” off, and combing her hair while staying in her under dress.

Music changes into Son A Tamayo by Arturo Márquez - harp by Lidia Tamayo. Throughout this music, La Malinche presents a dance interacting with the screen, Man and Woman.

The couple is moving in slow motion creating actions of distant hugs and kisses to each other.

Contractions and stretching of their bodies.

When this music ends, La Malinche falls to the floor, Man and Woman stand turning their backs to the audience

–the three of them breathing strongly to the beat of a ‘ping pong ball sound’.

When Carla Bruni’s song starts, Man and Woman exit leaving La Malinche dancing on the right side of the stage.



[Photo by Katherine Wasiak]

End of song, end of video, La Malinche is lying with her legs pointing to the ceiling,
Lights out.

Video shows next title on screen and TV.

Picture 8. **Not All Plants Need a Lot of Sun**

La Malinche, Man and Woman are lying on the floor in the end position of

La Malinche in the last scene.

The three characters are dancing without music - in unison.

Creating variations, lines, circles.

As the choreography goes by, the three of them will approach each other.

Falling, holding, carrying.

The last part of this sequence remarks on the relationship of La Malinche and the couple

to finally

end up laying on the floor center stage.

La Malinche then takes a part of the screen and covers the couple. She then goes back

and covers herself with a winter jacket.

Music on featuring Please Horn by Maria Joao.

Man and woman start cuddling under the fabric which will turn into a fight for getting the fabric,
leaving the Woman uncovered:

Woman: *I have to wake up...a dreamt dreamer dreams dreamers...*

La Malinche pulls the other side of the screen covering the Woman while saying:

Malinche: *And I step down the plane finding myself in the cold Canadian grounds.
What is Canada? Is it the land where the crumbs of every culture
gathered? Could it be the passion gathered in a hockey puck? Could it be
the smile in the children's face as they throw snow balls at each other?
Are you in the strong wind caressing the prairies? Where is your
Revolution? Where is your Independence? Where is your tyranny?
Where is the pollution? Where are the street markets? Where are you
Canada? Are you hidden in my thoughts? Where have you placed yourself
in my history?*

Throughout this text, Man and Woman are creating shapes and forms with the fabric
moving to the opposites sides (Man on the left side, Woman on the right)
while La Malinche is sitting in the rock.

Man: *I wake up...*

Woman: *I have to wake up...*

The couple begin throwing the fabric from one side to the other side of the stage.

Malinche: *I find myself walking in perfect streets drawn by a recent history – A
history drawn by your hands. Inviting me to be part of you're landscapes,
on bringing my history into yours.*

Man: *I have to wake up...*

Woman: (To the man) *You have to wake up...*

The couple stands showing their backs while creating a knot to join the screens together.

Malinche: (To the audience) *And here you are - Sitting on the other side of the
border, feeling comfortable, cozy - Looking inside me. This time I am not*

invisible. This time, you and I are rivers representing north and south.

"We are the river toward a sea".

They then caress each other without touching, creating waves through their bodies,
circling each other.

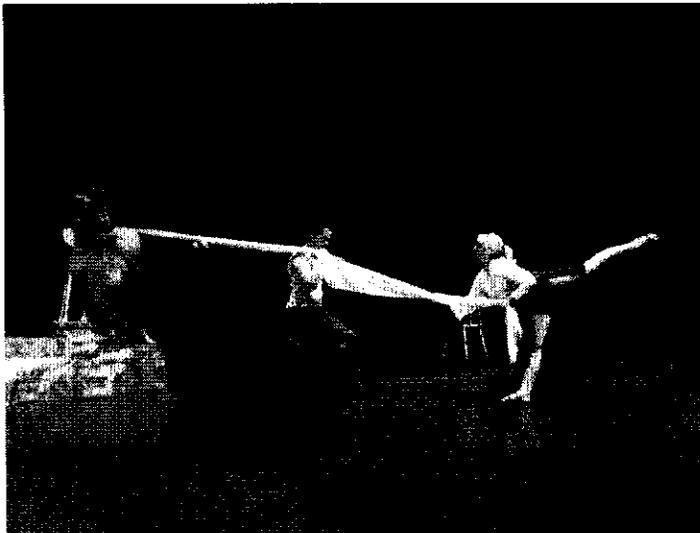
La Malinche takes the fabric and throws it to them as if she was throwing a net to catch
fish pulling them to the rock.

Malinche: *And in this new journey, (To the Woman) you will be you;*

Woman falls to the back of the rock.

Malinche: *(To the Man) I will be me.*

Man: *I have to wake up...*



[Photo by Lily Marquez]

Man falls behind the rock.

Video projection of the Mexican and Canadian flags is shown on the screen and the TV.

La Malinche is setting up the cactus at the bottom of her chair, and a
bonsai maple tree on the chair.

She sits on the rock beside the plants looking at them while covering her
head.

Lights out.

END.

DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DRAMATIC ARTS

FACULTY

Ron Chambers, BA, MFA
 Robert Cousins, BA, MA, MFA
 Douglas Curtis, Theatre Diploma, BFA, MFA
 James Dobbin (Calgary Campus), BA, BEd, MFA
 Lisa Doolittle, BA, MA
 Richard Epp, BA (Hon), MFA
 John Farwell, BA (Hon), MFA
 Jeff Goffin (Calgary Campus), BA, BEd, MA
 Gail Hanrahan, BA, MFA
 Nicholas Hanson, BA (Hon), BEd, MA
 David Loney (Edmonton Campus), BFA, MFA
 Douglas MacArthur, BA, MFA
 Richard O'Brien, BEd, MA, MFA, MBA
 David Owen, BA (Hon), MA
 Brian Parkinson, BA, MA, PCE
 Gerald Potter (Edmonton Campus), BA, MFA
 John Poulsen, BEd, MA, PhD
 Leslie Robison-Greene, BA, MFA
 Shelley Scott, BA, MA, PhD (on leave)
 Ches Skinner, BA, BA(Ed), MA, PhD, FRSA
 David Spinks, Professor Emeritus
 Sara Stanley, BA, MFA (on leave)
 Gerry Unger
 Jim Wills, BA, MFA

STAFF

Arlene Curran, Scene Shop Assistant
 Patricia Foster, Administrative Assistant
 Rosemarie S. Gattiker, Mgr. of FOH Services
 David Green, Technician
 Teresa Heyburn, Costume Shop Manager
 David J. Hignell, Technical Director
 Lynn Hopkins, Costume Shop Assistant
 John A. Johnston, Properties Master
 Jeff LeGrand, Technician
 James McDowell, Master Carpenter
 Kelly Roberts, Technician (on leave)
 Lynne Schaaf, Technician

STUDENT ASSISTANTS

Sebastian Abboud, Scene Shop
 Melinda Appenheimer, FOH Assistant
 Jenn Campbell, Box Office
 Carly Derksen, Monitor
 Melissa Duca, Box Office
 Jamie Dunsdon, Archives
 Ryan Godson, Audio/Visual
 Jill Greschner, Concert Stage Manager
 Shannon Hagel, Box Office
 Ben Hart, Monitor, FR Assistant
 Charity McPetridge, Monitor
 Sarah Nelson, Costume Shop
 Devon Pollock, Box Office
 MaryLou Roberts, Box Office
 Micayla Rougeau, Box Office
 Kim Stadelmann, Box Office
 Valerie Stanzl, Costume Shop
 Krista Vander Neut, Properties Assistant
 Shawn Wagar, Audio Assistant
 Bekk Wells, Scene Shop



VIA MARINA

BY LILY MARQUEZ



Director:	Lily Marquez
Stage Manager:	Charlotte Nixon
Set and Costume Design:	Rebecca John (supervised by John Farwell)
Lighting Design:	Alex Beavis
Sound Design:	Ben Hart
Movement Coach:	Lisa Doolittle
Videos:	Lily Marquez and Kelly Andres

CAST

Christina Calgaro Canadian Woman
 Nathan Loitz..... Mexican Man
 Amanda Stephenson La Malinche*

The creation of this show was collaborative and cast members made major creative contributions to the production.

*Based on a Mexican historical character best known as a traitor, a whore, and in the past decade defined as a survivor, 'La Malinche' was a Mexican Indian originally named Malintzin. Her own people sold her and gave her into the arms of Hernán Cortes who baptized her as Doña Marina during the Spanish conquest of Mexico in 1519. She learned Spanish and was the translator for Cortes as well as his concubine. She was the bridge for the Spanish to conquer Mexico. Today the word "Malinchista" means to be a lover of foreigners, a traitor, and is somehow given to Mexican immigrants who reside in foreign countries.

The use of cameras or recording devices of any kind is not permitted. Please turn off all pagers, cell phones and watch alarms.

This performance is about 60 minutes in length, without an Intermission.

PRODUCTION STAFF

Artistic Director for TheatreXtra Lisa Doolittle
Technical Director David Hignell
Head Shop Carpenter James McDowell
Head Stage Carpenter David Green
Scene Shop Assistant Arlene Curran
Set-Up and Strike Crew Alex Wylie, Stefanie French,
..... Justin Carriere, Lauren Bowman
Properties Master John A. Johnston
Costume Shop Manager Teresa Heyburn
Costume Shop Assistant Lynn Hopkins
Show Head of Wardrobe Jordon Navratil
Head of Sound Jeff LeGrand
Sound Operator Michael Fitzgerald
Projections Courtney Peterson
Head Electrician Lynne Schaaf
Light Board Operator Nancy Bridal
Electrics Crew Michael Fitzgerald, Riley Ohler,
..... Jen McNeilly, Adam Beauchesne
Poster Design Lily Marquez
Poster Distribution Ben Hart
Public Relations Katherine Wasiak
Manager of FOH Services Rosemarie S. Gattiker
Student House Manager Heather Haugen
Box Office Jenn Campbell, Melissa Ducs, Shannon Hagel,
..... Devon Pollock, MaryLou Roberts, Micayla Rougeau, Kim Stadelmann

Feature Music from: Guillermo Velazquez, Shania Twain, Pedro Infante, Jennifer Hanson, King Chango, The New Meanies, Los de Abajo, Jann Arden, Lila Downs, Moodymann, Metric, Load, Be Good Tanyas, Delinquent Habits, Lidia Tamayo, Carla Bruni, Maria Joao and Amigos Invisibles.

Voices of: Jouelle Brick, Marty Blank, Nicole Seitz, Taryn Nader, Brent Thomas.

Texts from: Lily Marquez, Octavio Paz, Carlos Fuentes, Eduardo Galeano, Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, Blackfoot Genesis, Leonard Cohen, Audrey Thomas, Christopher Dewdney, KD Lang.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

To Gael Marquez, my son. Ai lov iu.

"We are alone. The solitude, bottom where the anguish appears, began the day in which we came off ourselves from the maternal scope and we felt in a weird and hostile world." *Octavio Paz*

Via Marina describes the journey of a woman crossing two cultures to understand her true self. Portraying the thinking voice that haunts us in our everyday lives, La Malinche unravels her spirit in the shape of a Man and Woman. They present a classical journey through history and in our countries - Loud ideas that transform "the self" into a screen, into a word, into a dance, into a shadow, into a love story. This work is the outcome of almost two years of study and experimentation on being in culture, in gender and in my personal life between Mexico and Canada; as Paz once said: I will be You... You will be I.

Lisa Doolittle - You opened a path for me. Thank you.

Lidia Tamayo, Arturo Márquez, Carol Williams, Shelley Scott, Denton Fredrickson, Janice Rahn, Don Gill, Michael Campbell, Mary Kavanagh, Byron Chief Moon, Loxá Tamayo, Doug MacArthur, International Council for Canadian Studies, Patrice Jegou, Rebecca John, Ben Hart, Devon Pollock, Candace Lewko, Jouelle Brick and the cast and crew.

Thank you all for getting on board.

Lily Marquez

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Len Barnes, choreography
Loxá Tamayo, Mexican video capture, photographs
University of Lethbridge School of Graduate Studies
CKXU 88.3FM

You are invited to stay after the show on Friday for an informal discussion with the artistic team from Via Marina (director-creator, performers, and designers). Via Marina is an original theatre creation, and both the creators and you - the audience - have much to gain from a dialogue about the work.

Lily Marquez is pursuing a Masters of Arts in Drama with the title "Transdiscipline: In Search of New Forms of Scenic Expression." Via Marina is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the MA.

Graduate Supervisor: Lisa Doolittle. Committee members: Shelley Scott, Dept. of Theatre and Dramatic Arts, and Janice Rahn, Faculty of Education (Art).