

# dFERIA

2024

MARTXOA  
11-14  
MARZO

DONOSTIA / SAN SEBASTIÁN

XXX. ARTE ESZENIKOEN FERIA  
FERIA DE ARTES ESCÉNICAS

MAHAIAK

MESAS



Ane Pikaza

UTOPIA

Antolatzailea / Organizador

Babesleak / Patrocinadores



Laguntzaileak / Colaboradores



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## "MIRADAS CRUZADAS THE PERFORMING ARTS IN ACTION" CONCLUSIONS

“**Theatre, heritage and shared legacy in the era of artificial intelligence**”, moderated by **Ramiro Osorio**, Director of the Teatro Mayor in Bogotá and with the following participants: **Ana Graciani**, Dramatist and Institutional Director for Performing Arts at the SGAE, **Gianni Forte**, Venice Biennale, **Santiago Herrero**, Cultural Director of the AECID, **Jesús Cimarro**, President of Pentación, **Gonzalo Ubani**, Director of the Teatro Cuyás and **Paco Negro**, Stage Director.

And “**Why is dance needed on the programme?**”, with the choreographer **María Pagés** as moderator, and the following participants: **Daniel Abreu**, choreographer, **Iratxe Ansa**, choreographer, **Goyo Montero**, choreographer, **Patricia Guerrero**, Director of Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía and **Paraskevi Tektonidou**, Athens Festival.

This gathering directed by the professor of Spanish literature, poet and playwright **El Arbi El Harti** and organized within the framework of dFERIA, by the María Pagés Choreographic Center of Fuenlabrada and Donostia Kultura, at the Teatro Victoria Eugenia, brought together figures from the world of theatre and dance to champion the role of the living arts in a world in which they are intriguingly interlinked. The arts not only capture our human essence, but also inspire and enrich other artistic disciplines, and come together in this regard with the shared goal of safeguarding their future and all that implies, by preserving their three essential elements: stage, performance and audience, with dFERIA as their constant ally, valuing the efforts of each.

The panel participants debating theatre give voice to its dynamic, offering a general overview of the world of performance, based on the aims of a dynamic society.

However, despite the responsibilities imposed by a dynamic and changing society, where everything is dystopian or fake, we need to reflect on: Why do we make theatre? Amid pandemics, infinite pain and, in short, a limited society in a world which is hard to put right, the essential actions in this regard take the form of five (5) ideas to reflect on the performing arts, as an event involving audience and performers, to combat the daily monotony of a society of loggerheads:

1. Define the model we wish to give to these institutions that we run: financial, social and environmental sustainability; giving theatre fully green credentials, an initiative in pursuit of a different, interactive, artistic space, but one which is above all environmentally friendly.

2. Provide forums for the creation and development of thought to impact on new citizens. Theatre thus fulfils a social function, by giving voice to issues which are typically ignored or disregarded by the world.

3. Lend them recognition within the context of essential arts, as established by UNESCO. There are two types here: as a cultural element recognising traditions, oral expressions and social customs; and the whole cultural legacy of each region.

4. A reflection on how the performing arts help us build our truth, and so impact on cultural goods and services on equal terms.

5. An attempt through these conditions of the arts to create a sense of peace and dialogue, as there is no future without truth.

For the Spanish stage, theatres and productions, a problem arises as to how they should adapt their structure, given the incompatibility between tradition and the establishment of sustainable spaces for the benefit of the environment.

Adapting such settings has a cost for the sake of sustainability and efficiency in terms of energy savings. To begin with, a revolutionary language is proposed, for a sector which needs to be managed through the implementation of a joint agreement with public authorities. This transition must be urgent and immediate; the role of artistic venues must be exemplary in the eyes of our society.

There is currently a dispute as to the destruction of years of historical architecture to lend sustainability to this concept of conservation. This model likewise demands that theatres for the new era have their roots in the community, giving it an active and conscious role in the performing arts. Venues must be open to the public.

And so the questions would be: How to make theatre, fill it with laughter, tears and the expression of truth, through the cracks and wounds of society?... This is unquestionably driven by the vehicle of genre. Which thus gives rise to further questions: what are the guiding principles of artistic directors or producers in making the performing arts a living force? What story do we want to tell? Should we listen to society? Should we rely only on rational, thinking heads to create what we aim to convey? This is a huge responsibility.

We are living in a world where productivity as an approach denies the impulses of creativity, and since the pandemic the importance of culture and education has been undermined, seeing them as non-essential, a perspective which gives rise to the following query for performers: How important is theatre, and why are culture and creativity not viewed as essential and necessary? How important is theatre as a point of creation? What actions should we take to make contemporary theatre necessary?

How can we bring about theatre projects that are a challenge to produce? The context of theatre right now is like the Trojan horse, with performers challenging and exploring ideas, creating and recreating this imaginary world linked to a utopia.

"Theatre can invent a platform to move, inspire and critique reality." This claim defines itself as a space to champion dynamics of power, to diversify the productions on offer for all audiences, idioms, disciplines, as well as the representation of equality.

Touring theatre projects require a dynamic of equality, with dramatists and directors demanding 50/50 involvement for men and women. Meanwhile, our changing society calls for a blended model giving voice to the current upsurge in productions written by women. This last aspect becomes even more relevant in the performing arts, thus demanding the involvement of both public and private sectors, with clear rules for both parties. There must likewise be joint responsibility in line with the rapid development of a new era, based on the principle of greater investment to create a network of grassroots dialogue, despite regional structures.

In conclusion, the participants make the following proposals in response to these questions and expectations

- Espouse the environmental movement.
- Equality in productions (mixed model).
- Support up-and-coming youngsters and offer greater rewards for talent.
- Conduct cultural tourism in the hollowed-out regions of Spain, while also taking theatre to accessible and convergent stages.
- Review the SDGs.
- Sustainability in theatre productions

Theatre was the last of the arts to enter the modern era, bearing in mind that it is the heir of a nineteenth-century concept which has made it hard to balance the aspects of what it is for and how can it be profitable, demanding a reflection on its survival and the need to open up to the audience and offer them an experience of unique connection.

The initial position of the professionals from the sector invited to take part on the **dance discussion panels**, on 10 March 2024, is that in order to keep the flame of dance alive as an artistic expression, the analysis must focus on the difficulties faced, in order to improve these aspects and maintain the utopian idea of humanity giving voice to the language of the body in motion.

The underlying assumption that we are utopian beings, that we keep the flame of dance burning as an artistic expression, faces challenges in Spain, given the mismatch between the profile and recognition of this art form and the rights and grants available to dance companies. The fabric of dance is patchy, and it still finds it hard to open up space in theatre seasons. We can draw on data to confirm this downward trend. In 1999, there were 4,362 dance performances in Spain, while to give a more recent figure, in 2022 there were 1,820. This gives rise to a question: Why do we need dance on the programme? The world of creativity, production and distribution, and ultimately promotion, is being hollowed out. These factors could offer a response to the question, and open up new expectations and uncertainties, such as: Do we understand dance as a profession with all its nuances? We must then define dance in the practical sense to move beyond the current situation:

- It is a necessity and a non-verbal means of artistic communication.
- It forms part of our regions' cultural identity.
- It represents bodily and social identity.
- It speaks of diversity and folk traditions.
- It is a lifestyle in which the dancer is a survivor who goes beyond reason and commitment and a love of their art.

How should we explain dance in order to draw society in? There must be a routine to emphasise its art, forging links with the audience, creating a connection between performers and spectators, as well as creating a stable structure as a lasting company with dance on the programme. However, this unfortunately depends on bureaucratic legal structures which sever its ties to culture.

Despite the artistic standards attained in Spain, there is no national agreement or framework governing culture; the lack of structures prevents dance from growing. Meanwhile, political structures affect the development of dance, by viewing culture not as the property of all, but for political purposes. In general, this country lacks a powerful cultural transformation drawing on dance itself in order progressively to create, and hence forge a deeper relationship with audiences. In short, the system is on its last legs, and it is the task of creative minds, as a sector, to rethink the system and adapt it in line with current needs.

Dance has become a way of making art a mere survivor, since we have adapted to the system and lost impetus. This is a widespread reality in Europe, with a drop in the number of performances, increasing the cost of developing the form.

In order to explain dance through education at every level we need to:

- Emphasise active sponsors.
- Take dance to divergent audiences, arouse interest through different viewers.
- Create audiences in schools, which demands balanced programmes in terms of the public.
- Create fields of dance research.
- Create an alternative discourse; we aim to be modern and to change the way we do things.
  - Establish dance in educational terms, giving it awareness as a unique art form on the curriculum, separating its teaching out from other arts, so as to put down roots from childhood onwards.
- Set up budgets at public and private institutions for dancers with set contracts and decent salaries.
- Establish dance as an agent of change and the intrinsic values of humanity.
- Work towards one single goal: identity and continuity to give dance a viable future.
- Create marketing strategies for dance schools and companies.
- Set up open days to sign up new dance performers.
- Create a grants system allowing events to be planned with sustainable, long-term budgets.
- Establish balance and continuity in the structure of dance event programmes.

"The dance of the future has no boundaries, is destined to open up new forms of performance, inspiring everything but indifference; it is an invitation, an appeal to collaboration with other bodies". We can only maintain it by tying it in with the real world, facing up to risks and the loss of its viability. That is where our universal challenge lies.