

Salir a la calle: Calàbria 2005 / Hospital 2026

Antonio Ortega reconstructs *Salir a la calle y disparar al azar* [Going out into the street and shooting at random], an exhibition by David G. Torres

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Concètric

There is a concept developed by the art critic Catherine Millet that fascinates and often guides me. It is a gesture she calls *l'écart*, which adds determination and personality to the act of making art through artistic practices that are fully aware of the tradition to which they belong, yet introduce a deviation, a modest yet significant displacement.

These variations become particularly relevant when they intensify or exaggerate one of the hallmarks of the original model. One example is going from Pollock's dripping technique, letting drops fall from the brushes, to Katharina Grosse's use of an industrial paint gun connected to an air compressor as a painting tool. In my opinion, Grosse's gesture intensifies the same principle.

In late-1990s Barcelona, Luisa Ortínez's *Se Alquila* [For Rent] projects were a fairly clear model for exhibitions with a certain do-it-yourself slant: "They'd lend us a space and we'd fix it up a bit with light bulbs and electric wiring and split the costs among all the participating artists". Luisa Ortínez's goal was not to position herself as a kind of outsider but the very opposite: her ideas emerged with the aim of creating context while operating in a way that was surprisingly close to the institution.

David G. Torres followed this *l'écart* principle when he planned the exhibition *Salir a la calle y disparar al azar* [Going out into the street and shooting at random] by intensifying the two fundamental features of *For Rent*: physical presence as the focal point and the desire to belong to the art system.

The exhibition took place in December 2005 in the basement I had been using as a workshop, and it brought together a series of materials, many of which were just posters, records, flyers or other items with no market value, which evoked "certain moments related to the need to exercise non-conformist thinking". The content of the exhibition was planned almost as a manifesto. David G. Torres defined it as "a defence of radicalism and intensity as the foundations of art". It included figures such as Tristan Tzara, Marcel Duchamp, the Dead Kennedys, Sonic Youth, the Velvet Underground, Chip Lord and Pau Riba alongside creators such as Ignasi Aballí, Jens Hanning, Momu y No Es, Rubén Martínez, El Perro, Guy Richards, Anna Fasshauer, Martí Anson, Alex Gifreu and myself in a constellation that prioritised discourse over the object. This anti-formalist inclination can be summarised in one of the text pieces that David keeps at his home: "Para decir algo, la primera premisa es tener algo que decir" ["To say something, the first premise is having something to say"]. That is, it is a conception of art in which the artist has to be fully responsible for their discourse.

Still, the most meaningful gesture of the exhibition was its format. It lasted precisely two hours, the length of the opening event. This meant reducing the exhibition to a social act, to a gathering, to being part of a collective. The exhibition did not suggest any intimate, visual route; it had no educational goals; it was nothing but a space of energy. Most of the faces that appear in the materials for the exhibition wear knowing, optimistic expressions, as if they could predict how that experience would be channelled. The exhibition was an artefact.

And finally, it was deliberately highly canonical. Replicating—on a low budget—all the features of an institutional opening (invitation, hosts, guests, poster, catalogue, refreshments, etc.). It was thus indicating that this initiative aspired to be part of the system. It was a way of creating context. The responsibility to create context.

We have recreated that experience using an almost archaeological reconstruction model that brings together the traces that remain, in addition to some duplicates or replicas. Using a presentation resembling a cabinet of curiosities, it refers to both the concept of the glass display case and the idea of the library after André Breton, the author of the phrase used as the title of the project: “Salir a la calle y disparar al azar” [“Going out into the street and shooting at random”].

Antonio Ortega