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Itziar Barrio, *Stella a Roma*, 2021, 4K video, color, sound, 19 minutes 40 seconds.

Itziar Barrio

PARTICIPANT INC

An assemblage of three IKEA chairs rises up from a stark-white cement plinth. Rubber cuffs bind the folding furniture's legs, suspending the trio in a tilted balletic pose. Swaths of buttery stygian latex cover each end of the metallic structure, evoking something between soaking-wet laundry hung out to dry and s/m garb in shiny sumptuous black.

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The closing iteration of Itziar Barrio's twelve-year project *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE*, 2010–22, was all about the dialectics of sex, labor, and style. Visitors experienced this interplay throughout the gallery with a selection of photo-based works, sculptures (such as the aforementioned *Untitled (JEFF 7)*, and *You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid*, both 2022, a three-channel video that features, among other things, an unresolved debate between the Roman goddesses Minerva and Venus. ("*Lavoro*!" "*Amore*!," they argue. "*Lavoro*!" "*Amore*!").

The film—the nucleus of the exhibition—follows Stella Kowalski, the character from Tennessee Williams's play *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) on a series of adventures. But this is Stella 2.0, a woman who abandons Stanley and New Orleans, beginning anew in Bogotá by appearing in Colombian director Sergio Cabrera's 1993 movie *La estrategia del caracol* (The Strategy of the Snail). She then goes off to Rome—where she actually gets to meet Minerva and Venus—to take on the role of a sex worker in Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Accattone* (1961). Stella's Odyssean journey is given even further intertextual layers via Barrio's metacinematic approach: In each location, the artist casts a new set of thespians who work in front of live audiences (or, sometimes, in empty white rooms) to develop the scenes and their characters.

During these moments, the film seems to pause to live-annotate itself—Barrio builds footnotes and appendixes into the work to interrogate, in real time, "scriptedness" and concepts surrounding labor. Players speak directly to the camera between run-throughs while answering deep questions given to them by the director. For instance, queries concerning Blanche and Stanley "preferring chaos or order" turn more personal and philosophical: "Do you consider yourself a leader? What makes a leader?," asks Barrio. "Drive, forward momentum, someone with an ensemble mentality," answers the woman playing Stella. Occasionally, these interludes steer the narrative into various speculative episodes, such as a brief music video starring one lead who also happens to be a writer/rapper IRL. The abrupt discontinuities in genre feel perfectly at home here, producing a series of dynamic exchanges in which the force of language pivots the power structures at play. Those in front of the camera have as much control as those behind it.

Speaking of control: The probing of authority, authorship, and ownership that characterizes Barrio's film crescendos in the work's last act, when our down-and-out Stella stumbles upon the divine duo inside an extravagant villa in Rome's Trastevere neighborhood. Our heroine feels hopeless after losing her beloved boyfriend and pimp Accattone in a traffic accident. Who will defend the sex workers, and how? Venus, speaking in rhymed couplets, cajoles Stella with impassioned verse into playing a considerably more traditional female part. But a perturbed eye-rolling Minerva, fed up with her companion's purple poetry, argues for more practical tactics. "For three thousand years, Venus has been protecting prostitutes. In three thousand years she has not been able to make it into a job." The texts the deities read when first encountering Stella perfectly encapsulate the dilemma: Venus holds an Italian translation of Paul B. Preciado's *Pornotopia: An Essay on Playboy's Architecture and Biopolitics* (2011), a text about the psychic and social structures of pornography, while Minerva has Franco Farina's 2018 volume on Marx, the working class, and labor titled *Karl Marx e il processo produttivo* (Karl Marx and the Productive Process). But this predicament is actually generative. Much like *Untitled (JEFF 7)*, with its dialectical drape, *You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid* keeps us suspended between the poles of Preciado and Farina, between desire and work, between passion and practicality, between the individual and the communal. Something's stirring in this amorphous yet fertile space—it might be the potential for genuine social impact.

— *Anthony Hawley*

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Power Dynamics: Itziar Barrio Interviewed by Elizaveta Shneyderman

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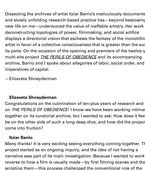

Still from Itziar Barrio, *You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid*, 2023, three-channel digital video, ninety eight minutes. Courtesy of PARTICIPANT INC.

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Dissecting the archives of artist Itziar Barrio's meticulously documented and slowly unfolding research-based practice has—beyond bestowing new life on me—underscored the value of ineffable artistry. Her work decentralizing typologies of power, filmmaking, and social artifice (including the institutional) is rooted in her ability as a multidisciplinary artist in favor of a collective consciousness that is greater than the sum of its parts. On the occasion of the opening and premiere of the twelve-year, multi-site project *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE* and its accompanying archive, Barrio and I spoke about allegories of labor, social order, and the imperatives of capital.

—Elizaveta Shneyderman

Elizaveta Shneyderman

Congratulations on the culmination of ten plus years of research and work on *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE*! I know we have been working intimately together on a curatorial archive, but I wanted to ask: How does it feel to have this project, the result of such a long deep dive, and how did the project first come into fruition?

Itziar Barrio

Many thanks! It is very exciting seeing everything coming together. This project started as an ongoing inquiry, and the idea of not having a narrative was part of its main investigation. Because I wanted to work in reverse to how a film is usually made—by first filming scenes and then scripting them—this process challenged the conventional role of the screenwriter in terms of independent creative production and in time structure. In this way, *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE* brought together a series of media and cultural references to generate a movie in real time, in which the spectator/participant/actor/worker/viewer/reader/ etc. the audience simultaneously witnesses a performance and the making of a movie. Actors worked with scripts from their respective cultures, including iconic movies like Kazuo's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), Sergio Cabrera's *La Estrategia del Caracol* (1993), and *Aciatrons* (1963) by Pier Paolo Pasolini, excerpts from the *Accademia* (2010) and *Cultural* (1985) manifestos; and a narrative about the 1953 New York City Draft Riots, among others.

Installation view of Itziar Barrio, *You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid*, 2023, three-channel digital video, ninety eight minutes. Courtesy of PARTICIPANT INC. New York City. Photo by Dexter Kurtz. Courtesy of the artist and PARTICIPANT INC.

ES

Walk me through all the components that comprise this complex undertaking.

IB

At the start, I wanted to create its narrative based on a constructed situation or experience. In 2010, the first performance of the project began in Spain produced by the Bilbao Theater and Contemporary Dance Center (Centro Coreográfico Galileo) in collaboration with the Bilbao Theater called The Pilot. We started working on a scene from scratch without the use of existing texts or scenes. The project then grew to include iconic scenes, songs, manifestos, roles, etc. The first time I showed the work was at Abrons Arts Center in 2013. I teamed up with director Nagel Smith to conceive a casting call as a live performance. Actors auditioned for four full days, with the final two days viewed live by an audience and the entire process recorded, to be included in the final film. In 2014, Smith and I moved the project forward into the realm of rehearsal. The four actors who had participated in the live casting were invited into a rehearsal room that was also constructed as a performance.

For the last stage of the film in NYC in 2016, the project moved beyond casting and rehearsing into the black box; we shot a "Hollywood" in the white cube of the gallery space at PARTICIPANT INC, directed by director Charlotte Mattheeuwsen. Following the performances, which also were video-recorded, the scripted environment of the set became a site for an exhibition of multiple sculptural elements, encompassing underlying structures, grammar, and processes that comprised the field of operations of this time-based project. These stages with small variations also ended up taking place in Bogotá (Espacio Odeon and Museo del Banco de la República) and Rome (Spanish Academy in Rome).

ES

What are other modes of working for you that complement the long-scale research works, and how do these relate or feed into them?

IB

In between these complex productions involving different collaborators and institutions, I go back to the solitude of the studio. It is in this practice of making sculptures, assemblages, and prints where I generate my ideas. I think of the studio environment as a laboratory of experiments and mechanisms. For example, after using the iconic scene from *Bob!* (1980) —with Sharon Stone unknowing and crossing her legs, subverting the power dynamics in the room with a minimal gesture—at the casting of *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE*, I started cutting the original dialogue at the studio in order to make a first-person monologue and quasi manifesto. This culminated in a print and performance at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Barcelona, curated by Paul B. Preciado.

Installation view of Itziar Barrio, *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (PREMIERE)*, 2022, PARTICIPANT INC, New York City. Photo by Dexter Kurtz. Courtesy of the artist and PARTICIPANT INC.

ES

I am interested in the element of parafiction in the construction of power for your subjective actors. I understand you provided actors with existing fictional and nonfictional parameters as source materials, blurring the boundary between scripted and unscripted work. Can you tell me how you did impose parameters toward the making of this space of parafiction, if any?

IB

In fact, this part of the process was especially revealing at the casting phase at Abrons Arts Center. Because this phase was already a few things at the same time—a job interview, a performance, and the making of a film—seduction became a very relevant feature of the work. By exploring this construction of realities, identities, and the making of contemporary myths—casting as a performance, filmmaking as a performance—the line between scripted and non-scripted became really blurred. This became clear when the performers were called to the mic to answer a set of questions. Sometimes the questions were directed to their character; sometimes they were addressed to their performance persona. Sometimes how much is the character affecting the actual performer and vice versa? This question became a speculative idea in the film first film. How much does the character become something equally real to the person performing it? Are characters autonomous entities themselves?

To illustrate this idea: In the final film, *You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid* (2022), we see the same character, Stella, navigating through different bodies, cultures, and languages. It follows the journey of Stella, a revisited character from Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). She leaves New Orleans, Stanley, and their abusive relationship and starts a new life in Bogotá among the sub-proletarian characters of *La Estrategia del Caracol* where her polyamory causes conflicts. Later on in Rome, Stella is a sex worker and the ex-lover of the protagonist of Pasolini's *Accattone*. The character Stella navigates languages, and characters through movies, cultures, and architectures in an exploration of how identity, labor, class, gender, and others are the subtext of social negotiations. The narrative is being constructed in the exchange between all agency involved. *You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid* articulates an agency based on bodies, on the fluidity of identity, and on the emancipation of the economic roles imposed by society.

ES

How does the work consider allegories of labor, particularly when it comes to the agency of everyone involved in the project?

IB

One of the main aspects of the project and in my work in general is revealing the means and modes of production. Labor and class are also always present in my work. The audience sees the environmental conditions of the set, the cameras, the microphones, the lights, the crew, the director. In this way, *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE* shows the usually hidden mechanisms involved in labor—filmmaking, in this case—including its power dynamics. While this happens in any given film or video, seeing it in an artwork that is about the construction of reality uniquely adds another layer of meaning and signification. There is also something choreographic and poetic about this process in relation to the means of production, domination, and the exploitation of the bodies. *THE PERILS* gives agency to the performers by allowing them to de-outside of their roles, to speak their own words, and to deliver their own messages and revelations. Even viewers become part of—and thereby help shape—the next chapter with their presence and gaze. The constructed situations—film production as performance—suggest the extent of human action and labor and find agents of participation in all.

Archive installation view of Itziar Barrio, *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (PREMIERE)*, 2022, PARTICIPANT INC, New York City. Photo by Dexter Kurtz. Courtesy of the artist and PARTICIPANT INC.

ES

What's next for you?

IB

Since 2016, and in parallel to *THE PERILS*, I have been working on a trilogy of multi-disciplinary projects (*Drones*, *Fallist Bear Bitch*, *ROBOTA MML* (2019–)) and *Particle Matter* (2020–2) analyzing the intersection of technology, labor, identity, and matter, and investigating cultural exchanges with different experts: astronomers, scientists, an anthropologist, a sex worker, a robot, a bear, and a particle of matter. The final pieces include videos, installations, and robotic based sculptures. The last two years I have been a member at the New Museum's incubator NEW INC researching all these topics. These are also research-based, long-term projects rewriting dominant narratives but in this case around technology, the construction of scientific knowledge, and the importance of the indeterminate and nonvisible. Beginning in 2023, the entire trilogy will premiere in a solo exhibition in NYC. I will be feeling their as I do now: concluding a long journey.

Itziar Barrio: THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE is on view at PARTICIPANT INC in New York City until April 17.

Elizaveta Shneyderman is a New York-based curator, researcher, and writer working across contemporary art and media studies. She is curator at the Riga Technoculture Research Unit (RTRU) as part of Kim? Contemporary Art Center in Riga, Latvia. Shneyderman's essays on contemporary art and visual culture have been published in Artforum, Animation Studies Journal, BOMB, Brooklyn Rail, and Rhizome, among others.

Itziar Barrio THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE PARTICIPANT INC Elizaveta Shneyderman video installation archives

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Work that is just about the technical or conceptual, personal or political, is fine; it meets the world with what's in fashion. But there's something else bordering on magic, that brings an artwork home, makes it land and resonate. You can't really teach that so much as conjure it.
— Kara Walker

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Itziar Barrio: *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (PREMIERE)*

By Jillian McManemin

Itziar Barrio, *Untitled (JEFF 7)*, 2022. Participant Inc, New York. Photo: Daniel Kukla.

ON VIEW
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Upon entering Itziar Barrio's exhibition *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (PREMIERE)* we're greeted by *Brazaletes* (2022), a photograph of the goddess Minerva's tattooed arms adorned with gold cuffs, an assortment of sexy metal, latex, and concrete sculptures, and a dramatic paint job.

Standing opposite the print is *Untitled (JEFF 7)* (2022), a hybrid of mangled IKEA chairs anchored to a thick concrete base, shrouded with black latex that appears to melt onto the structure. The piece is framed by a wall painted in light-sucking, matte-violet that runs the entire length of the gallery. The facing wall is bisected: white and then black with a small monitor displaying the ticking run time of the 98-minute three-channel video, *You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid* (2022), that the artist developed over twelve years.

The project began in 2010 in the artist's hometown, Bilbao. Barrio assigned archetypes to actors and had them perform various movement scores. IKEA chairs—which the artist employs frequently to represent dominant relational narratives, mass production and labor—played a central character.

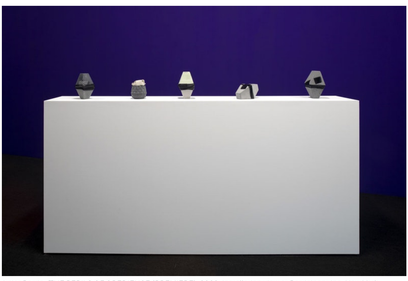
You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid occupies half of the main gallery space. The wide-screen projection is displayed slightly below eye level, guiding the viewer to sit in an IKEA chair or even on the floor for an optimal view. This coaxing, via the creation of circumstances, is how bodies are dealt with in the video itself. Barrio's characters move through their (capitalistic) predicaments as the artist simultaneously reveals the labor of artmaking.

Itziar Barrio, *You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid*, 2022. 3-channel HD, 98 minutes. Video still.

Over time, the video project expanded and subsequent iterations grew stickier and were created in different cities. The first installment in NYC features reenacted scenes from *A Streetcar Named Desire*, where plain-clothed actors watched by a live audience are directed in real time, then interviewed about their performances. Stella, a former Southern belle who's in a sexually charged and abusive relationship with her husband, leaves the *Streetcar* narrative and is transported to Bogotá, landing in a remixed *La Estrategia del Caracol*. Stella is enmeshed in the film while departing from it (she's polyamorous now). Finally, Stella arrives on a heavenly plane in Rome after a rough time as the lover of Accattone, where jewel-encrusted goddesses Venus and Minerva languidly discuss sex work.

Sex work arrives as a theme, which doesn't mean that we are subject to reiterated jargon. It merely exists and this casual emergence feels instructive, if not radical. The goddesses sing a song called "Labor Union Sluts," queer Marxism infused with a sense of humor.

Barrio's genre-fucking is generative and liberating. Narrative, reenactment, fracturing, remix, and improvisation are approached sans a tyrannical hierarchy of form. We tumble alongside Stella through time, space, and storyline, frequently pivoting out of the narrative to view it from another angle. I'm particularly drawn to the moments where the actors are interviewed. First as the characters they inhabit and then as themselves, constantly analyzing what they're doing and who they are as the hum of spliced manifestos and musical interludes buzz.



Itziar Barrio, *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (PREMIERE)*, 2022. Installation view at Participant Inc, New York. Photo: Daniel Kukla.

A small kiss of bronze, *Plegada* (2022), floats on the purple wall. The bronze cast appears again in *Minerva plegada en cañería IV* (2022): a big slip of black latex hanging from a hook that travels to a concrete slab on the floor (cast from an IKEA container), where the bronze is placed delicately. The artist created the bronzes from a fold in the hem of *Statue of Minerva* (2nd century BC), grounding the character from the video work within physical space and history. The larger works also reference classical sculpture—with IKEA chairs as body and concrete as pedestal and latex, evoking billowy fabric carved into marble.

The archives of the project, carefully curated by Elizaveta Alexandrovna Shneyderman, are displayed in the back room with an accompanying website in-progress. A Spanish translation of Virginie Despentes's *King Kong Theory* rests on top of a printed copy of the *A Cyborg Manifesto* as a small iPad plays a slow motion animation (by the artist) of Sharon Stone's infamous crotch scene in *Basic Instinct*. The presence of ephemera supports the objective of the art itself—revealing the labor of the project while offering a lens to view subcultural and theoretical ties.

Within the cerebral bath of theory and pop culture, *You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid* emotes the exciting, strenuous feeling of grasping for revolutionary solutions. It examines relational dynamics to understand the systems that bind us. It immerses us deeply in our world to offer possibilities and alternatives. As I looked closely at *The repetition of things they do make meaning* (2022), trying to discern if latex was laid on or embedded into concrete, the beat from Rihanna's "Work" floated over, emphasizing the interwoven methods of Barrio's constructed filmic and sculptural environments that are at once confrontational, queer, and fiercely cool.

Contributor

Jillian McManemin

Jillian McManemin is an artist, writer and the Founder of the Toppled Monuments Archive. She's working on her first book, *Sculpture Kills*.

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Itziar Barrio: Stella!—working on, and through *You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid*

Interview / Jillian McManemin

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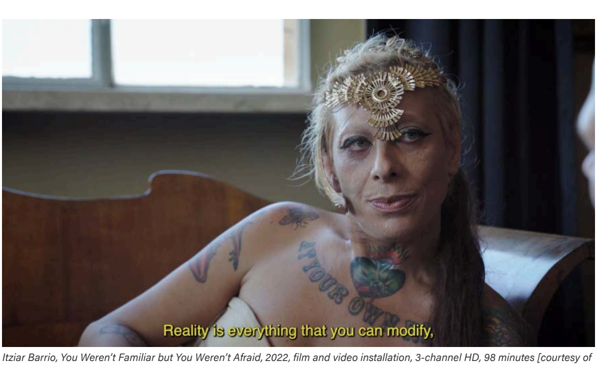
Itziar Barrio and I spoke about her experimental feature-length work, You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid (2022). The 98-minute, three-channel video installation is currently on view in THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (PREMIERE), her solo exhibition at PARTICIPANT INC in New York.

You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid was filmed in multiple cities and makes overt narrative references to three films: A Streetcar Named Desire (1951), La estrategia del caracol (The Strategy of the Snail) (1993) and Accattone (1961). In the first episode, filmed in 2016 at PARTICIPANT INC, actors perform scenes from Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire in a workshop setting, against a white scrim. They are given on-screen direction by various theater directors and interviewed, both as the characters they play and as themselves. This mode of filmmaking and performing is utilized in each of the video's three segments.

Barrio also traveled to New Orleans to absorb the energy of the play's original setting. Spaces and objects (such as IKEA chairs, which the artist frequently uses in her works) play a vital role. The tenement-style architecture of New Orleans is echoed in Bogotá, where the second installment of the work takes place. The character Stella lifts herself out of the Streetcar narrative and is placed within the drama of the film La estrategia del caracol (The Strategy of the Snail), a story of eviction, communal living, and state violence.

The epilogue takes place in Rome. Stella encounters the goddesses Venus and Minerva at the end of her wild ride as a sex worker and lover of the pimp Accattone from Pier Paolo Pasolini's film of the same name. In all the remixes, renditions, and reenactments, the power dynamics of labor, class, and interpersonal relationships are highlighted, and revolutionary manifestos and musical numbers are interposed throughout. Stella is played by a different actor in each city.

My conversation with Itziar took place before THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (PREMIERE) opened, so I had only viewed the video on my computer. I was excited to focus on You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid, the 12-year process of its creation, and its themes of agency, sex work, and queerness. The video asks how we might shake up the dominant narratives that steer our lives while revealing the collaborative possibilities of artmaking via cinematic form.



Itziar Barrio, You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid, 2022, film and video installation, 3-channel HD, 98 minutes [courtesy of PARTICIPANT, INC]

Jillian McManemin: *The film is composed of disparate methods, usages of film, text, and improv. How did these pieces of media that you utilize get accumulated?*

Itziar Barrio: *I guess it is part of the organic process of making art. The actual journey of making is what takes me to things …. The films I chose to work with always have four characters: one is a leader, somebody that wants something; then we have an anti-leader, somebody who is going to make that impossible; then there is the soldier that helps the leader in that goal; and the navigator that goes in between. In the case of the pilot that took place in Bilbao, my hometown, I didn't use scripts. Then I looked for films with iconic scenes, and I would look for those characters.*

The idea of contemporary mythology is important to me. In North American culture, when Stanley in A Streetcar Named Desire screams "Stella! Stella!", it's an iconic scene. Or, for example, Basic Instinct [1992], with the very iconic scene of Sharon Stone crossing and uncrossing her legs. The same, no? A small gesture that signifies a lot.

JM: *Both examples were super disruptive in their time. Basic Instinct blew everyone's minds …. I guess it's the same with Marlon Brando. His raw sexuality was shocking to people. That's helpful to position these archetypes as a starting point for your practice. You've also mentioned the Stanley Milgram obedience experiments in the early '60s as being a jumping off point and inspiration for the beginning of your project. Is that where the character archetypes that you work with are stemmed from?*

IB: *The project really started as an investigation of power dynamics. I approached the project as a constructed situation. I have the characters. I have the furniture, which is always IKEA. IKEA is another dominant narrative, right? Another contemporary mythology? Then, thinking about power dynamics, the Milgram experiment … proved how people ended up doing things even if they did not want to do them, because they were ordered to.*

Itziar Barrio, You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid, 2022, film and video installation, 3-channel HD, 98 minutes [courtesy of PARTICIPANT, INC]

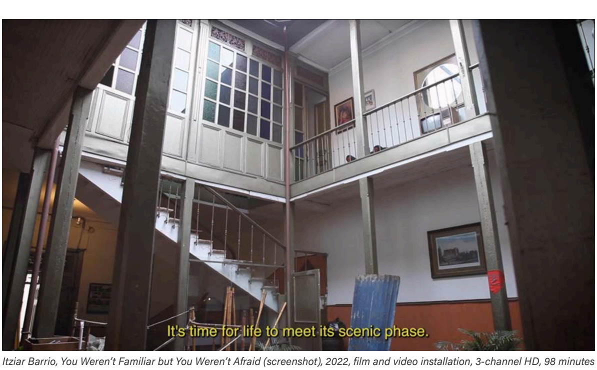
JM: *The people conducting the experiments were trying to make sense of genocide.*

IB: *[The Milgram experiments] give the title to the entire project. The title is a little bit like, you know, when you have a band when you are a teenager, and you always wish you could have another [name]. I feel like that sometimes. The project has grown in many other directions. The first challenge was to make a film without a storyboard or a script.*

JM: *You have staging, and then you have people interviewing the characters, and then the actors get interviewed. It is like all these vantage points—reenactment, autobiography—which I found incredibly interesting and strenuous. You have these moments when actors are performing, and then they are giving "real answers" about their "real lives." It was funny—I had this expectation that you would be in the film more than you are. You made a film that is investigating its own filmmaking, but then, as the director-character, you are only a very slight specter.*

IB: *That is an artist's decision, you know? The filmmaking, as a performance, is a way of showing labor, the power dynamics involved in the making of a film, and the means of production. Those are obsessions in my work. I always see myself—not necessarily as removed, but when people come to see the performance, they see me working as the director, and I'm very much on the side. I am directing the cameras and the production. You see the theater directors more, and that is part of the orchestrated plan. This is what I call the constructed situation. I am just busy directing the film. I am not going to be performing. I delegate. I am not directing the actors. You only see me talking because we have a problem with a camera.*

JM: *Pasolini is such an iconic filmmaker, with an iconic personality. I saw you in that one scene in Rome, and you are really working with all the equipment. There is so much about labor, work, and power dynamics, but the films that you have stitched together show queerness throughout. You have Tennessee Williams. You have the character Alan Grey, Blanche's first husband, who [in Williams' play] killed himself after being confronted about having a homosexual encounter. Then, you have this situation in Bogotá, where people in this communal living situation are being evicted by the state. Then you have Pasolini, who was killed. Queerness and violence seem to be a remarkable thread throughout the entire film.*



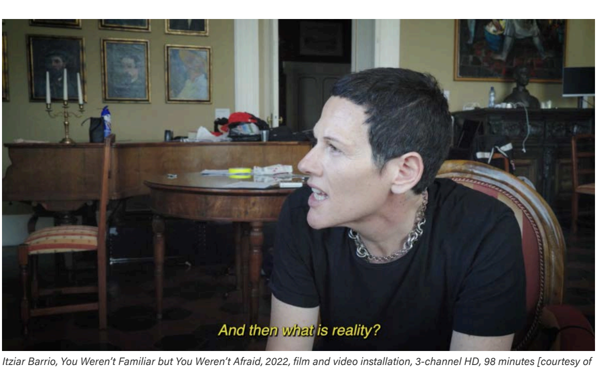
Itziar Barrio, You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid (screenshot), 2022, film and video installation, 3-channel HD, 98 minutes [courtesy of PARTICIPANT, INC]

IB: *They naturally emerge. Pasolini doesn't talk about it, but we all know that he was gay. Tennessee Williams decided to talk about these communities and suicide. It is part of the dominant narrative that I am trying to rewrite. Violence goes along with a lot of things in life, no? But I guess my work is queer in the sense that I think in those parameters of identity.*

JM: *The film doesn't exactly offer a queer utopia, or an emotionally satisfying solution to all of these swirling problems. It's more complicated. I am curious about the politics behind it. The film is repeating over and over that transparency and the ability to speak can be a revolutionary act. There were parts that felt devastating because there wasn't a solution or proposal. We've previously talked about manifestos. What are your thoughts on the politics that you put forth in the film—with the usage of manifestos and revolutionary texts?*

IB: *I am obsessed with riots, too, and historical events that disrupt. They are possibilities for change, for new possibilities. My work in general, and specifically this project, is about rewriting dominant narratives and trying to bring in new ones. Manifestos are there for that. I used text from [Donna Haraway's] "A Cyborg Manifesto" in the video. Manifestos look to the future, even if they are naive or silly. I like the imperfection, or even the failure, because it is sometimes the only way that we can find things out.*

JM: *I want to talk about Stella and the evolution of Stella within this project. She becomes a vessel for every question that the film asks. I was thinking of it in terms of scale, with Stella and her location and environment. She goes from being in A Streetcar Named Desire, in this tiny apartment, this domestic violence and familial situation that is really claustrophobic, to the next film, where there is polyamory happening, and communal living. Then, finally, she arrives in Rome on this heavenly plane, where she has gone through even more turbulence, as the ex-lover of Accattone. I want to hear a little bit about this ascension and scale shift, as far as agency for this character is concerned.*



Itziar Barrio, You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid, 2022, film and video installation, 3-channel HD, 98 minutes [courtesy of PARTICIPANT, INC]

IB: *Focus on Stella and you can find a lot of the characteristics of how I work in this piece. I mentioned the character-archetypes being important, but also they were part of a sub-proletarian class. I'm always very interested in class and underrepresented communities. I decided to put her in the context of La estrategia del caracol in Bogotá. The architecture [in the two films] is similar: tenements. Not exactly the same, but [involving] communal living and the frictions that come with that.*

We see Stella going through different bodies, languages, and cultures. I think this hits at the core of my ideas around identity. Then in Rome, as you mentioned, we see Stella extracted from Accattone by Pasolini. Stella is a sex worker. Dissent is very important in my work, too. I like breaking the rules. Maybe going back to your reflection on violence and queerness in my work—I'm not going to give a solution, but there is something possible in the agency that we all have to rewrite narratives. There is an agency in us. I am trying to take that, as an artist, and I am trying to talk about that. That is my work.

JM: *Absolutely. As a sex worker, I was grateful for how you handled this material. With A Streetcar Named Desire, you have love, you have sex, you have class, you have money, and a power struggle. Sex work holds all of this in a very intense way. It makes sense that your film explicitly talks about sex work, because within sex work you have relational dynamics, you have the state. And race and class lines are intense in the industry in a way that people don't understand. Sex work is also always adjacent to and interwoven with queerness. In the film, when Minerva and Venus are arguing about whether sex work is about the sex part, or the work part, it felt like we can't even really get to talking about these issues if we can't agree on any definition. Your film is formally super fractured, and trying to analyze itself, but I think that the ethos of the film is at least trying to get to some definition about what you're doing as far as labor is concerned—as an artist or filmmaker.*

IB: *It's also not a coincidence that the video [ends] with Minerva, the goddess of intelligence and strength. She reflects on the construction of reality and making. Lola Kola, the performer, says that she prefers life, instead of film. She says reality is beautiful: the possibility of movement, the possibility to construct things, right? There is something here that relates to hope and the idea of constructing narratives.*

We are embedded in this capitalist society, where we do labor for money. But suddenly we judge others and so on, right? Our bodies are always being exploited, if we think about labor.

Itziar Barrio, You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid, 2022, film and video installation, 3-channel HD, 98 minutes [courtesy of PARTICIPANT, INC]

JM: *There is a bit of text: The consequence of the wage relationship, the systematic alienation as the worker …. The whole film gets blanketed with this statement.*

IB: *That is part of "A Cyborg Manifesto" by Donna Haraway. [The film] is a lot about different ways of being in this capitalist society. I think a bit of Marxism is needed, no?*

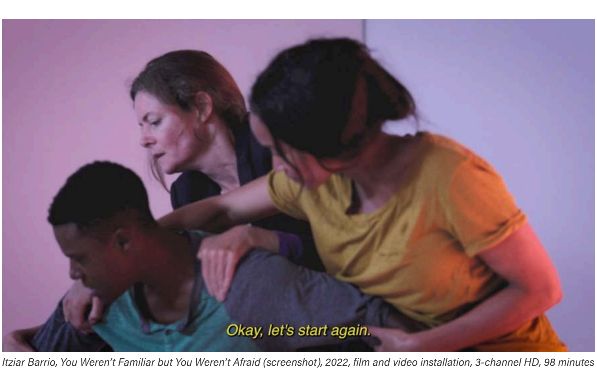
JM: *I used to have these ideas as a sex worker and Marxist, like, if I'm identifying as a sex worker, then I think every person should identify with the way that they make money—especially in the queer community—as a political act. But people don't always want to be defined by how they make money, so it gets slippery. Minerva, in the Rome part of the film, mentions the Red Umbrellas, a real organization, and talks about the liberation of sex workers. I was like, What does that even mean? I can imagine better conditions, or a better conversation, but this strong word, "liberation"—I was so thirsty to grasp what that meant.*

IB: *That scene happened so organically, working with Federica Tuzi, one of the screenwriters. I have to acknowledge the theater directors, Cristina Vuolo, Charlotte Brathwaite, and Julio Correal: we co-wrote, and had a lot of conversations. We had Minerva talking to the camera as the character, and also as herself. The subjectivity of the performer is very important in the work.*

JM: *Through a relational process, you are kind of trying to be the opposite of Oz—a looming director who is masculine and very forceful. I'm curious, because this process has been going on for about 12 years—is that correct?*

IB: *Because of Covid, we ended up postponing the premiere twice.*

JM: *How much of this project is woven into your identity as an artist? I think about the life of an artist, and how what we make determines how we interact with the world.*



Itziar Barrio, You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid (screenshot), 2022, film and video installation, 3-channel HD, 98 minutes [courtesy of PARTICIPANT, INC]

IB: *I can't think about it all, but I've been doing that recently, because of the archives. We are making a website [for the project's archives]. It's emotional. [This work is] the biggest investigation that I've done. Another aspect is that the technology has changed. In Bilbao it was basic HD in 2010, And the final [shoot] is 4K, in Rome.*

JM: *Does showing the project in its full form feel like letting go? Or do you just feel like it is enmeshed into your practice, so there's no separation?*

IB: *One part of me is like, I need to finish this! In each location, the crew is from the place. It is very localized. I think it makes a lot of sense to work with people that are a part of a specific context and culture. It's good to wrap things up; it is very exciting for me. Seeing this reaction, even yours just now, is adding to the conversation that I have with the piece myself, too. I don't even see what it is about anymore, you know?*

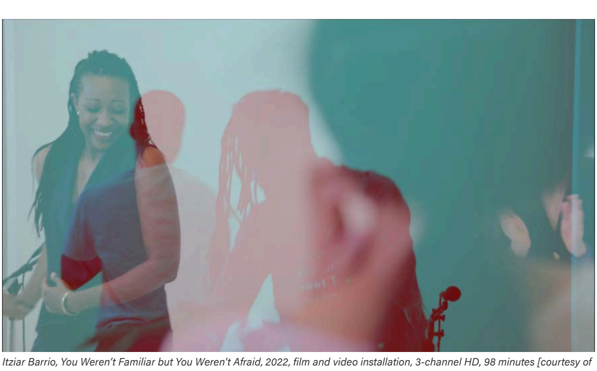
JM: *It's funny, a proposal of transparency as being something that can get us toward truth. Then, as the artist, you're like, "I'm blind."*

[both laugh]

IB: *My work can be super conceptual or rational, but what people might get out of the film, I still don't know.*

JM: *I think it is going to be really different for everyone, because of people's individual relationships to the media that you put forth. Whether or not someone has any interest in Pasolini, in A Streetcar Named Desire, or has a relationship with any of the locations you travel to. The moment, "Stella!" is important to me, because I am an American, and I love film. I saw Streetcar when I was really young. For the film in Colombia, I had to do more research. [This experience of familiarity] might be swapped for somebody else. Something iconic can happen in another area where I might completely miss it. People are going to have different reads based on their history as sex workers, as filmmakers, as queer people, or as not any of these things. There were moments in the film when I got emotional, and I was like, Oh, this is hitting something about my personal history. Cinema is an emotive force. There were also moments where the actors were speaking about their lives, which I found really wonderful. Who plays Stella in Colombia?*

IB: *Yes, Endry Cardeño.*


Itziar Barrio, You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid, 2022, film and video installation, 3-channel HD, 98 minutes [courtesy of PARTICIPANT, INC]

JM: *She was talking about being mistreated and objectified as an actor , and her evolution as a performer in the ability to advocate for herself. I was like, Oh yeah, I totally have known this person, or have met someone like this person, but in a different context.*

I also want to talk about the scale, as far as how many countries you filmed in.

IB: *I really wanted to work with different groups. I didn't know where it was going to take me, honestly. Then the organic and the poetry comes along because I always want to have that in my work and in life. Bogatá was very personal. I had this connection with my gallerist Margarita Rodriguez Rincón, director of Rincón Projects. I was already working with her, and we are still working together. I was not like, I need to do it in another country or in another space.*

JM: *So it merged with and emerged from your life …. There is a tumbling through life, and then art gets merged into it.*

IB: *Labor, too. I'm very obsessed with labor and with the means of production. This collaboration affects the people I work with and that is part of the project. When I finished Bogotá, I was like, Of course the story is not finished, it is not complete. I didn't know if there was going to be another stage.*

JM: *I love that it ended up in Rome. You are talking about building these archetypes and trying to understand them. Then, from these archetypes of men and women, it's like, No, no, let's just talk about these goddesses …. It got bigger and bigger, as far as the effects that these archetypes might have on the way that we conceive of things. There were also these moments where you use music. The last musical scene was the goddesses singing "Labor Union Sluts" after grasping for answers about sex work. They were like, Okay, maybe we should take a break and sing this little song. I was wondering about the musical interlude. I think that music holds energy similar to that which a manifesto can hold.*

Itziar Barrio, You Weren't Familiar but You Weren't Afraid (screenshot), 2022, film and video installation, 3-channel HD, 98 minutes [courtesy of PARTICIPANT, INC]

IB: *That is what contemporary mythologies are all about. Music is huge in that. The first stage, in Bilbao, I ended up remixing "Sweet Dreams" by the Eurythmics with Keith Milgaten. That is an iconic song. Music is very important …. For me, they are kind of these soft transitions into other themes, or they bring a moment, or intervene. In Rome it happened very organically. One of the performers is the singer too.*

JM: *You shift us toward desire after such hard concepts—after talking about all this complicated shit, you turn to music to provide relief, so we can hold these thoughts at the same time as we feel pleasure, feel sexy, laugh. This is important, because if you are telling someone something, and you really want them to listen, and then you make them laugh, it's a huge power move. People are going to listen to you if you're charming. I felt like the goddesses were kind of playing with this idea.*

IB: *Music is very connected with subculture, and a lot of my work is about that too. I was lucky that [the actors] were [also] singers. This goes along with my usage of fiction and nonfiction and [the actors'] own subjectivity and passions. Desire is very important in my work, the sense of humor and lightness. I also love music. Rhythm is important when you are making a film and editing. In Rome we see Stella playing the piano. That happened spontaneously. She was so generous, and it was all so magical.*

[In the film, the characters] Minerva and Venus—we haven't talked about patriarchy. They are talking about it, and that moment where they decided that we can actually be together, sing, talk, and feel this: There is also hope there, Jillian! In the end, when they come together.

JM: *I do feel like it is incredibly hopeful! I also loved the idea of a sex worker being like, I am in this great position, because I am being flanked by these two goddesses. It gave the archetype of a sex worker this elevation.*

What I was saying earlier is that I don't think that the film necessarily offers up a utopia, which to me feels like a closed environment that cannot exist. The proposal of a utopia doesn't do anything to liberate anyone. I would rather be hanging out with the cool sex workers and arguing and singing. That sounds better.

IB: *The last scene in Rome is an epilogue. In Bogatá I replicated the final scene in La estrategia del caracol where they ended up going up a mountain with their fictional house. I used that scene but with Stella, she's just going up a mountain to get to this very fantastical place with two goddesses.*

The locations and the empty spaces by themselves [are] very important to my practice. I mean empty spaces as not having human bodies present. I usually approach them as characters too. There is that house scene with the fountain that is replicated in the three places. I want to say that, because it is important in the sense that we were just talking about people … we have to talk about things. There happen to be spaces that have a similarity. There might be a little sci-fi attached to all of my works. I am not a sci-fi artist, but it is there, a little salt of sci-fi. It is not just Stella traveling through different bodies, languages, and cultures; these spaces are also interconnected, and we don't know how or why. I was able to film the house in New Orleans that supposedly inspired Tennessee Williams to write A Streetcar Named Desire.

JM: *I was thinking of the house in Bogatá as a character that gets fought over and invaded, and shots are fired to get the eviction happening. It's really this space that is being contested and pulled back and forth. What should this space be used for? Who gets to decide what the space gets used for?*

IB: *Yes, that is actually a very important thing. It is not only about humans, but it is also about our spaces. Time and space get resolved in that way, in the film.*

JM: *The show will have sculptures, as well, that are going to have varying degrees of agency, I assume.*

IB: *They'll have agency, like anything else.*

Jillian McManemin is a queer multidisciplinary artist and writer whose work has appeared in BOMB, Hyperallergic, Art-agenda and The Brooklyn Rail, among other publications. She has performed and presented work at Anthology Film Archives, MetLiveArts, The Poetry Project, Dixon Place, Invisible Exports, and the Knockdown Center. She recently founded the Toppled Monuments Archive, and she is working on her first book, Sculpture Kills. She is based in Brooklyn, NY, and is currently the exhibitions manager for the estate of David Smith.

#Interview #Jillian McManemin #Web 2022 #45.03 #Itziar Barrio
#PARTICIPANT INC

See Also

Baseera Khan: I Am an Archive

Khan—winner of the museum's second annual UOVO prize, which is awarded to an emergent Brooklyn-based artist—moves through an array of media and materials, trying to capture the textured co-existence of multiple languages and influences.

Type: Reviews
Source: Spring 2022
Location: Brooklyn, NY
Credit: Text / Dina Ramadan

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Editors' Dialogue: A Chorus of Positions With a Kinship of Aims

To reflect the collaborative nature of Gaming The System // Spring 2022, the usual editor's letter takes the form of a colloquy.

Type: Letters
Source: Spring 2022
Credit: Sarah Higgins + Stephanie Bailey

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ITZIAR BARRIO: A DREAM OF DIFFERENT WEATHER/ THE SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE IN THE AGE OF ZOOM

Sergio Cabrera: *A film cannot change the world, but it can generate reflections that change people who change the world.*

Blanche Dubois: *I don't want realism. I want magic. Yes, yes, magic! I try to give that to people.*

A Review by Eva H.D.

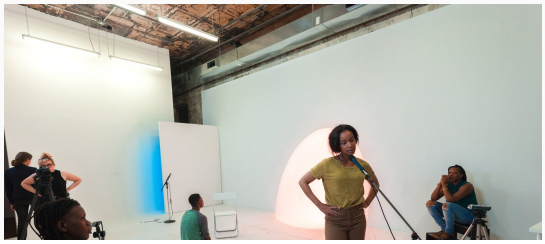
In recent years, many of us have had the occasion to question, like Ford assembly line veteran and poet Philip Levine, *what work is[1]*. What constitutes work, however—whether it's answering a manager's texts at eleven at night or risking one's life to ring up Starbucks lattes—has long been a subject of debate. A songwriter friend's grandfather used to tell him, "You can't call it

work unless you're sweating"; this maxim might ring hollow to the systems administrator plagued by twelve-hour work days and round the clock carpal tunnel syndrome. Like queer Marxist auteurs Rainer Werner Fassbinder and Pier Paolo Pasolini before her, visual artist and filmmaker Itziar Barrio is deeply preoccupied with the nature of labor and its complications, and she shares with them a profound suspicion of the omnipresent market as carnival ruse, a chump's game. (Perhaps Pasolini's iconic *Accattone* would still be a pimp today; it seems more likely he'd work for Amazon.) Her awareness of cinema-as-labor, and of labor as a performance, informs a central premise of her latest film: What happens when actors—workers themselves—are subjected to unexpected pressures within the context of the cinematic work? According to Barrio, "the work cultivates conditions for unscripted consequences to probe codes and limits of film, performance, sculpture, and installation."

Barrio's *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE* (on exhibit earlier this year at PARTICIPANT INC, NYC) probes the limits of performance: of gender, of violence, of love, of control. What is, she asks, the performance of *performing,* or of spectating—and what does this signify in the age of zoom, when virtually all aspects of daily life are recorded and available for exaltation and critique? For Itziar Barrio, the work of filmmaking *is* a performance – and the idea of the performative as it pertains to power dynamics is fundamental to her work, as is the lineage of queer Marxist cinema in which she positions herself. *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE* is a synapse-teasing concatenation of experimental film, sculpture, texts, archives, and cinematic ephemera, the culmination of twelve years of filming in multiple locations. In it, questions are layered for a textural effect that calls to mind abstract painting—the facts of color and composition trumping literal interpretation—cumulatively occasioning a broader inquiry into the nature of a culture of terminal spectacle itself.

The centerpiece of the show is Barrio's film *You Weren't Familiar, But You Weren't Afraid,* a mesmerizing and allusive meditation in which the apparatus of filmmaking is ostentatiously on display. The film follows three performances, one set in New York, one in Bogotá, and a third in Rome, through casting and rehearsal – each riffing on, respectively, *A Streetcar Named Desire, La Estrategia del Caracol,* and *Accattone*. (References and jeux de mots abound; the through-line here is the character of 'Stella', who literally, as the language shifts from English, to Spanish, to Italian, becomes a 'star' over the course of the film.) The installation, which also includes a taped interview with the director of Italy's Pasolini archive, a collection of sculptural works, and an active, ever-expanding web archive, is a synthesis of pop culture, historical documents, and aesthetic inquiries into the nature of materialism; Barrio's interest lies in reconfiguring the iconic in order to "break the meaning," as she puts it, to build something new. Drawing inspiration from sources as varied as Caravaggio's *The Cardsharps,* Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf,* and Fassbinder's *Fox and His Friends, THE PERILS* asks: if workers are governed by what they produce, how are they affected when what they produce is desire?

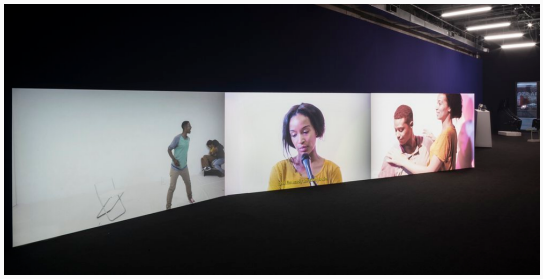
The film opens with a shot of Desire Street in the leafy New Orleans neighborhood where playwright Tennessee Williams wrote his breakthrough hit; we then find ourselves in a Manhattan white cube art space, where four performers rehearse scenes from *Streetcar*, punctuated by the interruptions and interrogations of an initially unseen director. Barrio's intelligent use of casting is notable, here: the gender and racial diversity of the performers revitalizes the play's now familiar tropes, provoking fresh and intriguing insights . This process continues in Bogotá, with a show that inserts *Streetcar's* Stella, played by Endry Cardeño, into the setting of Sergio Cabrera's *La Estrategia del Caracol* (a 1993 Colombian film that outperformed *Jurassic Park* at the box office but is largely unknown to American audiences). The final act takes place in Trastevere, Rome, a bohemian neighborhood with a storied working-class history; Stella, in this iteration the reluctant sex worker of Pasolini's *Accattone,* encounters the goddesses Venus and Minerva sipping tea in a ornate sitting room, where the three debate sex workers' rights and the nature—essential or otherwise—of womanhood, labor, and love. As these scenes are rehearsed and rerehearsed, new meanings emerge from the texts, from our understanding of the actors as individuals performing the roles of themselves. The result is the cinematic equivalent of what musicians call woodshedding: as the performers repeat their lines to the point of reflexivity, a surprising and irresistible jazz emerges.



In each iteration, the individual scenes' directors question the cast members regarding their characters' motivations, but also probe more personally, asking, in one instance: "Could you lie?" We eventually learn, with help from the archive, that we are not simply watching footage of plays being rehearsed, but of the casting itself; and that there is an audience present observing the process. We see the actress playing Blanche interviewed as Blanche; as herself, Miriam A. Hyman; and then rapping in a music video—forcing us to consider how performers find and identify truth within the constructed world of the theatre. The diverse cast going through the now familiar motions of *Streetcar* implicitly calls into question the performance of gender both on stage and in life; we may wonder what is entailed for men in performing 'man', as we watch actress Kelly Haran flawlessly embody the 1950s working stiff Mitch. The nature of existence itself is performative, Barrio suggests; the least gesture a potential film in the making.

During the pandemic, this sense of universal spectacle was exponentially enhanced: formerly discrete privacies became screenings that bled each into

the next—birthdays, funerals, schoolchildren taking their first faltering steps towards literacy filmed and framed; business meetings chaired from the toilet, everyone coiffed for the camera at all times. (Are the conditions for unscripted consequences a dwindling quantity in a world where everyone is her own amateur dramaturge? As writer Zadie Smith remarked in 2016 essay, this desire to make the quotidian spectacular via social media has infected even the most introverted of pursuits: "We've gotten into the habit of not experiencing the private, risky act of reading so much as performing our response to what we read.") Barrio's inquisitive, restless scope of vision is remarkably prescient; in *You Weren't Familiar,* begun in 2010, her camera picks up on the backstage banter, the cords and wires, the gaffes, revealing the blurred line between spectacle and reality, person and performer, revelation and presentation, theatrical and social roles; and the power dynamics inherent in these configurations—astutely prefiguring contemporary life, in which seemingly no one is free from the all-seeing camera's multifarious gaze.



"She consistently references Queer cinema where the subject is class exploitation."

It is notable that Barrio, a Basque artist based in New York City, fixates on filmmakers whose works concern the excavation of deeply painful and concealed national memories. Although she consistently references Queer cinema where the subject is class exploitation, perhaps her worldview is closest to that of Cabrera: unlike Williams, Pasolini, or Fassbinder, Barrio is proposing an alternative to the world in which the sucker, *farlocco*, always pays. Layerings of contrapuntal imagery, including recurring footage of a fountain, a significant trope employed throughout, underscored by ambient piano music remind us of the seductions of simple beauty. Barrio immerses us in her lexicon, as Toni Morrison put it, letting "the rest of the world move over" to her frame of reference. The fountain becomes a character, a conduit, conducts us from one setting to another. Like Pasolini, Barrio uses the symbolic in practical ways, her gaze often lingering on inanimate objects, or rather, occasioning an animation of objects, in the sense of *anima*: a be-souling; a sort of metaphorical intervention.

The show's title, *THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE,* taken from Stanley Milgram's now widely criticized experiment of the same name,[1] performs double duty; it evokes the familiar discussion over how far a person might go to obey instructions from an authority figure, but also calls into question the perils of obeying any prevailing thought current—why were we, as a society, so inclined to believe in the authority of Milgram's heavily doctored results? After all, Milgram, who had an "astute sense of what works on television" was a director of sorts, too: he privately characterized his work as "merely effective theater." Barrio, meanwhile, includes footage of herself working in order to expose her complicity in the embedded power structure of filmmaking. In *THE PERILS,* the installation's guests watch the film's audience watching the on-screen audience watching the director watch the cast watching the director; each an uneasy collaborator in the creation process.

Authority presents itself in various guises: actors submit to the orders of the director; the public to the rules of the performance space; the audience to the dictates of the performers' fame, and so forth. Artists submit to the authority of

intuition or of form, to the exigencies of space, of the available equipment. A discussion between Barrio and her cinematographer over camera lenses culminates in inevitable acquiescence to pragmatism: “Well, this is the shit we have.”

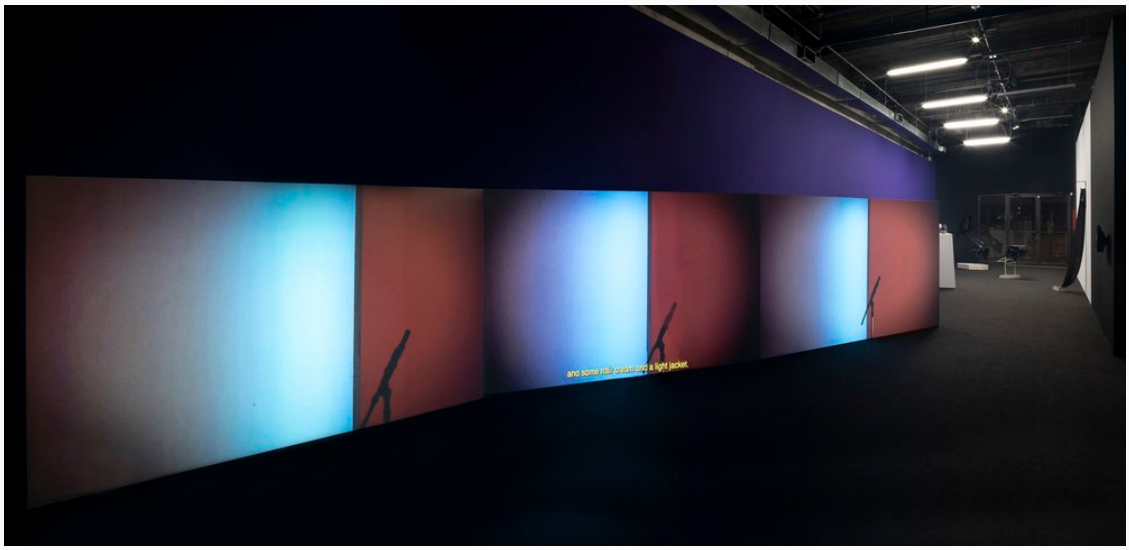
The presentation of the film on three screens effects a quasi-theatrical expansiveness—a sense of heightened control over the field of vision; we can choose to oscillate between a close-up of a performer and a pan of the crew, abstract meaning from a clip of Fassbinder’s Fox lying dead on the ground, juxtaposed with the performer playing Blanche explaining that her character’s husband committed suicide after being outed as a homosexual. (This theme a thread woven throughout: a triptych of boys whose queerness—sexual, political—has killed them.) The split consciousnesses suggested by the multiple screens work together to form one fastidiously coherent socio-political-theatrical narrative.

‘Chronotope,’ a literary term indicating the connection between location and the timeframe in which a story unfolds, is useful here: for Barrio, location is a character, and emptiness—of a street, a building—merely a construct of the uninquisitive eye. (What, indeed, *is* empty?— consider microorganisms, atoms, the air!) *You Weren’t Familiar* illuminates how the chronotope affects the behavior of the individuals (re)acting within it. Barrio takes this concept further, illustrating how our location in a specific body inextricably entangles with the scripts we are assigned. Pasolini’s fluid sequences reveled in documenting bodies that do not normally appear in cinema; Barrio too finds vitality in the quotidian, a statement political as well as aesthetic: when capital is privileged over labor, the body becomes fodder, collateral damage.

Applied to the hackneyed theatre of political spectacle, Barrio’s perspective allows for enhanced possibilities. In March of 2022, senator Marsha Blackburn (a de facto thespian making a desperate bid to accrue campaign footage) demanded that Supreme Court nominee Ketanji Brown Jackson define what it is to be a woman—in a cynically disingenuous interrogatory technique presumably cribbed from [illegible] cripts and putting them in other places and times opens up the question to the possibility of genuinely interesting answers. In *You Weren’t Familiar,* a director poses the same question; with the chronotope shifted to a less sinister context, the alteration makes room for the apposite (and practical) response of performer Lilith Primavera, who brilliantly pinpoints the universal in the specific: “I don’t know what it means to be a woman. I barely know what it means to be Lilith Primavera.”

An archaeologist in real time, Barrio sifts through contemporary cultural detritus, in an attempt to determine the nature of the society that created it. *THE PERILS* is a project that prompts and rewards further research on the part of the viewer—it accumulates layers of meaning, each reference a symbiotically enriching reverberation of the whole. Fortunately, every aspect of the creation process as well as a plethora of ancillary information is currently available in an encyclopedic online archive including scene outlines, poetically gnomic hand-printed notes[2], recordings of auditions, a scrapbook of Pasolini

clippings, written questions such as: “are you in touch with your violence?”, photographs of sculptural pieces, and film stills from *Fox* and *Accattone*. Co-created by writer and curator Elizaveta Alexandrovna Shneyderman, the archive forms a kind of personal cinematic grammar, a cipher by which to read and interpret the film anew.



Barrio is concerned with making the invisible visible, whether in a discussion of the viability of unionization for sex workers, the presentation of a baker plying his trade elbow-deep in dough, or her questioning of the figurative dough that greases the cogs of culture—and asks us to consider the seductions of power, social obedience and submission; and the nature of the conduits that connect us, across otherwise unbridgeable divides of geography, history, identity. Included in the web archive’s dramaturgical artefacts is an audition monologue from *Basic Instinct:* “I’m a writer, I use people for what I write. You write what you know. Let the world beware.” But Barrio, sensing that unconsidered obedience to any narrative is fatal, proposes the opposite—I *learn* something through creating. And there is an open invitation to the process. Her camera’s hunger to take in just that much more than the eye can see: Let the world be *here*.

experiment-41/6401) Milgram's assistant "even came to blows with one forty-six-year-old woman who turned the shock machine off." (Gina Perry, *Behind the Shock Machine. The Untold Story of the Notorious Milgram Psychology Experiments,* New York, 2013. p.134)

[3 i.e. "recuerdo del día de mi nacimiento, recuerdo del día de mi nacimiento, recuerdo del día de mi primera comunión"

Eva H.D. is the author of the poetry collections *Rotten Perfect Mouth*, and *Shiner*. Her poem, 38 Michigans won the Montreal International Poetry Prize ." Her poem, "Bonedog" was featured in Charlie Kaufman's recent film *I'm Thinking of Ending Things*, (Netflix). Her new collection of poetry,*The Natural Hustle* will be available from McClelland & Stewart in 2022.

Photos by Daniel Kukla

THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE Video Stills by Itziar Barrio

itziarbarrio.com

Itziar Barrio. THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (Participant Inc, 2016) Poster. Designed by Jaume Marco

Itziar Barrio. Minerva plegada en cañería II. Concrete, clay, used plumbing pipe, paint, and latex (DETAIL). 126 x 50 x 30 cm. 2019.

Itziar Barrio. You Weren't Familiar, But You Weren't Afraid Film Poster. 2022. Co-designed by Jaume Marco and Itziar Barrio

Itziar Barrio. THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE at Participant Inc, 2016. New York. Photo: Olivia DiVecchia

Itziar Barrio, THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (PREMIERE), 2022. Installation view at Participant Inc, New York. Photo: Daniel Kukla.

Itziar Barrio, You Weren't Familiar, But You Weren't Afraid Still. HD, 98 min. 2022.

Itziar Barrio, THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (PREMIERE), 2022. Installation view at Participant Inc, New York. Photo: Daniel Kukla.

Itziar Barrio, It's all whatever we want it to be, 2022. Participant Inc, New York. Photo: Daniel Kukla.

Itziar Barrio, Untitled (JEFF 6), 2022. Silkscreen on latex, latex, Metallic structure (IKEA

JEFF Chair), and cement. Participant Inc, New York. Photo: Daniel Kukla.

Itziar Barrio, Plegada, 2022. Participant Inc, New York. Photo: Daniel Kukla.

Itziar Barrio, THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (PREMIERE), 2022. Installation view at Participant Inc, New York. Photo: Daniel Kukla.

Itziar Barrio, Minerva plegada en cañería IV, 2022. Participant Inc, New York. Photo: Daniel Kukla.

Itziar Barrio, Putting it into our bodies, 2022. Cement, rubber and spandex. 12 x 5 x 5 inches. Participant Inc, New York. Photo: Daniel Kukla.

Itziar Barrio, THE PERILS OF OBEDIENCE (PREMIERE), 2022. Installation view at Participant Inc, New York. Photo: Daniel Kukla.

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