INTERVIEWS

with Teresa Pereda, Charly Nijensohn and Juan Pablo Ferlat

Ana María Battistozzi

To be truly coherent with the dynamic of collective participation that we have emphasized in relation to these works, it might have made more sense to have conversed as a group, rather than hold three separate interviews. This format, though, is useful insofar as it shows the individual visions, which are undeniably important even in a participatory dynamic. These interviews also provide a space for reflection on the professional and personal yield for each of the participants.

Ana María Battistozzi: *Based on the registers and the images that we have of your work, there seems to be an intersection of experiences, of modes of production, as well as extremely rich material on the level of human relations (your team, the locals and the way that they connected in each case). Where to start? Perhaps with that small project that you set up so that everything would work from the beginning to the end. How did you organize the work that this project entailed?*

Teresa Pereda: We always used two cameras. In the Amazon, there were four of us, since Edu Abad worked as an assistant. Most times, Charly worked with one video camera and Juan Pablo with the other. There were also two still photography cameras. This suggests the way that our roles rotated; each one of us took the other's shoots. Still, at the moment of actually making my work I was very aware of everything going on, of who was holding the ball of yarn, where it was headed; I got in the water and asked someone to hold it down. Someone always has to take charge of organizing what's happening.

A.M.B.: *Did the dynamic entail letting things happen or was there some sort of a scripted plan?*

T.P.: I put together a plan, but always on site, on the basis of the locals and what the place itself suggested. I developed much of the action seen in the video. I recorded the locals telling their legends, and those legends guided me in terms of what other actions to carry out with the wool, in the jungle or in the water. I developed different situations on the basis of three legends I chose: the one about the *Boto Vermelho*, a sort of red fish; the one about the *Curupira*, and the one about the *Mapinguarí*.

A.M.B.: *What characterizes each of these legends?*

T.P.: Curupira is the spirit of the woods, who takes power over anyone who comes into the jungle and, in a certain way, makes that person get lost in the thicket. *Mapinguarí* is a huge being, half monkey and half man, who devours people.

A.M.B.: *It would seem that both cases contain the idea of a devouring, possessing being. Is that right?*

T.P.: In the Amazon, the relationship between people and nature is somewhat sexual, an amazing coupling that one feels on a physical level. As soon as you go into jungle, you sense something greater, something devouring. It was on the basis of this sensation and the stories of the locals that I structured the situations that appear in the work. Still, in a way, the situations came to pass naturally. I don't arrive to a place with a previous plan; it takes shape naturally. What I do is go to the jungle with the ball of yarn and roll it. I have to take the only path available into the jungle. So we are all single file in the areas it is possible to get into, because going deeper into the jungle means not knowing what you will find.

A.M.B.: *What you are saying is interesting, because it would seem that nature establishes limits and crossing them entails risks.*

T.P.: Exactly. There is a limit, I would even go so far as to say a wall. The feeling you get is that nature doesn't give you a chance, and if

you cross that limit there is no turning back.

A.M.B.: *That's your experience because you come from somewhere else. But what happens to the locals?*

T.P.: They speak of the jungle and the water as if they were people, and in a way that reflects the presence of those elements, which is so strong that it demands respect and an awareness that there is no turning back. Either you respect it or it devours you.

A.M.B.: *What did that warning mean for your work?*

T.P.: In my case, for example, I knew that once I threw the wool into the water the current might take it, might even drag it down and dissolve it. I knew that once it was in the water there would be no turning back. It was very moving to see how the torrent dissolved it. The same thing happened with the wool in the vast plain in Uyuni, where the plateau is so large and diaphanous. There, silence and vast space were the main players.

A.M.B.: *It would seem, though, that when you set the ball of yarn rolling you are paving a way.*

T.P.: The wool is my only guide, the only thing that will allow me to return from that vastness in which I lose myself. The jungle has its unique form of devouring, but in the opposite setting, in Uyuni, the silence and vastness are equally devouring.

A.M.B.: *It's interesting that in such different geographical settings in Latin America the same feeling sets in.*

T.P.: At the moment seen, for instance, in Flores para un desierto (Flowers for a Desert) when I set the ball of yarn rolling, the feeling I have is that I am that ball of yarn, moving, taking the shape of the place.

A.M.B.: *A projection of your ego onto the ball-object…?*

T.P.: And onto another situation, which doesn't surprise me because I spent part of my childhood on a wool farm in Neuquén. To squash the

wool, my siblings and I would jump on it as it went into the baler. We would walk on, or play hide-and-seek in, the bales of wool. I have a long and close relationship with wool that I never really considered until recently, when I started to work with it.

A.M.B.: *Maybe you never realized it because only in this context could it become meaningful.*

T.P.: I think it's strange that this is happening to me now with a material that was so important to me as a child. The same thing happened to me with soil. In the countryside, you always take a shovel along, just in case. It is a basic tool that comes in handy if you get stuck somewhere on the road or if you want to check out a crop…

A.M.B.: *What you are describing has to do with constructing a sensibility, and childhood experiences are crucial to that. At the same time, this type of work entails a radical distance from your earlier pictorial work. It appears that at that time you were also concerned with origins, but in terms of the representation of certain signs. Have you thought about where you have been, how you got here?*

T.P.: That's an interesting question because the change was not intellectual. It came, rather, from working with materials connected to the history of my sensibility. It's as if a basic connection with the language of the material had been established, and when I say material I mean basically soil, which is what I have been working with for fourteen years. The connection to the soil was what led me to leave behind paint and brushes, the materials that I used to work with…

A.M.B.: *Materials are more cultural than natural.*

T.P.: I connected with soil on a sensorial level and in terms of memory, a memory certainly archaic and distant but also current. Listening to the material and its resonance is what allowed me to make this passage over these twelve years. In a way, finding wool meant something similar.

A.**M.B.:** *That's interesting, because wool also has to do with current concerns about harmony, or the lack thereof, with nature. Things biodegradable that become a part of nature. As part of a biological cycle, wool is part of nature, as opposed to artificial things, things that are not a part of that cycle.*

T.P.: Like oil byproducts.

A.M.B.: *One of which is paint…*

T.P.: That's true…

A.M.B.: Could that be connected to a rupture in your own work?

T.P.: There is a rupture but not, in my view, in terms of ecology, but rather the desire for a connection with the Jungian archaic man; that primitive man that we all have inside, who in a way is at stake in terms of what you say about nature. Build what we may, one day we will die and become dust. We return to nature; our bodies are degradable and, in a way, working with natural material means assimilating that.

A.M.B.: *At the beginning of this conversation, I was thinking about collective production and everything that it entails. That's another aspect of your work. On the one hand, it is concerned with the archaic and the primitive, while at the same time it makes use of very sophisticated and contemporary production strategies.*

T.P.: You mean the use of video and still photography cameras?

A.M.B.: *I also mean collective work, teams that involve a number of people. And in your case, considering where you come from, that means breaking with the model of the individual artist in the representational space of painting. In this work, we are faced with an almost cinematographic form of production.*

T.P.: That's true, but at the same time collaboration is also akin to the way the people worked in the caves in Lascaux or the cueva de las Manos (cave of the Hands), or even in the building of cathedrals. Such collabo-

ration seems to mean getting lost in anonymity, but it is what makes the work possible. I think those two aspects come together to construct this sort of work.

A.M.B.: *How did this encounter come to pass?*

T.P.: Charly and I knew each other's work, and we were both at the Fin del Mundo Biennial, where he presented a video and I did the first performance from this series. Charly came to see it and participated as a member of the audience. I remember that he had his bags with him because after the performance he was heading straight for the airport. I remember perfectly the special way he said goodbye. Shortly thereafter, he wrote me, telling me that he was thinking of going to Uyuni, to work in the salt flat, and he sent me some images. He asked me if I would be willing to go along as a collaborator with the locals, whom he wanted to work with in a production. Naturally, I said I would; I was very moved that he had perceived that I had special relationship to people. But I kept thinking, and I made a counteroffer: I would do a project of my own at the site and he would register what I did. We kept exchanging e-mails about the alternatives, and that's how we came up with the idea that he work at dusk in the salt flat and I work in the early morning, when the light is good.

A.M.B.: *And how did Juan Pablo become a part of the trip and the project?*

T.P.: Juan Pablo was a student and disciple of Charly's. Almost three years ago, when I had the show at Wussmann, Charly introduced us via e-mail, and said Juan Pablo was going to come by and visit me. We were in touch that whole year. I would look at his work, a sort of contact between a young artist and an older one. We had a beautiful connection from the very first day and, when Charly and I arranged the trip to Uyuni, I suggested that Juan Pablo come along as my assistant. Charly loved the idea and, in the end, Juan Pablo came along to assist us both; he would also have the opportunity to do his own work, if he wanted to. That was the beginning, and the things that came to pass, both in Uyuni and in the Amazon, were extraordinary: rich, fluid, simple, easy and powerful. In-

deed, so powerful that they went beyond anything the three of us could have imagined.

A.M.B.: *Beyond the encounter between the three of you, what was it like working with the different places and persons?*

T.P.: I would say it was totally improvised. The only thing we arranged beforehand was the hotel in Uyuni, where we would stay for those twenty days in January. We went at that time of year because it was the rainy season and Charly needed there to be water on the salt flats. I also found out that January is the month when they "flower" the llamas, and that gave rise to the possibility of flowering my ball of yarn as well. I always have something in mind when I travel. I try to do research along anthropological, cultural and social lines, to learn as much as possible about the place in question.

A.M.B.: *And was all that prior information useful?*

T.P.: Often intuition or simply what comes to pass proves be to the most helpful. I remember that at the beginning we had rented a car for two days, and the driver who picked us up at the airport struck me as very interesting. As soon as we got out of the car, I said to Charly, "This man should be our driver for these twenty days." Not only was he himself a great help, but his whole family—he has seven brothers—worked on Charly's photos in the salt flats. In fact, their grandfather was the one who welcomed us in Jaruma, a one-hour drive from our hotel, where we participated in the llama-flowering ceremony and the sacrifice shown in the photos and the video. None of those things was planned in advance.

A.M.B.: *What struck you about that man?*

T.P.: He had two characteristics that I consider very important for my work. Since he was a driver who worked with tourists, he related easily to those not from his home. At the same time, he was totally committed to and proud of his place of origin. His contact with tourists by no means led him to look down on his home. Just the opposite; in fact, he was the one

who took me to the home of the person who showed me how offerings were made in this area.

A.M.B.: *Why did you need to learn how offerings were made there?*

T.P.: It is something I always do; I ask for permission, and they teach me how to be in that place. Before taking the first shots in the salt flat, for instance, we did a small ceremony, a chayada, which is the word for the ceremony to the host, that is, to Pachamama. We did a brief and common chayada, something very basic, according to the instructions of this man, as a way to ask the salt flat for permission to go in. It's important because locals consider the salt flat the dwelling of the gods.

A.M.B.: *I can imagine the implications of working somewhere like that.*

T.P.: It's quite something to spend twenty days at such a meaningful place. And hence the importance of asking permission; that's basis to my work at each place. I did the same thing in Ushuaia: ask the people with whom I worked for permission.

A.M.B.: *You mean in the Yatana forest?*

T.P.: Exactly. I try to identify the place's keepers, who are sometimes not all that visible.

A.M.B.: *In the Amazon, were the keepers visible?*

T.P.: Yes, they were, but in another way. The question of the keepers was very strange. One was a woman who worked in the kitchen of the inn where we would eat. It was a very simple place, geared towards the locals, mostly fishermen. There, we were waited on by a woman, Marcia, who helped me out. She told me the first legends that I registered.

A.M.B.: *Was that because you asked her to, or did she just tell you the legends?*

T.P.: I asked for them. I can't tell you how, but I am able to detect the people who are facilitators of my work. I can't explain it rationally, but

something happens to me, people who look at me, and I sense it. It's as if their gaze went through me, making me someone worthy of their trust, even though I am from somewhere else. I don't try to hide the fact that I am from elsewhere —it's so obvious— but that gaze is what produces and facilitates the encounter. I can't say much more because that would take us into esoteric spheres involving energies and such, and I don't know about that. I just let myself go. This woman, Marcia, took me to the old folks that grow medicinal herbs; they are heelers, as was she, but she gave it up because now she is a part of a group of evangelists.

A.M.B.: *Those two roles must not be easily compatible*.

T.P.: That's right, that's why she gave up her work as a heeler, though she had been one. At a certain moment I realized that she had all these traits; what I can't explain is how I perceive something like that. From then on, she was my facilitator. Despite the language barrier —Marcia spoke a very difficult form of Portuguese—, she was the person who told me the first stories about the place. Then she took me to the old folks, who never would have received me if I hadn't gone with her. At my request, they gave me some remedies. I often do that: assume a passive disposition, a willingness to receive, in this case a remedy. Marcia was kind enough to try it first.

A.M.B.: *How interesting that she took on the role of mediator even to that extent! And what did Charly and Juan Pablo do in those sorts of situations?*

T.P.: These are very special situations. In my view, Charly and Juan Pablo have the confidence and trust to handle them, and they know how to participate as they come up. Their presence in situations like the one I am describing could have been annoying, but it wasn't. At the llama-flowering ceremony in Jaruma, for instance, we didn't know that they were going to sacrifice an animal. We aren't used to that... though it was not so strange for me to see an animal sacrificed...

A.M.B.: *But it's not something that people from the city can necessarily handle well.*

T.P.: It was a very powerful experience, and we took it in stride and kept filming and taking photos. That's why I say that at a certain point it's not clear who is doing what. When we were in the salt flats working on Charly's project, I was standing around in some of the takes, just another person. He hadn't asked me if I was willing to be in some of the scenes, but he had brought along black clothes in my size; he gave the clothes to me the day we arrived and there I was. I am one of the characters in many of the Charly's scenes.

A.M.B.: *Did that help you in any specific way?*

T.P.: Absolutely! It allowed me to be with the other participants, to converse with them, to be out there in the downpour, under the thunder and lightening, exposed to the same wind and cold as them. That was thanks to the fact that Charly included me in his work, and how he did it allowed the same thing to happen with my work; I don't know if I am making sense. Freezing cold and soaking wet, all wrinkled from having spent an hour and a half out in the storm, we then got into the vans. That also positioned me in relation to my work in a way that I had not imagined. That was my experience. I don't know what Juan Pablo and Charly would say.

A.M.B.: *Probably similar things.*

T.P.: Probably, because we created a really harmonious connection, one based on great respect, which is so valuable and rare.

Ana María Battistozzi: *What led you to think you could work with Teresa on certain projects?*

Charly Nijensohn: Well, one of the characteristics of my work is that it's like making films; I arrive, do my thing, and leave. But some time ago, due to certain experiences that I was having, I became interested in more and deeper human contact, I didn't want to radically change what I was doing,

but I did want to go a bit further in terms of connections with people.

A.M.B.: *Moving beyond the parachutist syndrome?*

Ch.N.: One is always a parachutist, but for some reason when working with Teresa it was possible to create ties different from the ones that I was to establish while working alone. I had already met Teresa when we were both invited to participate in the *Bienal del Fin del Mundo*. At the event, I saw the work that she was doing with people from the area's idigenous community, and I found it very interesting. Especially the profound connection that she was able to establish even though she is blond and fair skinned, which always marks a difference... So, when I was about to start the project in Bolivia, I thought of her as someone who could provide a more shamanic contact, something that I would not be able to do. At the same time, I was interested in the idea of gathering a group of people to work together and help each other out. My work does not take all day -I usually work early in the morning, at sunrise, or at dusk- which means I have a lot of free time. It's enriching to share that time with others, helping each other out and exchanging experiences and ideas, Teresa and I were able to do that. She could provide me with that shamanic side and I could help her with other things she needed. Since our schedules were different, we were always available to help each other out, which was very enriching. Again, the idea of the shaman comes to mind when I think of her and what she contributed to these projects. It was fantastic to participate in these experiences, in that shamanic magic that she generates.

A.M.B.: You call the unique bond that she is able to forge, as well as your interest in it, shamanic. What part of your work and in what instances did you feel drawn to that?

Ch.N.: Since its beginnings, in the 1980s, my work has had a shamanic component, though over time it has changed. There was something shamanic in Ar Detroy or La Negra, for instance, though because they were group projects that was felt mostly inside the group. In both the 1980s and the 1990s, I participated in different groups; I have always

liked collective work, and I have always tried to connect that way.

A.M.B.: *I am interested in the moment when you clicked with Teresa's work.*

Ch.N.: I was telling you about my interest in collective work. Well, the initial stage of that sort of work came to an end soon after 2000, but I was still fascinated by the dynamic of doing things collectively. Though those first groups no longer exist, I still have the idea of working that way, and I find people with whom I am interested in establishing that kind of connection. I guess there was something of that between Teresa and me, something that allowed us to further our work together. Through her, I was able to nourish a certain side of myself, and I was able to do the same for her.

A.M.B.: *As I understand it, she greatly appreciated that exchange of experiences: you contributed your experience with larger projects, which she did not have, as well as competence, even mastery, of certain technologies.*

Ch.N.: That was most certainly part of the back-and-forth that we were both after.

A.M.B.: *There is a marked difference in what each of you can contribute. At the beginning of this conversation, you said that your work was like making films, "I arrive, I do my thing, and I leave". What happens collectively in terms of a contemporary production design is one thing, and what is constructed or furthered by human relationships of that sort that Teresa forges is another. Can you recall significant incidents in relation to both these things?*

Ch.N.: Let's see... our first experience together was in Bolivia. Each one of the places entails, if not great danger, at least certain tension. In this case, we lived for three weeks —a pretty long time— at an altitude of 4,000 meters, and so we didn't have oxygen. You drink coca-leaf tea to handle the altitude a little better, but that means that you are kind of wired, and so you can´t sleep, and so you stop drinking the tea. Teresa had some sleeping pills, which everyone appreciated. At that altitudes, the feeling

of not having enough oxygen is intense and it's hard to fall asleep at night. For the first few days it's no big deal, but then it build up and gets harder to handle. Let's just say that every place has its problems.

In the Amazon, the issue was mosquitoes, and vaccinations against God knows what. You have to be very careful about where you go. There are also problems at each place in terms of what you can eat to avoid getting sick during precious time. There is a lot of energy, money and concentration at stake, and if you get sick it makes things hard for everyone. You have to watch what you eat, etc. All of these things vary greatly from place to place.

A.M.B.: *And what was your relationship with the people like in each case? You just describe the situation, but what about the relationship with the locals? Was that the decisive to your work?*

Ch.N.: The fact that Teresa was able to build a bridge with the local people was vital. All of the experiences that were possible due to that greatly affected the project. As the days went by, her bond to the people grew stronger, and as a result the project went in all sorts of different directions. And it culminated in the ceremony they invited us to at the end of the project; what I mean is, the way that she connected with the people made certain thing a certain direction, possible. Basically, it was an experience different from the one I had in Greenland when I worked with the Inuit Indians. I had a good relationship with them, but it never got so deep. In that sense, I think what we were able to do together was wonderful. I would never have participated in and experienced the things I participated in and experienced had it not been for Teresa. Of course, that enriches everything. I have a personal experience of this sort once a year, and I love to live it to the fullest. For me, that means getting to know the world around me a bit better, including many things that one might not see. What Teresa makes possible by opening up those curtains and participating in other thing is really wonderful.

A.M.B.: *What you say about the difference between the experience in*

Bolivia and the one in Greenland is interesting. Would you say the difference was due to Teresa's participation, the nature of the project —which entailed an exchange— or the group itself, which was living together for a spell?

Ch.N.: I don't know, I think we are living like a puzzle, that we fit together and give each other things that neither of us would experience on their own.

A.M.B.: *I imagine that Juan Pablo is another piece of the puzzle, and that that precise conjunction of the three is what forms a good connection, that includes the place and its inhabitants.*

Ch.N.: Definitely. I would say that's why it was possible to repeat as successfully in the Amazon an experience that I think was unforgettable for all three of us, where everything flowed and we didn't step on each other´s toes. It was very comfortable. That's not easy in the sort of work that I do. It's great when it happens, and I enjoy it very much. To be able to stop what I am doing and make myself available to her, for my mind to be blank and then go back to what I was doing...

A.M.B.: *the way you complement each other is interesting. Many people who do such dynamic work choose to focus only on their own project. In addition, it's important that you had the courage to participate in things that you would not have done in other circumstances. That must be connected to the rational side that dominates our culture. In the end, it only serves to exclude you as a viewer, not allowing you to participate as an agent.*

Ch.N.: Before, for instance, I would make quick visits to a place and rush back. Especially when I was working with Ar Detroy, I would do what I had to do and leave; I only stayed for a day of two. One of the many differences with this system —probably before Uyuni, in Greenland— is the fact that I cannot go and do everything in one, two or three days. I could in terms of the cinematographic work, but that wouldn't do me any good spiritually; I need to be there X number of days, three weeks, say, twenty-one days, for things to start happening. I mean, certain inexorable things take time; time goes by and ruins everything. Time goes by and things change. So part or what I have come to understand in this time is that one has to be in

the place, not just go and then leave, you have to be there. And the longer you are there the more you want to experience everything around you, because it is part of the other to which you don't have access during daily life. I think that this sensibility has been furthered and perfected thanks to Teresa, and that it was crucial to the work in both Uyuni and the Amazon. I participated, for instance, when Teresa went to visit a shaman in the Amazon. And the experience of being in that hut with those people and that woman shaman was unique. Teresa had to go back two days later to get a potion that the shaman had made for her. I think it was a black liquid in a two-liter coke bottle. There is always someone who serves as a sort of introducer; Teresa had been in touch with a woman who made this contact, and before Teresa drank it that woman took a sip from the bottle to test what was inside. Then she said to Teresa, "It's good medicine."

A.M.B.: *Yes, she told me that she tried it to make sure it was ok. An act of courtesy.*

Ch.N.: That's right. It was also part of Teresa's work to drink it. I, on the other hand, could never drink that, though the whole situation was fantastic. The same was true the last day we were in Uyuni, and we participated in the ceremony. Teresa ate with them; I was a bit under the weather; I drank a little water, but I didn't participate in the chaya or drink beer. They drank grain alcohol, called potable alcohol. And they drank it while sacrificing the llama and explaining the ceremony —a series of things— over a six-hour period during which it begins to ferment. I imagine the situation as more and more alcohol gets drunk... And all of this in the middle of a mountain, a beautiful sunset. Anyway... these are things that I would never have experienced on my own and, of course, they also enriched my work a great deal. The interesting thing is that these people started out working with me and then with Teresa, and that's when everything started to flow; in the end, it became one thing, something that gave to both of us, to the three of us counting Juan Pablo, what each of us was after. In a way, you don't even go after many of these things, they just appear, though one is not that innocent. In this sort of work, one is always conjuring a certain

magic.

Ana María Battistozzi: *It's my understanding that despite a dynamic that entailed multiple and interchangeable roles. Teresa and Charly were going to work on pre existing project. What about you? Did you have a personal artistic project or just an interest in participating in the production?*

Juan Pablo Ferlat: I had a lot of ideas. Something that, from the onset, relates the work of all three of us is a deep connection to nature. I have done other projects in nature, and in one way or another nature has run like through my work. So the idea of working in places like this was not foreign to me. Still, from the onset I tried the first trip; at that point, we had not yet had a similar prior experience and we were all very excited.

A.M.B.: *A similar experience in terms of working as a team or working together?*

J.P.F.: Both. Really it was more a question of let's see what happens, and if it happens, if something comes out of it, great. We didn't have a specific idea beforehand. There was also a tight time limit, since we only planned to be there a certain number of days. That's why it seemed more important to be available to help them. Do you have any idea of the risk of a project where three artists set out to collaborate?

A.M.B.: *The risk that each person plays the role of artist and no one of producer?*

J.P.F.: Exactly. Or that jealousy gets in the way and no one focuses on the work. That's why, from the onset, I said to myself, what matters most here is putting your ego aside, collaborating and working together.

A.M.B.: Was that something that you had agreed on beforehand or something that happened naturally, without discussing it?

J.P.F.: A combination of the two. Initially, I was going along to be an assistant camera operator for both Charly and Teresa, but also to be around to help out in the production as well. Technically speaking, those are my areas of expertise, my fields. But they also invited me to participate as an

artist. What I mean is they were always open to me doing my own art as well. But, strangely enough, for me the success of the project depended on how much I was able to help them make their art.

A.M.B.: It's my understanding that that is what happened in Uyuni. Was that also the case in the Amazon?

J.P.F.: Something really interesting happened there, which was like raising the stakes. By the time we went to the Amazon, we had already had an earlier experience working together, and that intensified the collaboration. So I started to work with Teresa editing the videos from Uyuni. I worked closely with Charly, who showed me the sketches he was making for the Amazon. So my work in that case began earlier. In Uyuni, Charly and Teresa's projects were already underway and I got involved at the production phase. That was different in the Amazon, where I also developed a few projects of my own, which I am now getting a sense of how to formalize.

A.M.B.: *That is, you were able to produce some material of your own and now you have to think it through.*

J.P.F.: *Exactly, and that was the case from the beginning; I participated from the very start…*

A.M.B.: *You were talking about editing the material from Uyuni, the whole post production stage. I am interested in the question of editing because it is increasingly considered fundamental to constructing a meaning. How did you three handle it? Where you only involved on a technical level or also in relation to the form and/or content?*

J.P.F.: We collaborated a great deal. The difference is interesting: Charly had already made his sketches; he had everything all set, and even knew what it was going to look like. Teresa's way of working on this project, on the other hand, was much more spontaneous and open to dialogue. So the timeframes of the rewriting that takes place in the editing process, which entails selecting, rewriting and rearranging what

took place during another phase. That was crucial, especially in terms of finding the language. Teresa's intuition, considering that she did not have a lot of experience working in video, was striking. The whole process entailed removing the extra to find those elements that formed a part of her proposal and aesthetic. Starting with the very first trip, we took a lot of footage; almost 16 hours, almost all of it filmed using two cameras. And the material was very diverse: parts of it entailed intervention in nature, and in other parts we were in the middle of a ritual. Tremendously varied situations. Editing that took us a whole year. By the time we went to the Amazon, on the other hand, we had a much clearer idea.

A.M.B.: *Did you have a script?*

J.P.F.: No, we never had a script as such. Teresa had put together something like a script, though not in technical terms; she had written down some things that she wanted to work on, things related to legends, and certain projects that she wanted to do with the wool in the jungle. A few clear yet very poetic lines that she had written out. But, mostly what was really fluid was our work as a team. There was a lot of improvisation in the scene of a jazz jam session, different improvisations that emerge in the context.

A.M.B.: *Tell me about your relationship with each of them. On a generational level, what sort of connection did you have with someone like Charly, who has worked widely both in Argentina and abroad and with Teresa who comes from a discipline so different from the one you were trained in?*

J.P.F.: I met Charly in 2001, when he was my professor. I was lucky enough to study with him before he went to Berlin, and we stayed in touch. My connection with Teresa is different. Despite so many differences, she has something quite enviable, a spirit of change, of transformation. That comes from her work and an inner peace that affords her tremendous confidence. When she set out on the first trip to Uyuni, she still had so much to discover. But from the beginning, due to that spirit, she faced everything without any fear. Since she has that energy of change, her exploration

was almost playful, certainly relaxed and totally natural.

A.M.B.: You represent three generations and each has a different attitude due to personality and age.

J.P.F.: And for other reason as well; Teresa's family has a tradition of visual artists. For her, this project represents a double challenge changing the support and embarking on a different kind of work.

A.M.B.: I agree that she is before a very transcendent change, indeed moving away from a crucial part of her life, and hence the importance of showing this as a new chapter.

J.P.F.: Absolutely. Very responsibly she took painstaking care of this work and she waited for an opportunity like this to show it in its full breadth. Unlike the visual arts were the assumption is that the work itself is fairly autonomous, this work is very relational; it entails a great many actors and other elements that bind and complete a large endeavor. So it's great that we were able to take care of the work until the right opportunity to show it came alone.

A.M.B.: *You use the term "relational" do you mean in the sense that Bourriaud uses the term?*

J.P.F.: Yes, though I am not all that familiar with his theory, I do think that in a way, Teresa's work coincides with it, because much of her work is based on relations. On a metaphorical level, what she formulates with the ball of yarn is very significant: it is a thread, one that waves connections between people and situations.

A.M.B.: *Different geographies, people and contexts, a very broad system of relations, right?*

J.P.F.: Definitely. In a way, it can be seen as a relational metaphor, a metaphor for connections. Something that can bind this relationships and people. I think that's a very specific metaphor. The work with the soil, the delivery and the restitution also gives rise to a certain type of connections and situations. The proposal is to generate

relations, and the aim is not the final work, but opening yourself up to whatever happens, allowing for these connections to emerge.

A.M.B.: *That's why I believe her work is much more than a work of art: it is a project that binds all these instances together.*

J.P.F.: Absolutely, and now she is raising the stakes. She is going to do a delivery and restitution in the gallery space. I think that that is the supreme instance of the show, where she will allow these things, these exchanges and relationships, to happen in and installation space as well. A binding within her proposal. Beyond theoretical formulation, I think that that emerges simply.

A.M.B.: *That's interesting, because it confirms what you were saying about her intuitiveness. Teresa deals with things that are, in a certain way lingering on the horizon of the thinking of this time. I would like to hear more about this situation that you say emerge simply and, mostly, about your role in them.*

J.P.F.: That is Teresa's work; suddenly generating surprising relations with people, with the locals, with people who are very different on socials and cultural levels. Suddenly, they invited us and we would find ourselves experiencing, quite naturally, a sacrifice ceremony. Charly and I could believe it. They cut open the llama, took out its heart, blew on its innards and told us our future.

A.M.B.: What was that like?

J.P.F.: Incredible. Still it was a fairly tense moment. There was the shaman and two men and a woman, who where his apprentices. The woman said that there were some black lines in the llama's heart, and that created a great deal of tension, as if she was about to say something no one wanted to hear. Meanwhile, the man was holding the animal's heart and lungs in his hand. Luckily, he looked away and saw some white lines that neutralized everything. Then he said, "Everything is all right here, you will have good luck and come back to Bolivia three times". At that moment, we looked at each other as if to say "how did we get here?!" but

that is how Teresa gets places, because since she was a child she has had a fluid relationship with native peoples, thanks to her aunt.

A.M.B.: *She definitely has a natural disposition, which is what Charly picked up on when he saw her action at the Bienal del Fin del Mundo.*

J.P.F.: Yes, that's why he invites her, so that she can work on the ties to the community. That was very helpful when it came time to invite the people how worked in Charly's piece. She presides over the nexus. Teresa gets around very naturally. The same thing happened in the Amazon: people appeared and situations occurred that allowed us access to really incredible places.

A.M.B.: *Places that would otherwise have been inaccessible?*

J.P.F.: Definitely. Just as she connected with the shamans in Uyuni, she connected with the people who read soil in the Amazon, some old folks in a house in the middle of the jungle who plant and heal with medicinal herbs. Suddenly, I found myself there. I never would have imagined that I would have been able to have access to that place and suddenly Teresa and I were there. That is, I believe, a characteristic of hers that allows her to move very powerful energies.

A.M.B.: *What would you say the outcome was for you? What things do you think this experience gave you?*

J.P.F.: Many things on many levels. Of course, on a professional level this has all been very enriching. But, mostly on a human level this work allowed me to grow a great deal. Watching them work and being a part of it made me imagine another sort of personal connection and another sort of collaboration between artists, something that doesn't happen that often in this milieu.

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