

CARTA

by Mónica Calle

Casa Conveniente / Zona Não Viglada
2021



1. SINOPSIS

In Carta, Mónica Calle continues to raise the questions: how do we continue? How do we resist and how do we overcome, individually and collectively? And how, in this process, is it possible to rescue the joy, the pleasure?

Starting from the Beethoven's live playing 7th symphony - using constant loops, vocal reproductions, and repeated physical movements - she challenges, once again, the performers to reflect on these and other issues with her. A place of questioning that arises from the body, from its limitations and capacities, or not, of overcoming. The innocence of the attempt. The wonder of error, of failure. The rigor. The transcendence. The astonishment. Rewiring.

This new show, Carta, is part of a research process that has accompanied Mónica Calle for the past 7 years, entitled *Ensaio Para Uma Cartografia*, in which she has been working the classical music and dance under the theater perspective. In this new work, whose title is related to the word cartography (Latin *charta*), Mónica invites a group of 15 professional classical musicians that together with the cast of actresses will return to that initial question: how do we continue and how do we start over? Question that takes on new shapes in the face of the circumstances that we all live in today. The artistic work as a place of resistance and humanity.



2. VIDEO RECORDING AND PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTRATION

[Full length recording | Sala Garrett at Teatro Nacional D. Maria II in Lisbon, PT](#)
(Password: mariathesecond)

[Stage photos by Filipe Ferreira](#)
[Stage photos by Bruno Simão](#)



3. CREDITS

Director: Mónica Calle

Performers: Ana Água, Ângela Flores Baltazar, Beatriz Almeida, Berta Vidal, Brígida Sousa, Bruna de Moura, Carolina Varela, Cire Ndiaye, Cleo Tavares, Inês Vaz, Joana de Verona, Kristina Van de Sand, Lucília Raimundo, Madalena Rato, Mafalda Jara, Mafalda Tuna, Maria da Rocha, Maria Inês Roque, Mariana Correia, Mariana Sardinha, Marta Félix, Miu Lapin, Mónica Calle, Roxana Ionesco, Sara Miguel, Sílvia Barbeiro, Sofia Dinger, Sofia Duarte Carvalho, Sofia Miguel Castro, Sofia Santos Silva, Sofia Vitória

Music Director: Martim Sousa Tavares

Light Designer: José Álvaro Correia

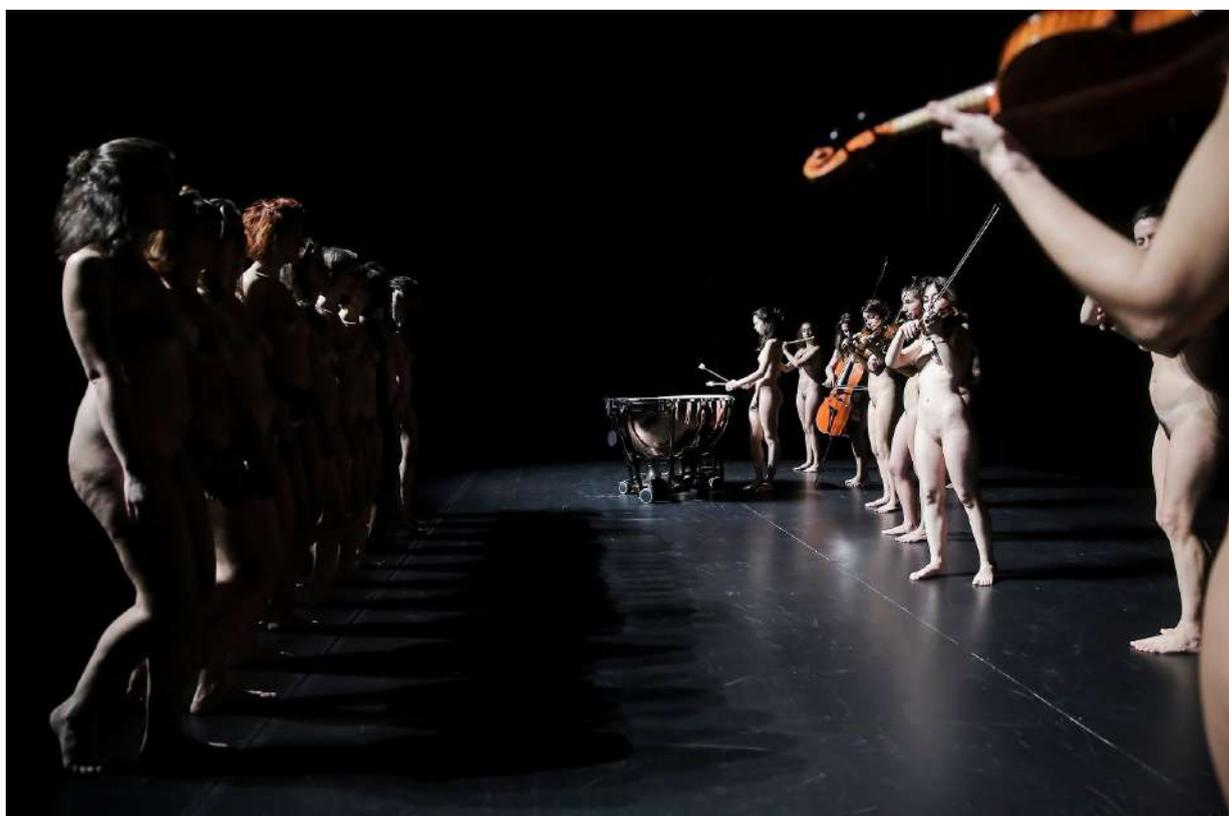
Assistant Director: José Miguel Vitorino

Photographer: Bruno Simão

Producer: Sérgio Azevedo

Production: Casa Conveniente / Zona Não Viglada

Co-production: Teatro Nacional D. Maria II



4. TECHNICAL RIDERS

[Example of light plans and rider.](#)

The light design can be adapted to the auditorium equipment and characteristics.

If possible, you can send us, in advance, photos of the auditorium, technical plans and available riders for us to analyse.

Light designer: José Álvaro Correia | josecor10@gmail.com

Technical needs for the stage and performers:

- The stage should be in raw style, with no fabrics, no background, no scenography, no side backstage;
- The international hoster should provide some of the classical instruments: 5 violins, 3 violas, 5 cellos 4/4 for the actresses and 2 timpani (which is a way to reduce the costs, getting these instruments rented or loaned from local). Regarding the instruments for the professional musicians, it's needed to analyse the better and cheaper way - to loan or rent good quality instruments from local, or to travel with the owner's instruments;
- Temperature control on the stage.

5. FEE PROPOSAL

[Fee proposal and conditions on this link](#)





6. FEW PRESS COVERAGE

Dancing in spikes as a political act

[Vítor Belanciano | 17/01/2021 | Jornal Público](#)

The most important political moment that I have been able to watch recently has not happened in any TV debate. It was on the stage of Teatro Nacional D. Maria II, [...] the day that Carta debuted, the new work of Mónica Calle, in the company of thirty women [...] playing fragments of the 2nd movement of the Beethoven's 7th Symphony. It was there [...] that another future was imagined, made of pleasure, sensitivity and solidarity.

[...] There is a political imagination that is urgent to reactivate [...] And at that point Carta is a lesson, without having this pretention [...] in a tremendous emotional and physical investment, witnessed by us, spectators, haunted [...] in Carta we again have [...] the idea that we only exist in connection with others. Those bodies are always together, walking in the same direction in all their nakedness and fragility, wrapped in a logic of mutual assistance. Surrounded by the pandemic, what we see is even more exciting. Don't give up. We must continue. In their belief in the possibility of theater, they face the cynicism of the world today. They set it on fire. There is no populism that fits that stage [...].

That mass of bodies is unbreakable. We know that no one will be left behind. The most helpless will not be forgotten. The most privileged will be more attentive and frugal. Capital or totalitarianisms may want to share them, but they cooperate. They may want to fill you with racist, sexist or classist hatred, but they will create bonds of brotherhood. If they are subject to precariousness, they will promote autonomous circuits for the redistribution of wealth. Those women, in points, show that, beyond technology, totalitarianism or pandemics, the body is an ancient artifact, sometimes looking invalid, but without equal. Let's use it. Let's walk together

Carta. By Mónica Calle

[Tânia Ramos | 13/01/2021](#)

[...] And naked women begin, individually, to show their fragility. A body. A unit of measure. An individual.

Here begins their transformation (and mine).

Align, create a human structure. A cell wall. And they quickly start breathing with one voice. The rhythmic movement extends over 29 bodies. With precise notes of light and the sound of the chorus of these voices we will feel the approach of the human wave. After this moment, each of the interpreters goes to get her instrument and repeats, now using it, the music that she had originally performed.

[...] Mónica's play, although repeating the same movement as Beethoven, is itself governed by a set of independent but interconnected movements: with instruments, with dance, with bodies. Going to the bottom of the body's resistance. Using all its beauty to transmit this Allegretto.

[...] I think we were all very sure that together we are even stronger, but that we are only individuals because we live in community, outside the community we are lost points in the Universe.

It had been a while since I left a play with teary eyes. Because Mónica and her working group (artists, technicians) managed to put that seed of hope in my chest.

A new world, please.

[Rui Monteiro | 14/01/2021 | Ípsilon](#)

[...] Carta is a "place of utopia and affirmation that we only exist as individuals in connection with others." [...] And these words, which, on any other day, could only be a declaration of intent, saying them half an hour after the Government orders, again, to close the theaters, gain dimension and substance because they reveal the desire to communion; more, they reveal the need for resistance [...].

And, listening the excerpts of the 7th Beethoven's Symphony, [...] let us follow the movement of this mass of female bodies looking in the despoliation of the nakedness to find themselves as one, let us willing to learn as they are learning to master the instruments and the voice, to use the body as a form of humble empowerment, capable of - I don't know? - recover, against the imposed loneliness, humanism and empathy [...].

To get here, Mónica Calle (b.1966) and her extensive cast went through a long process [...] started in 2014, with the staging of [various works] in a movement of trial and error [...] advancing and going back and forward again to find this 'Carta', a staging of great beauty borned from a deep inner search. [...] through repeated movements, it reveals in its subtext a restrained desire for upheaval, a need to act much more than just react, which will only happen when the idea of a collective, of a community capable of build everything that is still a utopia.

[...] although sometimes he seems to be asleep, entertained there at the deep of his cave, out of sight, the breath of the dragon that lives in Casa Conveniente is always felt in it's productions. Even when, as now, it seems, only and deceptively, a dormant volcano, but very capable of suddenly erupting, as it so often threatens in the strange and restless serenity of this piece. [...]

Mónica Calle in front of an army of hope

[Gonçalo Frota | 12/01/2021](#)

[...] performance in which Mónica Calle returns to take the premises that made *Ensaio Para Uma Cartografia* (2017) one of the most sublime shows in recent years.

[...]

Even more than what happened with *Ensaio Para Uma Cartografia*, *Carta* lives from the imperative need that Mónica Calle identifies in “being together” and “needing each other”. Even more than in *Ensaio*, when 12 actresses repeated the same movement while listening to and following the recording of conductor Leonard Bernstein directing a rehearsal of Ravel's *Bolero*, interrupting and correcting the musicians. The orchestra playing and the actresses also fought against errors and imperfections in a continuous sacrifice, and in a way of overcoming that was confused with tiredness

[...].

[...]

[...] *Carta*, a proposal founded on resistance, fraternity, solidarity and a collective idea. When we see, one by one, the musicians joining, on the bottom of the stage to an increasingly voluminous triangle [...] as they advance on stage and, already without the instruments, carry on the voices Beethoven's notes, these women are together [...]. They are always together, for better or for worse, they are infected by transmitting the same choreographic movement and walking in the same direction, wrapped by the same melody.

Mónica Calle had not anticipated this reaction, but at the end of the first *Ensaio Para Uma Cartografia* dates at D. Maria II, in 2017, the audience started to join the actresses in the same incessant repetition of movement that occupied almost the entire performance. Not intended to encourage any kind of public participation, the play would have the same effect in several rooms in Europe, thanks to this spontaneous form of solidarity that the spectators experienced [...].

Carta appears as a continuation of *Ensaio Para Uma Cartografia*. [...] "The premises are not exhausted, they are here, they are necessary and relevant".

[...] This was not a work that started from scratch, it was the result of many years of work [...]. [...] there is in *Carta* an option to counter the logic of unstoppable succession of creations that governs the performing arts, forcing a feverish rhythm of production, even if the time for a creation is not yet exhausted and requires a bigger investment. "I am increasingly reluctant in this artistic production of objects treated as disposable [...]. The work we do here is about people coming together and about time, on a journey made together, both artistically and in personal life. "

The return to some of the same elements led Mónica Calle to believe, for some time, that *Carta* would be “a conclusion” of what started in *Essay*. But the [...] same journey we were witnessing has now become more numerous, thanks to a group that repeats interpreters but is gathering new accomplices. [...]

[...] the creator has now added to the attempt and the failure a notion of absence. These musicians do not even represent all the instruments that would be necessary for the performance of the symphony, but under the baton of Martim Sousa Tavares they help each other, help each other and offer, in all their fragility, a musical piece that it stands up dignified and justified. [...] the musicians are playing excerpts from Beethoven's work without recourse to sheets [...]. "For the first time there is our voice, the voice that comes from inside". [...] What we are left with, therefore, is the musical hum of these women who sing excerpts from the *Symphony No7* by Beethoven and carry them in their voices and in their bodies as, little by little, they advance on stage, as if they saw a light and were attracted to it, in all its nakedness and fragility.

The musical phrases placed in these voices and in these bodies are heard as a song of hope and collective uplift. [...]

These women represent the artists' "responsibility and obligation" in to present themselves as "bags of hope, vitality, joy, fraternity and faith" [...]. Even when these steps are accompanied by severe economic constraints and a feeling that this total commitment to art is still treated with ingratitude and disrespect so often.

[...]

If there is an absolutely nuclear idea in Carta, in fact, it is that it is necessary to continue.

And it's this verb that drives Carta [...] that makes some of these bodies we met before now being transformed and marked by the years that have passed since the Ensaio, that makes "the evidence of our mortality and our humanity" [...] infiltrate the artistic discourse. On stage, we always see the ephemeral that exists in these women in conflict with the permanent character of the notes written by Beethoven. Those notes that, even so, to live have to be played, heard, sung, made flesh. In Carta, "Beethoven exists through our bodies, our voices, our presence, our movements, our individualities." And when we are taken by that circular melody, it is no longer Beethoven that matters. This is what these women claim for themselves as they lean on pieces of this symphony to move towards us. [...]