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Documentary and Community Theatre with Young People in Madrid: The Creative Process of Mundo Quinta

Mundo Quinta is a documentary theatre creation programme for adolescents in Madrid, launched by Espacio Abierto Quinta de los Molinos and directed by the theatre company Cross Border Project. This publicly funded programme started in 2018 and is currently celebrating its sixth season. Each season takes place during the academic year and culminates in the premiere of a new play. This article combines empirical and ethnographical methods with theatre analysis to examine the foundations, artistic vision, and creative process of Mundo Quinta, and to analyze how artistic quality is ensured in the final productions. The research undertaken focuses on the fourth season, and identifies the techniques used to create the verbatim theatre play *¿Me quieres alfileres? (Multiformas de querer)* [*Do You Love Me? (Multiforms of Love)*] in 2022 with designated young participants.

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AT PRESENT, there is a 'participatory turn' in the cultural policies of many European countries.¹ While the idea of participation is not novel in cultural policy, it has traditionally been associated with the accessibility of cultural services. The interest in promoting more active involvement of citizens in cultural institutions is leading to a new understanding of participation.² Creative industries and public institutions face constant demands to foster cultural diversity in their projects and develop more democratic forms of artistic creation that turn citizens into active participants. The New European Agenda for Culture calls for cultural participation to create a more cohesive Europe. It recognizes that cultural participation has a positive impact on the quality of people's lives, contributes to their wellbeing, and boosts their sense of belonging to society.³ Simultaneously, in the performing arts, interest has increased in fostering participation and attracting new audiences beyond the

highly educated who make up only 10 per cent of potential audiences.⁴ Theatre, like other cultural representations, has the power to challenge the way we understand ourselves and others, promoting positive changes in collective identities.⁵ Within this frame, the experience of community theatre practitioners is essential, as they contribute to expanding the borders of cultural practice and experience by engaging specific communities in the creative process.

In community theatre, the community is the source of the dramatic text, the performers, and the audience.⁶ Despite being created with the guidance of professional artists,⁷ community theatre is usually considered unconventional because it often takes place outside mainstream establishments, with target audiences that are not necessarily theatre-goers.⁸ In some countries, community theatre constitutes an integral part of public theatre institutions. In others, it occurs mainly in the

independent scene,⁹ which may hinder its professional recognition.

In Spain, there has been a notable increase in community theatre projects in which people with no previous acting experience become performers and co-creators. After years of independent initiatives from community and inclusive theatre companies, public theatres are launching and hosting programmes that require expertise and mediation from community theatre professionals. In 2011, the General Plan for Theatre proposed the promotion of new audiences through 'a greater presence of theatre in the entire educational system, in cultural programming, and in community development'.¹⁰ Public institutions, from the national level to regional and city councils, have sponsored new funding sources. For instance, the annual call for grant funding for theatre and circus programmes enables 'stable projects of creation, exhibition, research, and training in the national territory specifically focused on theatre for children and youth and/or inclusive theatre for people with different abilities'.¹¹

A survey conducted by the Spanish Network of Publicly Owned Theatres, Auditoriums, Circuits, and Festivals, with the collaboration of Pedagogías Invisibles, revealed that the main objectives of theatres already involved in projects of education and mediation are to create new audiences and to promote the performing arts as an added value to education.¹² In this scenario, with children and youth as a target collectivity, an increasing number of public theatres are generating community theatre projects. Well-established annual programmes include La Nave of the Teatro Calderón de la Barca, in Valladolid,¹³ and Mundo Quinta of Espacio Abierto Quinta de los Molinos, in Madrid. These two programmes fulfil the recommendations of the European Theatre Convention, according to which public theatres, policy-makers, and funders must ensure 'professional production values' and 'high artistic standards' in their participatory theatre projects, allowing time for the process.¹⁴

This article focuses on the fourth season of Mundo Quinta (2021–22), which resulted in the production of the play *¿Me quieres alfileres?*

(*Multiformas de querer*) on 25 June 2022 at the Espacio Abierto. Mundo Quinta is a programme of documentary theatre created with and by adolescents between the age of thirteen and eighteen. It was launched in 2018 by Espacio Abierto Quinta de los Molinos, the only cultural space of the City of Madrid exclusively devoted to children and adolescents, and which is publicly funded by the municipal company Madrid Destino. The Spanish theatre company Cross Border Project manages the artistic direction of Mundo Quinta, and it was founded by Lucía Miranda, stage director, cultural manager, playwright, and art educator. With more than ten years of experience, the company has stood out for its combination of professional theatre productions with art education projects, both at a national and international level, using diverse techniques from documentary theatre and community theatre. Cross Border Project wants to make theatre for social transformation an integral part of performing arts and education institutions.¹⁵

In theatre studies, the emphasis on the social and personal benefits of theatre participation sometimes overshadows the artistic values of community theatre, even if specialists are utterly convinced of such values. For this reason, scholars agree on the need to re-orient a field 'heavily biased towards the social sciences'¹⁶ and pay more attention to its aesthetics.¹⁷ We cannot forget, however, that 'theatre practice, although involving creativity, fantasy, imagination – in a word, art – is the action of those who do it'.¹⁸ The approach of this study combines the examination of the creative process (encompassing all the social actors involved) with the analysis of the final play – 'to which the specialized discourse known as aesthetics refers'.¹⁹ How do the interests of a public institution, a theatre company, and young participants come together to create a theatre production? What are the foundations of the programme? How is the creative process organized and what artistic vision arises from it? How is artistic quality in the final production ensured? To answer these questions, analysis of the dramatic text and the final performances²⁰ is combined with my direct observations of the creative process and

semi-structured interviews with the artistic director of Espacio Abierto, the director and founder of Cross Border Project, the two art educators who currently lead Mundo Quinta, and eight out of the fifteen young participants of the fourth season. The observations and interviews took place during the last two months of the creative process from 21 April 2022 to 26 June 2022.²¹

The Foundations of Mundo Quinta

Mundo Quinta was created along with the opening of the cultural space Espacio Abierto Quinta de los Molinos. Espacio Abierto opened its doors on 21 July 2018 under the artistic direction of Beatriz de Torres. It is located in a small palace in the public park Quinta de los Molinos, a 52-acre green area in the San Blas district of Madrid, with almond trees, pines, bushes, and ponds. The creation of Espacio Abierto as a cultural centre aimed at children and youth was an initiative of the then mayor of Madrid, Manuela Carmena. The assessor of culture at the City Council, Paula Foulkes, assigned the project to Beatriz de Torres, who developed the concept of Espacio Abierto, considering the use, form, and spirit intended to shape this public space.

Espacio Abierto (which means 'open space' in Spanish), lives up to its name with a welcoming spirit, serving as a meeting place and offering a rich programme of activities, workshops, and shows aimed at babies, children, adolescents, and families. In a personal interview, de Torres highlighted art and creation as the cornerstones of Espacio Abierto: 'I wanted everything that happens here to be crossed by art and creation, not only to generate a space for creators to show their work but to serve as a bubbling heart so that the creativity is contagious for everyone who comes and mainly for children and adolescents.'²² By providing a safe and welcoming environment, Espacio Abierto offers an opportunity for children and young people to explore their artistic passions and connect with others.

According to de Torres, cultural institutions have disregarded adolescents because they are between childhood and young adulthood. For this reason, she wanted adolescents to have a

prominent role in Espacio Abierto so that they could create, express themselves, and let their voices be heard. She promoted the creation of Mundo Quinta as a documentary theatre project for, with, and by adolescents. The performing arts can, in her opinion, benefit youth 'at an intimate and even professional level'.

Moreover, she wanted Mundo Quinta to result yearly in a final staging that fulfils the expectations of a professional production, one she describes as 'the type of production I would programme as an artistic director'. For her, the experience of creating a performance not only gives adolescents specific performing skills, but also the 'reliability and professionalism of doing things with care, responsibility, and team awareness, knowing that each of them has a role'. In addition, it was essential for her that the performance let us hear the voices of the young participants, which led to the choice of documentary theatre:

I was clear on the responsibility of a public space and it seems to me that those of us who are eventually in charge of a public institution have the obligation to bet, to risk, and to defend things that can only be done from the public sector. . . . We have to give this audience and this age group a space, right? Not only as an audience but also as an active part. We have to push the institutions. And this is a municipal space: here they are listened to, resources are provided, their needs, their requests are met . . . this is for them, for everybody, and we are all here to enjoy that.

In the individual interviews, the young participants expressed their identification with the project and how important it was for them to feel heard. One of the veteran participants described their experience with the first season of the project. 'We were very united as a group,' they said. 'It was our first year, we showed off on stage and I felt very important. . . . It made me feel relevant, like someone saw me, I mean, someone saw all of us and truly believed that we matter and that we should give our best. I think that's wonderful.'²³ This feedback shows the positive impact of creating a sense of community, responsibility, and trust among participants, prioritizing their voices.

To develop Mundo Quinta, de Torres contacted Lucía Miranda, the director of the Spanish theatre company Cross Border Project. At

the time, Miranda was the artistic director of *Generación Global* (2018–20), together with Marina Santo. *Generación Global* was a scenic creation laboratory aimed at young people, between fourteen and eighteen years old, from diverse origins, who were studying in Madrid, with a special focus on migrants and refugees. It was coordinated by the Centro de Cultura Contemporánea Conde Duque of the Municipality of Madrid, the non-profit organization CEAR (Spanish Commission for Refugees), and Cross Border Project.²⁴ Nacho Bilbao, one of the members of Cross Border Project, designed the *Mundo Quinta* project, taking into consideration the experience acquired by the company in *Generación Global*.²⁵ Throughout the years, Cross Border Project's community programmes have benefited from the exchange of experiences among art educators.

The first season of *Mundo Quinta* was launched in October 2018 and is currently in its sixth season. The group meets every Thursday at Espacio Abierto during the school calendar, from October to June. During the Covid-19 lockdown, *Mundo Quinta* maintained its weekly meetings online, guaranteeing the creation of a final scenic production that could take place after the restrictions lifted, despite the special circumstances. In the first and second seasons of the programme (2018–20), the artistic directors were Nacho Bilbao (lead director) and Belén de Santiago. From the third season (2020–23), Belén de Santiago (lead director) and Ángel Perabá took over the artistic direction. Since 2020, Susana Rubio has been the coordinator of *Mundo Quinta*.

In *Mundo Quinta*, the community of adolescents is at the centre of the programme's attention. The young participants are the source and protagonists of the final production. Community theatre, as described by Eugene van Erven, 'manifests itself in many different guises, yielding a broad range of performance styles', and is united by 'its emphasis on local and/or personal stories (rather than pre-written scripts) that are first processed through improvisation and then collectively shaped into theatre'.²⁶ Every year, the lead artists rely on documentary theatre techniques

to convey – and even collect – the creations, stories, and concerns of the adolescents.

The connections between community theatre and certain forms of documentary theatre that stem from a community have already been mentioned by such scholars as Derek Paget, from the perspective of British verbatim theatre of the 1970s and 1980s, and van Erven, from the perspective of community theatre.²⁷ However, in current documentary theatre productions, the selection of the community depends mostly on the topic that the playwright or theatre company wants to address, while in community theatre, the community is at the heart of the entire process, including the selection of a topic, as in *Mundo Quinta*.

Mundo Quinta's Creative Process

Closer examination of *Mundo Quinta*'s yearly organization of the creative process sheds light on its artistic vision and the key elements and strategies used to achieve it. Every year, the artistic directors of *Mundo Quinta* follow a similar timeline. Before the start of a new edition, there is a recruitment phase organized by Susana Rubio, the coordinator of *Mundo Quinta*. Rubio contacts the public high schools of the area, and two art educators visit them to give a workshop about *Mundo Quinta* so that students can experience what the project is about. They also invite the students to attend the staging of the play of the previous season, attracting young audiences. The collaboration of schools and teachers is key in this process.²⁸ Information about *Mundo Quinta* is also spread by word of mouth, as Belén de Santiago highlights: 'Once you have the group, part of the recruitment is done by the participants, as they tell others about it.'²⁹

At the end of October, the weekly meetings begin, taking place on Thursdays between 5 and 7 p.m. Although the content of each workshop depends on the phase of the creative process, every session of *Mundo Quinta* starts with warm-up games and finishes with a moment of reflection and closure. These moments include circle exercises in which each participant has a say. Before leaving, the participants take turns in the circle to twist towards each other and embrace. This

approach fosters a sense of community and encourages open communication among participants.

Belén de Santiago and Ángel Perabá insist on the importance of the first meetings for team building. They are essential to establish a safe space of creativity and artistic expression for the rest of the year. As Perabá puts it, 'For us, "team building" means to be able to express oneself freely within the group, to be able to give opinions, to be able to make mistakes, to feel free to make mistakes.'³⁰ In the interviews with the young participants, it was evident that the feeling of being included and accepted was of utmost importance:

I was starting to meet people I really liked, and it's a feeling I can't describe. When you start to feel like you've found a place where you fit in. When we did activities, they included you in everything. . . . I'm being part of something and not as an extra, but we are all one.³¹

This sense of belonging is crucial for adolescents, as they are still in the process of discovering their own identities and interests.

Without losing sight of the team-building objective, the first few weeks are also about choosing a theme of interest to everyone, as Belén de Santiago explains:

We start the edition, and the first part of the project focuses directly on getting to know each other, building a team, and generating a safe space of confidence where participants feel free to express themselves. This is a fundamental aim because if we are not successful, the project won't work at a later stage, so we have to go all-out with it. The first session is about playing, knowing each other, and knowing the group. Afterwards, this aim of building a team and generating a safe space is connected with the search for a topic of interest for the group through the artistic tools that we are going to use to create a play. This year we have worked with verbatim documentary theatre. Thus, we looked for a topic that concerns us all as a group using the tools of verbatim documentary theatre.

In the fourth season (2021–22), the group decided to reflect on human relationships. In this part of the creative process, the participants of Mundo Quinta collaborate in games and improvisations, conduct research, and generate materials that Belén de Santiago will

eventually transform into a dramatic text and Ángel Perabá into movement and choreography. Participants also delve into a specific theatre modality in combination with documentary theatre, showing the project's commitment to continuous improvement and innovation. This ultimately benefits the participants, especially those who have been involved with Mundo Quinta for several years. For example, in the 2019–20 season, the creative process was based on Theatre in Education, while in 2022–23 it concentrated on the theatre of objects. In the fourth season (2021–22), which led to *¿Me quieres alfileres? (Multiformas de querer)*, Mundo Quinta focused on verbatim theatre.

In this part of the creative process, the artistic directors invite two experts to share their experiences about specific topics or techniques. These special guests do not necessarily come from the creative field. The artistic directors of Mundo Quinta consider the wishes and needs of the young participants before deciding who the guests will be. For de Santiago, remaining attentive to these needs is paramount: 'There is a continuous, gigantic listening process.' In 2021–22, the guest experts were Paula Lafuente and Daniel Galindo. Lafuente, a psychotherapist and artist, gave a first workshop that focused on improving the wellbeing of the group, and a second one on experimental poetry, to explore the words of the interviews from the perspective of their sound. Galindo, a radio presenter on Radio Nacional de España, focused on the language of the radio, and taught the young participants how to talk with a microphone, as the play is built around the recording of a podcast (Figure 1).

Another remarkable aspect of the creative process lies in the involvement of the participants' families beyond the role of mere spectators. Every year, the art educators organize an open session where a parent or another adult family member of each young participant is invited. This session serves as a platform for parents and teenagers to engage and play together, thus transcending the space of the group and bringing families closer to the theatre. According to Perabá, it opens up new paths of communication between the parents



Figure 1. The podcast. Photo and courtesy of Javier Burgos.

and their children. It provides an opportunity for parents to share their expectations when they were young, and for the children to compare them with their own expectations. By doing so, they become more aware of the connections between their past and present selves. Moreover, the materials and dynamics that emerge from this session become a part of the final staging, thus making the families an integral part of the creative process. Involving the families in the creative process and the final play not only enhances their participation but also strengthens their bonds with the project.

At this point of the creative process, Belén de Santiago has been working on the creation of a dramatic text with the materials generated by the community. Her intention is 'to be true to the participants' discussions and the conflicts they brought up'. This commitment is

reflected in the words of the adolescents themselves, who revealed in the interviews that they were aware of their contributions. The participants were able to identify specific moments in the plays that contained their words, experiences, and ideas, underscoring the significance of their input. Some participants expressed pride in sharing their message and emphasized the empowering value of performing their ideas:

Throughout the year, I've brought up things on affective responsibility and how love is badly treated in adolescence because there are visions that are not entirely real about what love is. I appear in the play as an expert. They have told me: 'You're an expert, you're going to talk about this.' And I'm quite proud, not only because it's my opinion or what I think and it's there, but because it's a message that I want to share and they have allowed me to do it.³²

While de Santiago works on the dramatic text, Ángel Perabá develops the dramaturgy of movement and composes the choreography that will be part of the final show. Music and choreography are key components of Cross Border Project's professional and community performances that create playful moments of complicity with the audience.

The last three months are devoted to rehearsals. The technical and artistic team starts working on all the angles of the final staging. These are hectic weeks in which the young participants not only rehearse but also experience what it takes to stage a theatre play. They meet the stage and costume designer, the sound designer, the audiovisual artist, the technicians for sound, lighting, and so on. According to de Santiago, this practical experience of what a stage production involves contributes to developing the theatre literacy of the young participants. The adolescents see it as an invaluable experience that gives them a sense of responsibility, as this participant highlighted: 'During the technical rehearsals, people come to see us and ask us questions, and we are constantly running from one place to another. The stress and adrenalin of this last phase make me feel very professional, and it thrills me.'³³

Throughout the year, the young participants are invited to watch plays at Espacio Abierto, and they have the possibility to go every month with the art educators to watch a play at other venues in Madrid. Some of them even took part in professional theatre productions of Cross Border Project, such as the forum theatre play *La chica que soñaba* [*The Girl Who Dreamed*] (2019) or the documentary play *Alicias buscan maravillas* [*Alices Seek Wonders*] (2021). The experience they gain, both as performers and spectators, enrich each other, fostering a theatre literacy that becomes a passion. In fact, in the personal interviews that I held with the participants, seven out of eight expressed an interest in pursuing a career in the performing arts, although only two of them used to go to the theatre before Mundo Quinta. Three interviewees would like to pursue a career in acting, two of them in combination with writing or scenography. Others

indicated a professional interest in production, dramaturgy, set design, and props; one of the veterans is currently studying stage direction at the Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático; and all of them acknowledged that, thanks to Mundo Quinta, they could better understand and appreciate the complexities of theatre production:

When you perform theatre and then you see another play, you know what's behind it . . . For example, the other day I went to see a play with the school, but it was a classic play, *La Celestina*, which didn't interest me much because it's the typical play that you read every year. But there were only four actors who played five or ten characters. Each of them had the versatility to play completely different characters and all that. I was talking about it with my friend, and my friend said she hadn't realized. She was attentive to what they were saying, but I kind of paid attention to a lot of other things.³⁴

I asked the eight young performers which part of the creative process they enjoyed the most. Six of them mentioned the last part of the rehearsals, particularly the last week before the performance, when they meet every day and cover the technical rehearsals. Their reasons for preferring this part of the process were diverse. They enjoy experiencing as performers how the technical aspects of the theatre production are finalized: they feel the responsibility of having to be present every day, as every hour counts – 'If you miss a day, the next day there are already five scenes set up'³⁵ – and the boost of adrenalin at the imminence of the premiere; they receive visits from the media, showing that their work is relevant and their voice is heard; and they have more time to spend and have fun with the whole group. As one performer observes:

I love the feeling of the week before the premiere. We come on Saturday, then we take Sunday and Monday off to rest. We come every day and every day is different. We check out the lights, sound, and everything else. That feeling of coming here every day, rehearsing the play at least three times, making mistakes . . . repeating a scene three times to make sure the lights are perfect . . . The feeling is incredible. I have a great time with my colleagues; we laugh a lot and we have plenty of free time when we're not rehearsing.³⁶

Two participants referred as well to the first weeks when they get to know each other and play because it makes them feel free and relaxed: 'No one expects me to know anything, I can forget everything I know and just start playing. It's my escape mechanism.'³⁷ One participant mentioned that they especially enjoyed workshops with guest experts because the directors take into account their needs and wishes;³⁸ another participant referred to the start of the rehearsals. When I asked all the participants if they shared good memories of Mundo Quinta, they referred to happy moments of companionship and friendship: 'The best thing is the friends I have made. I have created very strong relationships here, and they are some of the few friends I have outside of high school.'³⁹ These memories rely upon the team-building games of the first part of the project and culminate in the intensity of the last weeks and the final explosion of the performance.

¿Me quieres alfileres?: A Collage of Stories and Documentary Techniques

Now that we have a better understanding of the organization and the vision of Mundo Quinta's creative process, let's take a closer look at the play created and performed in the fourth season, *¿Me quieres alfileres? (Multiformas de querer)*.⁴⁰ As already discussed, one of the foundations of the programme is the use of documentary theatre as a means of giving voice to the community of adolescents. In addition, each season of Mundo Quinta delves into specific dramatic forms, which provide a specific methodology during the devising process. The fourth season focused on verbatim theatre, one of the most emblematic forms of documentary theatre.

From the 1920s until today, documentary theatre has evolved, taking many names and forms, which share the use of media objects as a representation of 'an absent person or a past event'.⁴¹ Originally, documentary theatre tried to represent reality faithfully,⁴² while more recently it has willingly blurred the border between fact and fiction.⁴³ There has also been a displacement from the focus on important historical events and characters to the

experience of the common people. This transition towards subjectivity is more apparent in current documentary theatre, where genre hybridity is frequent.

In his study of the British local scene of the 1970s and 1980s, Paget observed that verbatim theatre was based on the 'transcription of interviews with "ordinary" people, done in the context of research into a particular region, subject area, issue, event, or combination of these things'.⁴⁴ This definition still applies to such productions by Cross Border Project as *Fiesta, Fiesta, Fiesta [Party, Party, Party]* (2017) and *Casa [Home]* (2021), even if, in these cases, the research and interviews were conducted by a single individual, Lucía Miranda, the director and playwright, instead of being conducted by the whole company. Miranda took Anna Deavere Smith as a referent in these plays.⁴⁵ Following the American performer's technique, actors not only reproduce the words of the interviews, but also use the audio recordings, to build the characters and imitate as faithfully as possible the way the interviewees talk, replicating their accent, pronunciation, pauses, and so on. In this way, actors convey other socio-cultural dimensions of the interviewees' identities, beyond their testimonies.

When the directors of Mundo Quinta introduced the verbatim methodology in the fourth edition, they drew on the company's experience. Ángel Perabá elaborates:

'Verbatim' refers both to the construction of the text, of the dramaturgy, the part that is direct transcription, and the technique that the performers use to learn the text, not only with the transcription of the text, say, on paper, but also with the audio, and then the acting verbatim, with tools that we have also been learning from the company. Listening to the audio, repeating and repeating, learning it as if it were a song and, well, giving them tools that we ourselves have been trying out in the company.

By analyzing previous approaches and identifying areas for improvement, the art educators crafted a strategy that would maximize the usefulness of the verbatim methodology. They explained to the young participants what verbatim theatre is, how to interview people and find a good story, and how to take care of the

interviewees from an ethical perspective. The adolescents were free to choose the people they wanted to interview, always with the topic of human relationships in mind.

The dramatic text, composed by Belén de Santiago, draws not only from the interviews but also from the participants' experiences and a development process that included exercises, improvisation, research activities, and games. She asked the participants about their experience and perception of the interviews they conducted to keep in mind what they considered relevant. Her intention was to preserve as much as possible the sense and meaning they found in the interviews: 'Otherwise, the play would be about what interests me, instead of what interests them.' In any case, de Santiago acknowledges that she is 'making decisions as a playwright, I just try [to make it so] that those decisions have more to do with theatrical, dramaturgical issues, with conflict; rather than going into the content'. In some cases, the interviews become a fictional dialogue in the play: 'I have also taken care of the artistic side so that the material is not placed in a raw state but that there is a scenic dynamic that contrasts with it so that it isn't all "monologue, monologue, monologue".' As Carol Martin affirms: 'the process of selection, editing, organization, and presentation is where the creative work of documentary theatre gets done.'⁴⁶

The use of real testimonies in theatre can raise ethical concerns, especially in projects created with adolescents. When I discussed this topic with Belén de Santiago, she emphasized the importance of taking 'responsibility for what you are telling' and placing 'ethics and care' at the forefront. To make the young participants and interviewees feel comfortable about the final product, the art educator involved them in the final revision and editing of the play's script. This process ensured that the play was respectful of the people whose stories were being portrayed:

In the [informed consent] forms we give [to the people we interview], we explain that we are going to create a play with the interviews, but that afterwards we are going to show them the text. The kids have given them the scenes . . . and about this material, someone can say, 'I want to change this.'

Before we started rehearsing, just as we had done with the interviewees, we read the dramaturgy [with the adolescents] and we had a session focused on 'How do you feel about it?', 'Do you prefer to tell your own story, or do you prefer someone else's story?' There are scenes in which they tell theirs, and they decided that – proposed by me in most cases, but accepted by them. And some of them told me: 'No, I prefer to tell this, or I prefer that.' . . . It's like they felt the desire to distance themselves from this material. And we have done it that way. And there are more possibilities, it can also happen that a participant says: 'This *was* like that, but now I don't want this to be in the play. . . We're going to remove this.' . . . And things have been removed, yes. This is part of the documentary process.

This accords with the testimony of one young participant who, in response to my question about their contribution to the creative process, revealed that a part of the text was linked to a painful personal experience. Despite the emotional weight of the content, the participant decided to retain it and perform it personally: 'I didn't feel that it was going to make me feel bad. Or that I would feel worse by repeating it over and over again. I think it actually helped me cope with things. Like, I joke about it now.'⁴⁷ This illustrates how a responsible use of testimony, respecting the agency of the participants, can help them process emotions and experiences.

Another important part of the creative process concerns the dramatic resources and techniques employed to transform community-generated materials – the document – effectively into art. The variety of stories, voices, and dramatic forms included in Mundo Quinta's play compose an insightful collage about different types of relationships and their meaning for the participants. The first part of the title, *¿Me quieres alfileres?* (*Multiformas de querer*), displays the input of one mother during the open session with parents, who mentioned that 'me quieres, alfileres' was a colloquial form of declaring love when she was a teenager.⁴⁸ In the play, *¿Me quieres alfileres?* (*Multiformas de querer*) is also the title of a podcast about relationships that the adolescents/performers record at high school and that serves as a unifying thread. According to Belén de Santiago, the idea of introducing a podcast came from an actual

podcast that one of the adolescents brought in during the research phase:

I thought it was a great resource, because I have to find a balance between [the young participants'] ideas and specific artistic decisions that can be undertaken in a simple way with an artistic, scenic result of quality. In this case, they proposed something that facilitates a scenic dynamic [i.e. the podcast]. It was positive for a play where there are many stories, text, monologues, and audio. I thought it was a nice resource to add these presenters, who can offer a contrast between some scenes, give other nuances, and create a special game.

The dramatic text is divided into twenty-five scenes and a prologue that provide a unique perspective – that of youth – on relationships today, from friendship, love, and family in adolescence to affective responsibility. There is a great diversity of voices and stories framed through two main strategies, as follows.

First: the podcast gives a frame to the stories, which are dramatized on the stage while the presenters comment on them. The presenters also introduce music and even audio recordings. For instance, in Scene 10, they play voice messages in which the listeners pose difficult questions about relationships that begin with the words 'What do we do when . . .?'. Mundo Quinta participants recorded these messages as part of an exercise during the development process, adding a new layer of authenticity to the play: 'What do we do when your friend starts crying for someone you know is not good for her?'; 'What do we do when your friend shows up and tells you that your best friend's mother has just committed suicide?'⁴⁹ Scene 17 includes a fragment of the recording of an interview with the grandmother of one of the participants, who speaks about her first love. This is a particularly poignant moment that offers a glimpse into the past, highlighting how relationships have changed over time.

Second: a metatheatrical framework provides information about the interviewing process. At the beginning and end of the play, in the Prologue and Scene 24, the performers explain to two different interviewees – and hence the audience – what the aim of the

interview is, and ask for permission to use their words in the play. By doing so, they encourage the audience to consider the ethical implications of using someone else's words for artistic purposes:

[Prologue]

INTERVIEWER 1: So, before we start, I would like to remind you that this interview is so that we can write our play afterwards.

INTERVIEWER 2: After this, we don't know what's going to happen . . . whether we're going to turn you into one character or several . . .

INTERVIEWER 1: We're going to interview several people from different generations.

INTERVIEWER 2: On relationships.

LUNA: Relationships . . . why?

INTERVIEWER 1: Well, I'm particularly interested in wondering a bit about how we can take better care of our relationships.

INTERVIEWER 2: In my case, well . . . What I think is . . . When the audience is there, right? (*Points at the audience.*) And they listen to the stories, I don't know, they might identify with them and feel: 'Well, it's not just me.'⁵⁰

[Scene 24]

INTERVIEWER 3: In the end, you are going to appear in the play, Pi, right at the end. There were some people who felt a bit awkward about talking about cancer . . . (*Unsteady.*) You know? But I told them that one of the things that surprised me when we found out and went to see you was that you spoke about it completely naturally . . .

PI: And what's the part that's going to appear about me?

INTERVIEWER 3: I brought it right here (*Takes out her mobile phone.*) to see if it's OK with you.⁵¹

The second fragment highlights an interesting aspect of group dynamics and decision making. It shows that some young participants were initially hesitant to include Pi's testimony about cancer in the play. According to de Santiago, there was indeed 'a group conversation about how we were going to talk about cancer, that is, about our concern to tell that story. However, the girl, when asked and shown the text, said that she loved it. In other words, it was us who thought that it could



Figure 2. Luna and her suitcase. Photo and courtesy of Javier Burgos.

raise an issue.’ This shows the effort that the art educators made to ensure that all voices were heard and valued.

Apart from revealing aspects of the interview process, the previous fragments include two important characters of the play, whose stories are mentioned and spread over several scenes: Luna and Pi. Luna, a girl who migrated from Peru to Spain, is portrayed as struggling with the Spanish school system and her relationship with her mother. Her last appearance in the play depicts her decision to return to Peru to be with her grandparents, whom she considers her significant relationship. The performers who take on Luna’s role use a suitcase to identify her, and her interventions are played verbatim, imitating the interviewee’s speech. Pi, a young pianist with cancer, tells us about her love of music and how it helps her through the worst moments. Instead of using the verbatim technique to imitate her speech, de Santiago chose to recreate the information gathered in her interviews through dialogues. Other characters’ stories reflect on the

difficulty of forging meaningful friendships, the need to end toxic relationships, the peculiarities of love in adolescence, and the social considerations of bisexuality, among other topics. The diversity of characters and themes brings depth and complexity to the play, creating a rich and nuanced portrayal of the interviewees’ experiences (Figure 2).

Mundo Quinta participants worked with innovative theatrical techniques to perform the verbatim fragments in groups that required a synchronized use of movement and body expression. Specifically, Scene 6, titled ‘Hey, How Are You?’, and Scene 13, ‘All Very Cheesy, So to Speak’, reproduce verbatim fragments of two different interviews that give an account of the beginning of a friendship and a romantic relationship, respectively. In Scene 6, six participants enter the stage holding teddy bears, while in Scene 13, seven participants come in with a lollipop. In both scenes, the group stands at the centre of the stage, in a choir formation, facing the audience. The two groups of performers, with



Figure 3. The verbatim choir. Photo and courtesy of Javier Burgos.

Ángel Perabá, composed a choreography of gestures that they execute at the same time. They perform the monologue as if they were a unique body with several voices. Each performer interprets a part of the text, resulting in a cohesive and immersive performance with a playful component (Figure 3).

On other occasions, fragments of the interviews are included within a fictional scene. This is the case in Scene 18, 'Mothers Who Are Not Here', which deals with the absence and loss of a mother. The scene is interspersed with two monologues and is based on an improvisation that the participants created from an interview, which is performed verbatim. Scene 19, 'Defending Oneself', introduces a different technique. This scene combines the fictionalization of the participant's interview with her mother with the breaking of the fourth wall. The daughter speaks to the audience to explain her own reactions to the interview, while another performer, in the role of the mother, tells her story. By adopting the intimate tone of confession and blurring the line between fact and fiction, the audience is invited to engage with the material on an emotional level and to reflect on their own experiences and relationships:

DAUGHTER: I already knew that she did judo. And I realized that I had never asked her about judo. – Mum, why did you start judo?

SHIBA: Well, I was the typical good girl who let herself get beaten up. Then, one day, my mum took me aside and said, 'Let's do martial arts.' She took me to do judo. The best thing I could do.

DAUGHTER: Her face was lighting up in a way . . .

SHIBA: We were two partners. I was the strength and she was the technique. And we were spectacular. We won everything. We lived for judo.⁵²

Other scenes originated in group dynamics, exercises, and creative stimuli proposed throughout the course. According to Belén de Santiago, Scene 1, 'Adolescents Taking up the Space', was based on an improvisation in which the participants had to enter high school. This scene takes place just after the prologue that introduces Luna's character and the interview process. As the song 'Brutal' by Olivia Rodrigo (2021) plays at full volume in the theatre, the performers come on stage using their smartphones as lanterns to illuminate their way. They carry the objects that will be used during the play: a table, several chairs, a blackboard, a tablet, and two microphones. They take props and costume items out of Luna's suitcase and place them on the table. Two of them sit down at the table, and someone writes the title of the podcast on the blackboard. In this way, the stage is set up for the rest of the performance with an opening

full of youthful energy: the adolescents take up the stage and want to be heard.

Scene 15, 'Fictional Relationships', is also based on a dynamic in which they play charades about their favourite fictional couples. The scene begins with a representation of the first-kiss scene of Lexa and Clarke, characters in the American science-fiction drama series *The 100* (2014–20), developed by Jason Rothenberg and based on the Young Adult novels by Kass Morgan. The play is rich in references to the music and popular culture that Mundo Quinta participants enjoy, which communicates a sense of authenticity and generates a special complicity with the young audience.

In some cases, the dynamic that led to a scene originated in specific material brought by one of the participants. Scene 7, for instance, titled 'Buddy Contract', is inspired by the comical illustration of an artist that depicts what a contract for friends could look like. In this scene, the podcast presenters humorously discuss what terms they would add to the contract. Similarly, Scene 12, 'The Obvious', takes the form of a monologue whose text was written by the friend of a participant. The monologue deals with how we can take care of relationships by saying obvious things to the people we love, such as 'You are beautiful'. The performer speaks directly to the spectators with restrained emotion, including them in the reflection. Both scenes illustrate how specific materials were transformed into different dramatic forms to explore the topic of human relationships.

Even if not all scenes are based on verbatim techniques, the play maintains an intention to document the creative process and the adolescents' life experiences. The intergenerational dialogue and the relationship between the protagonists and their parents are therefore very present. In fact, some of the parents' contributions to the open session had a direct translation into the play. As de Santiago explains, 'The scene titled "Letter to the Child" is a consequence of one of the activities carried out with the parents. It's their document.' The scene consists of a monologue that quotes sentences written by the parents, who had to complete the phrase: 'Forgive me for

... but sometimes I would like you to ...' Emotion and humour go hand in hand in this letter, which finds a connection to a previous scene titled 'Letter to the Mother'.

The play includes two sessions of group choreography composed by Ángel Perabá for some exercises with 'viewpoints', a technique of improvisation for creating movement for the stage.⁵³ The participants practised with viewpoints throughout the year, particularly during the warm-ups. Perabá wanted the young performers to 'feel onstage and improvise more, compose more': 'It's very cool because you play a song and maybe everyone goes to the floor at the same time. They understand that there are issues of repetition, of the duration of actions, of the meaning given by the place you put yourself in space.' The first choreographed session is based on the popular bolero song 'Bésame mucho' ['Kiss Me a Lot'], as interpreted by American singer Alaina Castillo in 2020. The idea of using this song came from an exercise with viewpoints in which there were many moments of kisses and hugs. On a stage dimly lit with purple light, seven performers interpret a dance that starts with movements and gestures that imply kisses and hugs. They continue dancing more freely around the space, surrounding one of the participants, who ends up as the soloist, dancing and singing at the centre. After reciting the 'Letter to the Mother', another group of seven participants perform the second choreographed session, based on the song 'Ay mamá' ['Oh, Mother'] (2022), by Rigoberta Bandini. The song is a hymn to motherhood that became famous after being performed at Benidorm Fest, where the candidate to represent Spain in Eurovision 2022 was selected. The performers first move along the stage rhythmically, and afterwards dance around one of the participants, who, microphone in hand, takes the role of the singer. In both choreographies, the technique of viewpoints helped the performers to understand the nuances of movement and space, leading to a more organized and cohesive performance.

Life experience, humour, popular culture, music, and dance are all ingredients in the shows of Cross Border Project. In Mundo Quinta, such elements are enriched by the

creativity and perspective of its young protagonists. Undoubtedly, one of Mundo Quinta's merits is to turn the theatre into a space where teenagers can reflect on and convey their concerns with beauty and emotion.

Conclusion

The participatory turn in cultural policies brings an opportunity to rethink how theatres and cultural spaces can contribute to building a more inclusive society and how society can enrich and enhance cultural institutions. In Spain, as in other European countries, there is a growing interest in attracting new audiences by expanding the borders of cultural practice. Some public theatres have launched community theatre projects aimed at children and young people – among other groups – that rely on the artistic direction of theatre professionals and art educators. After five successful seasons, Mundo Quinta, a documentary youth theatre programme, represents a positive model of how a public institution and a theatre company can work together to build a stable programme that takes care of the community and places it at the centre of artistic creation.

The foundations of Mundo Quinta lie in the use of documentary theatre as a creative way to let the voices of adolescents be heard and to make them the protagonists of the creative process, with all the personal and professional gains such an experience has to offer. Espacio Abierto gives the project the time and resources necessary to fulfil the expectations of professional productions. In this sense, the mediation of the Artistic Directors and the participation of a whole artistic and technical team are paramount, as they guarantee the quality of the final production. At the same time, great attention is paid to the wellbeing of the participants. From the very beginning, art educators have focused on building a space where the participants feel free and safe to play and express themselves. The interviews with the young participants show that creating a sense of community and belonging leads to increased motivation and engagement among participants. It also underscores the significance of recognizing

and acknowledging the value of each participant's contribution, which can boost their confidence and self-esteem.

The creative process of Mundo Quinta extends throughout the academic year and is divided into a team-building phase, a research phase, the creation of the dramaturgy, the rehearsals, and the final staging. The project opens its doors to collaboration with guest experts and parents, enriching itself and broadening its scope of action. Every year, the participants choose a new topic and practice, with specific theatre-creation techniques. In the fourth season of Mundo Quinta (2021–22), the artistic team introduced verbatim theatre as a method for textual creation and performance. At the same time, the use of verbatim performance allowed the young participants to enquire into how others experience their most significant relationships and to reflect on the importance of an affective responsibility to improve them.

The analysis of the final performance, in combination with the observations and interviews about the creative process, sheds light on the construction of the dramaturgy. The final text and performance rely on the contributions of the young participants in a creative way. The construction of the scenes shows that the Artistic Directors have intensively documented the ideas and contributions of the participants. By involving the participants in the final revision and editing of the play-script, the art educators ensured that their agency and stories were respected. They have also introduced specific dynamics, activities, and improvisations that opened paths to artistic results. Many of the scenes are based on the interviews, but they are performed using diverse techniques: from pure verbatim imitation to softer forms that re-signify the interviews within the fictional context, including performance techniques that rely on bodily expression, synchronic movements, and choreography. The unifying thread of the podcast and the metatheatrical frame that shows the interview process hold together the collage of stories and documentary techniques.

Mundo Quinta is a good example of how the commitment and collaboration of a public institution and a theatre company align to

offer youth a safe space to create and share their wishes and concerns. The meaning of 'safe space' in this context is two-fold: it not only entails a place for adolescents to think and create freely, but also as a guarantee of being supported by a public institution that ensures the continuation of the project, and a theatre company that boosts their creative efforts with the required artistic expertise.

Notes and References

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1. See, for example, Jutta Virolainen, 'An Analysis of the Concept of Cultural Participation in Finnish Cultural Policy', *Nordisk Kulturpolitisk Tidsskrift*, XIX, No. 1 (2016), p. 59–77; *Cultural Policies in Europe: A Participatory Turn?*, ed. Félix Dupin-Meynard and Emmanuel Négrier (Toulouse: L'Attribut, 2020); and Birgit Eriksson, 'Citizen Participation in Arts and Culture', *ETC European Theatre Convention* (2020), <<https://www.europeantheatre.eu/news/citizen-participation-in-arts-and-culture-birgit-eriksson>>.

2. For an explanation of the paradigms of participation that emerged in different historical contexts and pervade current cultural policy, see Emmanuel Négrier, 'Introduction', in *Cultural Policies*, ed. Dupin-Meynard and Négrier, p. 11–27, (p. 19–25). In the same volume, Félix Dupin-Meynard and Anna Villarroya's 'Participation(s)? Typologies, Uses, and Perceptions in the European Landscape of Cultural Policies' (p. 31–53) combines various methodologies to analyze the typologies of cultural participation in European policies, showing 'a smooth movement towards new forms of engagement of citizens across Europe' (p. 39).

3. European Commission, *A New European Agenda for Culture* (Brussels, 2018), <<https://culture.ec.europa.eu/document/a-new-european-agenda-for-culture-swd2018-267-final>>.

4. See Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012); Eugene van Erven, 'The Tension between Community and Art', *Research in Drama Education*, XX, No. 3 (2015), p. 407–10; and Taiwo Afolabi, 'Theatre and Participation: Towards a Holistic Notion of Participation', *Applied Theatre Research*, V, No. 2 (2017), p. 67–82.

5. *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, ed. Stuart Hall (London: Sage, 1997). For studies on the impact of social change on the Spanish theatre, see Pilar Nieva-de la Paz, 'La evolución de los roles de género en las representaciones literarias: un camino abierto hacia el cambio social', in *Roles de género y cambio social en la literatura española del siglo XX*, ed. Pilar

Nieva-de la Paz (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), p. 9–20; and Francisca Vilches-de Frutos, 'Representaciones de género en el teatro español contemporáneo: La igualdad en la construcción del espacio cultural europeo', *Aleph: Revista de Literatura Hispanoamericana*, XXIV (2010), p. 9–28.

6. See Richard Owen Geer, 'Of the People, by the People, and for the People: The Field of Community Performance', in *The Citizen Artist. 20 Years of Art in the Public Arena: An Anthology from 'High Performance' Magazine, 1978–1998*, ed. Linda Frye Burnham and Steven Durland (Gardiner, New York: Critical Press, 1998); Jan Cohen-Cruz, *Local Acts: Community-Based Performance in the United States* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), p. 2; and Petra Kupperts, *Community Performance: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007).

7. Eugene van Erven, *Community Theatre: Global Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 255.

8. Helen Nicholson, *Applied Drama: The Gift of Theatre* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 2.

9. Miriam Tscholl, 'Our Stage: Participatory Theatre in Dresden and Europe', in *Engage: The International Theatre Programme for European Theatres, Season 2018/2019* (Berlin: European Theatre Convention, 2018), p. 11–12.

10. Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música (INAEM), *Plan General del Teatro* (2011), p. 6.

11. Boletín Oficial del Estado, *Resolución del INAEM, por la que se convocan ayudas al teatro y al circo correspondientes al año 2023* (2 March 2023), p. 16.

12. María Valls, *Informe Borrador Proyecto Ornitorrinco. Resultados de la encuesta sobre detección de actividades de educación y mediación en los espacios escénicos públicos de la Red* (Madrid: Red Española de Teatros Públicos, Auditorios, Circuitos y Festivales de Titularidad Pública, 2020), p. 27.

13. La Nave is a yearly multidisciplinary programme co-directed by Nina Reglero and Carlos Nuevo and aimed at people between sixteen and twenty-six years old that started in 2014. For an analysis of one of their theatre productions, see Luisa García-Manso, 'Teatro comunitario y testimonio en la escena española: "Fuegos" de Lola Blasco y La Nave', *Revista de Escritoras Ibéricas*, VII (2019), p. 209–36.

14. European Theatre Convention (ETC), 'Participatory Theatre: Suggestions and Recommendations for Publicly Funded Theatres, Policy-Makers and Funders at the Local, National, and European Level', ed. Judith Staines (2021), p. 7.

15. Cross Border Project, 'Filosofía Cross Border. Nuestro objetivo', <<https://thecrossborderproject.com/filosofia-cross-border/>>.

16. Van Erven, 'The Tension', p. 408.

17. See van Erven, *Community Theatre*, p. 252; Brad Haseman and Joe Winston, "'Why Be Interested?': Aesthetics, Applied Theatre, and Drama Education', *Research in Drama Education*, XV, No. 4 (2010), p. 465–75 (p. 465); Gareth White, *Applied Theatre: Aesthetics* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 2; Joshua Edelman, Louise Ejgod Hansen, and Quirijn Lennert van den Hoogen, *The Problem of Theatrical Autonomy: Analyzing Theatre as Social Practice Problems* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2017), p. 88; Maria Shevtsova, *Sociology of Theatre and Performance* (Verona: QuiEdit, 2009), especially p. 59–102 (for her theoretical bases of theatre understood as a social practice) and 273–334 (for her ethnographical research on immigrant community theatre audiences). See also Maria Shevtsova, 'Artistic Processes and Characteristics: Key Problems of the Sociology of the Theatre.'

In Dialogue with Pierre Bourdieu', in *Theatre(s) and Public Sphere in a Global and Digital Society: Theoretical Explorations: Volume 1*, ed. Ilaria Riccioni (Leiden: Brill, 2022), p. 1–15.

18. Maria Shevtsova, 'Minority / Dominant Culture in the Theatre', in her *Sociology of Theatre and Performance*, p. 273–87 (p. 275).

19. *Ibid.*

20. Four public performances took place at Espacio Abierto: on 25 and 26 June 2022, and on 8 and 9 October 2022.

21. Semi-structured interviews were conducted, and audio-recorded, with informed consent. The ethics committee for my faculty evaluated and approved the study in advance. Before the start of the investigation, and throughout the process, I had the invaluable support of Susana Rubio, coordinator of Mundo Quinta, whose explanations and responses to my questions contributed to this research. I wish to record my further gratitude to Espacio Abierto, Cross Border Project, and all the people involved in the fourth season of Mundo Quinta for their generosity and readiness to collaborate with the research.

22. All such quotations are from a personal interview with Beatriz de Torres by the author at Espacio Abierto on 22 May 2022. All interviews mentioned in this article were conducted in Spanish; all translations are mine.

23. Personal interview with an eighteen-year-old non-binary participant at Espacio Abierto, 19 May 2023.

24. Generación Global was promoted by the then Artistic Directors of the Conde Duque, Miguel Oyarzun and Isla Aguilar, who founded the BE Festival in Birmingham. The initiative ran for three seasons. In the first two years, Lucía Miranda and Marina Santo were the Artistic Directors. Marina Santo brought to Generación Global her invaluable experience as Artistic Director of Be Next, the BE Festival's Youth Theatre Company. In the third season, Lucía Miranda left Generación Global to start coordinating a new programme for the Centro Dramático Nacional with children, 'Nuevos Dramáticos'. Marina Santo continued in her role as Artistic Director of Generación Global, and Ángel Perabá replaced Miranda.

25. There are some differences between the two programmes, however, as Generación Global took place during school vacations, while Mundo Quinta is organized throughout the academic year. Additionally, in the organization of Mundo Quinta, no specific collective, such as CEAR, was ever involved (author interview with Lucía Miranda at Espacio Abierto, 5 May 2022).

26. Van Erven, *Community Theatre*, p. 2.

27. Derek Paget, "'Verbatim Theatre": Oral History and Documentary Techniques', *New Theatre Quarterly*, III, No. 12 (November 1987), p. 317–36 (p. 317); van Erven, *Community Theatre*, p. 245.

28. During the Covid-19 pandemic, Mundo Quinta had to look for an alternative for the workshop. Instead of visiting the schools, they sent short video documentaries about the previous seasons. One video per season of Mundo Quinta is available at Espacio Abierto, *Vimeo*, <<https://vimeo.com/user87854715>>.

29. All of Belén de Santiago's quotations are from an interview with the author, at her home in Madrid, 27 May 2022.

30. All of Ángel Perabá's quotations are from an interview with the author, at Espacio Abierto, 12 May 2022.

31. Author interview with a seventeen-year-old female participant at Espacio Abierto, 26 May 2022.

32. Author interview with a seventeen-year-old female participant at Espacio Abierto, 2 June 2022.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Author interview with a seventeen-year-old female participant at Espacio Abierto, 26 May 2022.

35. Author interview with a twenty-one-year-old female participant at Espacio Abierto, 19 May 2022.

36. Author interview with an eighteen-year-old male participant at Espacio Abierto, 2 June 2022.

37. Author interview with an eighteen-year-old non-binary participant at Espacio Abierto, 19 May 2022.

38. 'I really like it when they bring people in to give talks . . . The subject of anxiety comes up every year, because of the studies, and one year we said: "We want you to bring us a psychologist". And they did. . . Last year they invited a woman who told us about her experience as an LGBT person . . . and it was very interesting' (author interview with a twenty-one-year-old female participant at Espacio Abierto, 19 May 2022).

39. Author interview with a seventeen-year-old male participant at Espacio Abierto, 9 June 2022.

40. *Multiformas de querer* can be translated as 'multi-forms of love', a subtitle that condenses the different forms of love and human relations shown in the play. A literal translation does not work for the expression '*me quieres alfileres*', which is based on the rhyme between the words '*me quieres*' [you love me] and '*alfileres*' [sewing pins], the latter used as a vocative. It was also once a comical way of asking someone if they loved you (see note 48).

41. Timothy Youker, *Documentary Vanguard in Modern Theatre* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), p. 2.

42. Gary Fisher Dawson, *Documentary Theatre in the United States: A Historical Survey and Analysis of its Content, Form, and Stagecraft* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 18.

43. Carol Martin, 'Bodies of Evidence', *TDR [The Drama Review]*, L, No. 3 (Fall 2006), p. 8–15 (p. 13).

44. Paget, 'Verbatim Theatre', p. 317.

45. Lucía Miranda, 'Nota de la autora', *Fiesta, Fiesta, Fiesta* (Madrid: Dramaturgias Actuales, INAEM, [2017]), p. 18–19 (p. 19).

46. Martin, 'Bodies of Evidence', p. 9.

47. Author interview with a seventeen-year-old female participant at Espacio Abierto, 9 June 2022.

48. Yaiza Cárdenas, '¿Me quieres alfileres?', *lo nuevo de Mundo Quinta*, *Gødot*. *Revista de Artes Escénicas* (23 June 2022), <<https://revistagødot.com/me-quieres-alfileres-lo-nuevo-de-mundo-quinta-en-espacio-abierto/>>.

49. Belén de Santiago, '¿Me quieres alfileres?' (*Multiformas de querer*): 4th Season Mundo Quinta, 13 June 2022, p. 17 (originally in Spanish; author's translation). The dramatic text has not yet been published. I refer to the version of the text that was used for the premiere, which I obtained from Belén de Santiago. The names of the interviewees were pseudonymized for the play (e.g. 'Luna'). In this article, I have also concealed the actual names of Mundo Quinta's performers, which appear in the stage directions, but which are not used in the dialogue.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

53. Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2005), p. 7.