

## Muntadas

On Translation: El aplauso

04/28 - 05/27/00

This triptych video installation was produced in collaboration with the Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Bogota, Colombia and the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio. Following the *File Room*, 1994, Muntadas embarked on an extended series of installations entitled ***On Translation*** with *El Aplauso* having been included in every major retrospective since its initial realization in Columbia.

*On Translation: El aplauso* is a video installation in the form of a triptych made up of three adjacent screens. The images and sound of audience applause before an unspecified event are projected onto the two side screens, while the center screen shows a front view of the audience applauding. Every fifteen to twenty seconds the image projected on the central screen changes, and a sort of subliminal flickering gives way to a black-and-white soundless snapshot of conspicuous violence. These images, that addressed the issue of violence in all its categories, were taken from the local Colombian context and sever other places around the world characterized by extreme violence, corruption, inequality, and international indifference.

As in other earlier projects, which took a look at the processes of transformation and translation of violence into a media spectacle, “el aplauso,” understood as a social convention that denotes consensus and complacency, was approached in this work as a metaphor for the immaterial identity of the audience, their alienation and complicity, represented here by the repetitive, monotonous gesture of clapping. In *On Translation: El Aplauso*, Muntadas drew a portrait of the obscene morbidity with which the media translate and accept atrocities committed all over the world.

*A project motivated, like so many others, by an acute perception of the context for which it was conceived, in this case a Muntadas exhibition in the capital of Colombia (Intersecciones, Casa de al Moneda – Biblioteca Luis Angel Arango, Santa Fe de Bogotá 1999).*

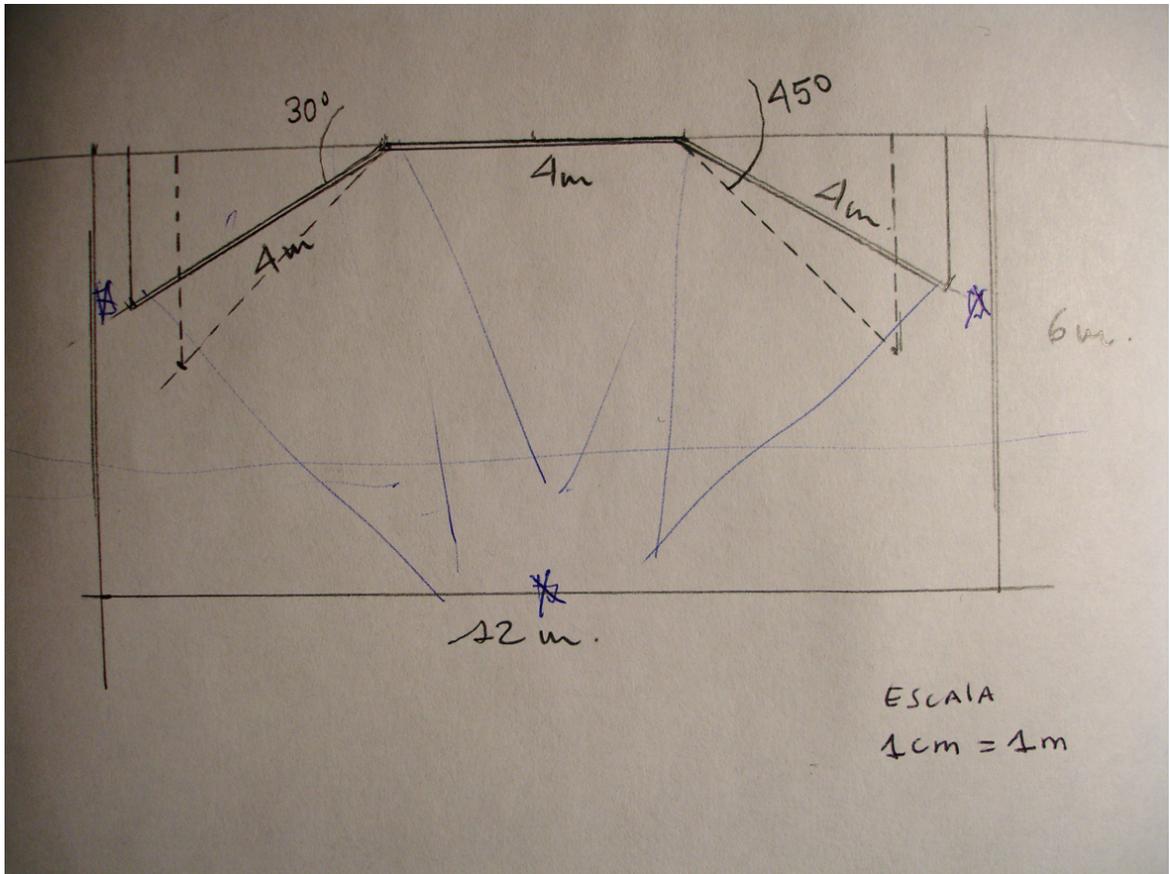
*It primarily concerns the violence and social inequalities which exist in Colombia, but which are perceived only indirectly in the relative calm and normality of life in the capital. This normality is punctured by media reports of a tragedy that has become part of the indifferent routine of daily life.*

*Muntadas uses video projections on three screens, which powerfully fill the space to refer in a broader sense to various violent situations around the world.*

*With the leitmotif of applause as a gregarious act, the central screen displays at regular intervals an exhibition of atrocities in the form of black and white inserts taken from press images, which are accompanied by a brief pause in the monotonous sound: the morbid translation, that takes place on a daily basis, of obscene reality into a media show.*

*The public, the audience, is represented as a depersonalized mass, an unwitting accomplice caught up in the show, through the emphasis on the gesture and the noise of applause as a repetitive, cacophonous motif.*

Eugeni Bonet in *Muntadas: On Translation: I Giardini*,  
51<sup>st</sup> Venice Biennale, 2005, p.



Sketch for *On Translation: El Aplauso* by Antoni Muntadas