

Złodzieje

Thieves

泥棒達

Lladres

Воры

Mabel Palacín



SANTAMÓNICA

ARREGLA

TELAFERIA

Public Screens / Private Screens

04

05

IRENE
AGOSTI

We're at a point where the pandemic is creating new barriers even within our communities. A time when words are muffled, almost drowned out in a confused fear of misunderstanding. And now you come up with a project that you're giving a provocative, polyglot, and transient name...

MABEL
PALACIÁN

Lladres/ladri/ladrones/thieves... I don't like to give it a single name because this project has always been based on movement and transformation, on translation. A message delivered in Moscow travels all through Europe to reach Lisbon as intact as possible. It's a project that I've been working on for a long time, and thanks to the Network and Loop award the opportunity arose to turn this idea on its head and think of all those languages that are already present in the city, that cities contain other cities. I focused on Barcelona, and decided to send a message from Barcelona to the outside world. In that way, another city appears within the city, made up of other languages, other places, crossroads, and connections.





IA

So, the process that you've filmed takes place in the human landscape that you belong to. Do you look at Barcelona as a world within a city? A city where languages, people and exchanges are not only those that appear on the picture-postcard images that we're so used to seeing?

MP

It's a different city, one that extends beyond its physical boundaries. A city that works in the realms of the potential, because of the connections it's capable of making. A city in which the languages that work are not the official ones, because that is something that no longer matters. The city, which was initially characterised by the proximity of goods, people, information, and markets, has expanded, and we are witnessing a reshaping that is linked to the communication that digitalisation fosters. We imagine the city as an infinite protocol in which the physical space and the communication space that it is able to establish overlap. The city is defined by flows which give it structure. People who aren't connected to this space of flows remain in the territory of place, available to articulate other flows.

How have you captured this perception
of a more real, or a more realistic, city?

Lladres/ladri/ladrones/thieves ... is a video where a message, delivered in several languages, travels via people and spaces in order to eventually reach an unknown recipient. The message in **Lladres** is verbal; the project is concerned with the voice, voices that belong to individual people, spoken rather than written words, and the sound of those words. Voice is linked to body and place. The characters look at, and speak to, the camera, they never physically meet, they find the voices of others, the images of others, sometimes separated from each other. The video is articulated through close-ups and environments united by voice, which acts as a connecting thread.





IA

The characters in **Lladres** speak and express emotions in their own languages: what exactly is the common ground that brings them together into a single whole, which makes the city real? How do they communicate with each other?

MP

In the way that we generally use images, they are also messages, they have a sender, and are in search of a recipient. Not a specific recipient, but anyone, they search for a recipient out in the open. Today communication appears as a major function of images, and this is the material **Lladres** works with. It deals with communication as an aesthetic experience, a communication that is successful even if the message that's received isn't exactly the same as the message that was sent, because what's important is the nature of the exchange that's inherent within the act of communicating. A communication that goes beyond both sender and receiver, one that considers the code in which the communication and the background noise are established.

Translation goes beyond words: as the words are transformed; there is no loss because the experience of the text is expanded. **Lladres** highlights the need for other people, for another who can translate and help convey the message. It suggests that we are not exactly whole, complete, and individual beings, but are part of others, we also form an organism together with other people. Networking already points in this direction, and the pandemic has reinforced this idea. William S. Burroughs theorised that language and its grammatical and syntactical rules were like parasites that have chosen our minds as a habitat. Language infects us: its power comes not from its direct capacity to communicate or to persuade, but

from its infectious nature, the power of fragments of language to graft themselves onto other fragments of language, spreading and reproducing themselves, using humans as hosts. Georges Bataille argued that communication was better understood from the perspective of contagion. According to Bataille, as human beings we are nothing more than a conduit for the communicative process, a channel for the ideas that run through it.





IA

Adding these ideas to a creative project is not a linear process. I think that method and technical guidelines are needed ...

MP

One of the fundamental aspects of the project is the idea of process. **Lladres** is a project that determines a PROCESS. For me this is process in capital letters, because the idea of process is always highly important in my work, but here it is doubly so. This is an open-ended project that develops following a protocol, like a game; that's why the process has a learning aspect and an element of surprise. We don't know exactly what a message that reaches a recipient will be like, and we don't yet know who that recipient will be. In the story there are a series of gaps that are gradually filled between the viewer and the actors, and that interests me and gives the story potential. It's a mystery in search of instructions on how to tackle it. Other stories appear within the narrative flow, such as the story of the chess game that Kasparov played against the world (represented by 50,000 players) in 1999 that was sponsored by Microsoft.

15



IA

The most complex part of a project that's in motion is to always keep the conclusion in mind, or else to have the energy to think of it as in a state of permanent r/evolution.

MP

The idea is also that there is no definitive version. This is suggested by the set-up itself, because it changes as the project progresses. It can be read in any order, and all versions are valid. In this sense I like the fact that this is a production that stems from an award given by a network of art centres (the Generalitat's network of art centres). I think it's interesting to involve them, and keep in mind the whole of the territory, the extended, infinite, flexible and plastic city that's destined to appear sooner or later and that will extend the limits of what we currently perceive as a city. The aim is to work with these centres, and to make what's presented at Santa Mònica a starting point for a work that is gradually expanding, incorporating new elements, and being projected in a specific way in each place.



IA

Let's go back to what I used to call *technical frameworks*.

MP

Lladres is recorded using mobile phones and this is a decision that ties together image and communication. The mobile phone has added a new kind of screen that has transformed and altered the whole tradition of screens. Cinema was conceived for a large screen and a large number of viewers all physically together at the same time; television was conceived for a large number of viewers at the same time, but here the viewers were separated from each other. The smallest of screens is aimed at individual, separate and unsynchronised but connected viewers. The mobile phone screen redefines the private and public spheres.





IA

Has the technical medium conditioned the form of the work, the image that the spectator will receive?

MP

This tiny screen has the particularity of alternating two formats interchangeably: the horizontal or panoramic, what we see, and the vertical or portrait, what we are. The vertical format is an interesting novelty, we've found it hard to get used to, but it now seems quite normal. In **Lladres** there's always more than one image on the screen (between 2 and 7) and the alternation of frames is an important feature. Here the cinema meets the multiple screen of the computer, the split-screen of the cinema meets the mobile phone, and the traditional CinemaScope panorama meets the vertical portrait orientation of a mobile phone, in a constant composition of spaces and voices.

19

The mobile phone also carries another narrative: data. This is important, and is almost always ignored. **Lladres** aims to visualise this data, and to make it part of the narrative. People attach no importance to the use of their data as they don't consider themselves to be important, and because they don't see how relevant it is. Visualising the storyline behind the data, extracting a narrative that is part of the story being told, is part of a process that revises the boundaries between the public and the private.

TA There's one final thing to be taken into account: the installation. Let's go back to your definition of the city, and so to the idea of viewers as skilful citizens who are able to choose their own perspective on art, and who are able to interact with the meaning of the work on an emotional level.

MP Art defines public space, and now it is especially necessary, because we are rebuilding a space that has been radically disrupted by the pandemic. The **Lladres** installation in Santa Mònica is intended to be displayed outdoors. It's an installation that must be seen from the street, and that seeks to reclaim the most interesting part of the building, the ramp/terrace that used to give access to the centre. The video appears on a LED screen on the wall separating the church and the art centre, a screen that can be seen either from the Rambla, or by sitting on the ramp which also serves as a terrace offering views of the Rambla with which the centre shares its name. The LED screen is an element that I find particularly interesting because of its urban characteristics, because it's a halfway point between the screen and the architecture, and it speaks in the public space. It clearly expresses a relationship between architecture, cinema, and the city, it enters into a dialogue with the city and its architecture. The exterior screen has a 4:3 vertical format, and the image overflows onto the walls of the building itself. There's no sound, but the sound can be downloaded to your mobile via a QR code. Inside a more traditional version of the video can be seen, and it also appears fragmented on the centre's information screen. Art is public space, and art centres have been closed for too long and need to reopen. We all need to work together to make this happen without fail.

02





Lladres

A project by Mabel Palacín

DOP

Oriol Bosch

Sound

Alex Vilches

2nd camera, edit
and postproduction
Adolf Alcañiz

Production

Ernest Gual
Esther de Udaeta
Carmen Molina

Graphics

Alex Gifreu

Casting

Belén Calafell

Medical assistance

Nurse On Set

Actors

Yuriy Badanin
Bilal
Giulia Cabello
Belén Calafell
Tereza Hruvkova
Marcela Kinga Rzepczynska
Francesca Mei
Milos Nenadovic
Dusia Safronov
Simon Smith
Ken Umehara
Andrey Ushatinskiy

Walkers

Natalia Kazah
Carlos Palacín
Ulises Palacín
Leslie de Leon
Luciano Calderón
Chuki
Eri Milosavlevic
Marta Campanales
Carla Almeda
Magic
Jonas Dedié
Julio Marcano
Conrado Oroibo Marañón
Emma Dodero Curtani
Javi Gancedo
Belén Calafell
Saliya Ash
Jeff Monfort
Translocura
Markus Dickert
Elisa Cabalo Pangua
Lena Dickert Cabalo
Gael Dickert Cabalo

Special thanks to

Carlos Durán
José Trenor
Laura Aguila
Parking IMSA
(Cesc Gilbert)
Fundació Roure
(Llum Delàs,
Luma Pascua)
Reial Cercle Artístic
(Joan Abelló,
Daniel Olazar)
Restaurante Puerto Plata
(Wilson)
Estudi Sol de Sants
(Alberto Pérez)
Little Creative Factory
(Cristina, Luis)
Maya Or
Polina Ganshina
Lucia Desván
Germán Desvan
Olga Safronova
Carlos Palacín
(master chess & pelotari)
Akemi Fujita
Naqash Javed



פּוּצְרִים

Loroví

Грабители

Zloději

ჭურჭლ

Ladri

Ladrones