

Creating a Graphic Transposition of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*: An Interdisciplinary and Experimental Collaboration between a Performer and an Illustrator

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ABSTRACT

This article reflects the unique and innovative methodological approach taken in the development of PROYECTO NORA. This interdisciplinary and collaborative research project aimed to work through and into the intersections between illustration and theatre, with the aim of creating an illustrated book of the play A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen as an outcome of this process. Through the graphic transposition of Ibsen's work our intention was to create a parallel story to the dramatic written text, enabling new viewpoints and perspectives. To achieve this, Carolina Schütte González and I explored the story through the use of the actress's body to create the main female character, Nora. Through embodying Nora's thoughts and feelings, we sought to expand upon and deepen our understanding of the character and the wider story. We documented, filmed and photographed the process of creating our own Spanish version of Ibsen's text, and our innovative and emergent

rehearsal process in which we created Nora's movements, postures and gestures in hopes of uncovering and expressing thoughts, feelings and emotions that are unseen and unspoken throughout the text. During this five-week long process in Santiago, Chile, and against a backdrop of widespread protests and riots in the country, we created a unique collaborative methodology that travelled towards art through theatre resulting in the creation of a graphic transposition of Ibsen's work.

INTRODUCTION

Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was first published and performed more than a hundred years ago, at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen on December 21st 1879 (Meyer, 1974, p. 477). It is a play considered by many to be a “global success” (Holledge et al., 2016, p. 1). It has been translated into thirty five languages and staged in eighty seven countries (Holledge et al., 2016, p. 1). It has enduring resonance and provides important space to reflect on gender roles through story. The play “owes its worldwide reputation to the last scene, where Nora [chooses to leave] her husband and children” (Janss, 2017, p. 3). In 2011 alone the play was performed more than 160 times around the world in different formats such as theatre, film and television (Holledge et al., 2016, p. 3). *A Doll's House, Part 2* premiered in 2017. This play is an imaginary sequel to Ibsen's classic written by American playwright Lucas Hnath, that shows Nora, who had chosen to leave her family and her roles within it, returning home fifteen years later. This play is an “exploration of repercussions, the rules of society and gender” and it explores whether it is possible for people “to communicate without stepping on others' rights and do no harm” (Luppi, 2017). This contemporary work further demonstrates the enduring relevance of this play in contemporary societies. In 2019 the original play was performed in different countries, including Aotearoa/New Zealand (September),¹ Chile (November)² and Spain (December).³ *A Doll's House* is part of the selected readings in the English Literature and Theatre Studies curriculums of colleges and

¹ [The website for the touring production is documented here at PANNZ.org](http://PANNZ.org)

² Colectivo Zoológico talks about their production in an interview with elmostrador.cl

³ Teatro Karpas promotes their production at Atrápalo.com

universities around the world (Hollidge et al., 2016, p. 4). In Chile this work remains compulsory reading in many schools and universities,⁴ thus demonstrating the enduring cross-cultural relevance of this text.

The multidisciplinary, collaborative, creative and experimental research project that this article discusses further extends Ibsen's work. We wanted to consider how the intersections between theatre and illustration might bring new perspectives to our understanding of the play. The translation of the text through the body and into a graphic form enabled us to create an illustrated book of *A Doll's House*, whose images constitute a parallel story to Ibsen's dramatic text with layers of meaning that can be 'read' in new ways.

The first phase of this ongoing project entitled *PROYECTO NORA*, explored, reflected upon and experimented with the use of the body, in the creation of the character, and in embodying her thoughts and feelings. The creative process of this first phase also explored the transfer of some of the aesthetic, expressive and representational codes of theatre into the realm of illustration. Similar creative processes can be found in a variety of interdisciplinary translation projects, including digital storytelling and drama (McGeoch & Hughes, 2009), the transfer of a silent movie into a theatre piece (Sapiaín Caro & Cortez Cid, 2020) and the use of comic imagery in theatre work (Conde Aldana & Cristancho Hernández, 2017). These projects have used stories as a starting point, translating, adapting and transferring them on to a stage or a screen whereas *Proyecto Nora* does a somewhat reverse translation. We are not only translating the text linguistically from English to Spanish, but also physically into theatre, creating embodiments which are ultimately transpositioned graphically and made static on the page once again. As far as we are aware after reviewing the literature, an experimental and interdisciplinary collaboration such as the one carried out through this project has not been done before. This article documents and reflects the unique and innovative methodological contribution this project makes to the fields of theatre and illustration.

From the beginning, this project was conceptualized through conversations between fellow artists, Carolina Schütte González who is a visual artists and illustrator, and myself, Maira Fortin a theatre practitioner, dancer and researcher/academic. We each brought

⁴ [A Digital School Library where *Casa de Muñecas \(A Doll's House\)* can be downloaded at CurriculumNacional.cl](#)

different disciplinary backgrounds and methodologies to the creative process. Sections of dialogue between the two of us are included in this article to share insights into the collaborative emergent and dynamic nature of our conversations. I aim to create a synergy between our dialogue and the written text in order to question and to destabilize notions of “a fixed orality–literacy binary” (Halba et al., 2011, p. 71).

It is essential to situate ourselves as researchers in relationship to this project. As in any conversation we began by introducing ourselves, situating ourselves within cultural and geographical landscapes, by self-identifying and describing our positionality as researchers and artists:

CAROLINA: My name is Carolina Schütte Gonzalez, I have Indigenous Chilean and German heritage. I was born in Santiago, and I am a graphic and multimedia designer and illustrator based in my home city in Chile. I have taught at tertiary level in Chile and have facilitated illustration and creative development workshops. I have integrated the commission to evaluate new projects by applying to the National Fund for the Promotion of Book and Reading.

MOIRA: My name is Moira Fortin Cornejo. I have Indigenous Chilean, French, and Spanish heritage. I was born in Santiago, Chile, and have lived, studied, and worked in Rapa Nui, and Aotearoa conducting research following Pacific methodologies and epistemologies. I am an actress and dancer, and I am based in Dunedin in Aotearoa where I have been producing theatre with *The Collective*. With this ensemble I have had the opportunity to perform Latin-American texts in Spanish and English, creating bilingual and intercultural performances.

Carolina and I became friends when we were studying Architecture in Santiago together around 1998, but after about two years of being fellow students we decided to leave Architecture and pursue other careers. Our friendship endured. We kept in contact and met each time I returned to Santiago to visit. Carolina initiated this project first inviting me to contribute and collaborate with her in December 2018. Almost a year later, in November 2019, I travelled to Chile to begin collaborating

in this project. During one of the several conversations we had during the time we worked together, I asked Carolina about how the idea of illustrating *A Doll's House* was born:

CAROLINA: I had read *A Doll's House* in high school, and in 2017 my daughter had to read it for school. As I had loved the play and now, she had to read it, I suggested to her that we could read it together, aloud, so naturally we were dividing up the roles as the reading progressed. And when we read it aloud, we began to interpret the roles, stopping to talk about the scenes, and about all the topics that the author was raising... family, personal fulfilment, the role of women, love, romantic love, beauty... and well as I am an illustrator and as we immersed ourselves in Nora's transformational journey, the idea of illustrating it came up. I wanted to get to know the author a little more and to get to know the codes of this unknown world of theatre. A conversation with someone from theatre was needed to understand the nature of the play and the idea coincided with your trip and then I told you and you were clearly interested...

MOIRA: Yes, I was interested in the interdisciplinary possibilities inherent in this project, the potential for our collaboration to create new spaces for artistic dialogue through learning from other creative processes. Also, I loved the idea of illustrating a play. Until now I have performed in plays, but I have not participated in the illustration of one and I was fascinated to discover how the two disciplines could complement each other. It will be interesting to know what the terminology for conducting such work would be... translation? Adaptation? Graphic representation?

TRANSLATION, TRANSPOSITION AND THE CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES OF THE VOID

The term 'translation' stems from the Latin *translatio* ('transporting'), and it is generally used in the process of changing the language of an original written text into another language (Munday, 2016, p. 8). Translation Studies has a wide variety of fields of inquiry, including audio-visual translation which relates to a translation that takes place in audio and/or visual settings (Pedersen, 2010) through multiple

semiotic systems (Gottlieb, 2001). In other words it is a translation not only carried out through written or spoken words, but also via sound and/or images (Pérez - González, 2014).

Studies have debated regarding the relevance of concepts such as “adaptation, translation, transposition” when discussing the relationships between cinema (including images) and literature (including theatre (Sapiaín Caro & Cortez Cid, 2020, p. 169). We are most inclined to use the term transposition for PROYECTO NORA, since the term “places the accent on the (creative) process that operates in the transition from the literary medium to the film medium” (Cid, 2011, p. 24). In our case, from the dramaturgical, to physical and graphic mediums. The term transposition also “designates the idea of transfer, but also that of transplantation, of putting something in another place, of removing certain models, but thinking of another register or system” (Wolf, 2001, p. 16), thus moving away from the assumption inherent in the idea of translating a text from one language to another, that an accurate ‘copy’ of an original work can be made across languages. Instead, we are recognizing that the process of transposition creates a new object, precisely drawing from other languages, cultural contexts and disciplinary formats (Wolf, 2001).

Written products are intended primarily to be read, although some contain images, or photographs, which complement and/or enrich the verbal content. We argue that illustrated books are a hybrid, “as they are made up of images and words that are closely interconnected to create a narrative whole” (Chiaro, 2009, p. 142). Screen products as well as images produced on a blank page are polysemiotic spaces as they “are made up of numerous codes that interact to produce a single effect” (Chiaro, 2009, p. 142). This book is meant to be read and ‘watched’ simultaneously, therefore we are using a wide range of codes that would enable us to illustrate Nora’s thoughts and emotions, including facial expressions, gestures, scenery, and costume (Chiaro, 2009). This approach will enable us to build a visual story of Nora’s internal world, where the images will also become the narrative.

The visual codes we were aiming to produce were intended to generate a close dialogue with the original and to remain inextricably connected to the verbal aspect of the play itself. In her article about the transfer from literature to cinema, Adriana Cid (2011) explains that:

[...] any filmic transposition must be understood as the result of a

complex creative process, of transmedia transformation, which is not limited to mere mechanical transfer operations, but bears the unmistakable stamp of the author. At a certain point in the genesis and making of the film [...] there is an intersection of horizons between both artists, the writer and the filmmaker, and from that encounter, a singular (re) reading of the literary text emerges. It is not a question of hierarchical relationships of prestige, but of different identities that establish a mirror and independent relationship at the same time. (p. 28)

The idea of transmedia transformation undoubtedly applies to our research project, as Carolina and I bring our specific artistic experiences, embodiments, aesthetics and gendered experiences as women to understanding and interpreting the text.

But perhaps an interesting question to ask will be: Why did we choose to illustrate this play? Many classic plays are in constant processes of translation and adaptation. Most of the time in the process of translation the aim is for the words translated across languages to remain the 'same', but the visual aspect of a play and how it is staged varies from director to director, who may want to convey a different epoch, social and political context and identity of a specific play. The idea that written theatre is meant to be performed has been contested by Edward Gordon Craig who in *On the Art of the Theatre* (1911) suggested that for example Hamlet was complete when written, and "for us to add to it gestures, scene, costume or dance, is to hint that it is incomplete and needs these additions" (p. 143-144). This is an interesting notion, which contains genealogies of ideas which privilege and revere the written word and those people in society who are able to access it. Stark Young (1954) challenged this position explaining that "a word, a sentence, spoken in the theatre has from that moment been recreated in new terms and must stand a new test. It is no longer a word on a page but is translated now into a new medium, the theatre" (p. 29).

Anne Ubersfeld (1977) has pointed out that theatrical space is a complex construction, defining it as a text consciously created with 'holes' which could be filled by other texts, such as the *mise-en-scène* (Carlson, 1985, p. 9). According to Ubersfeld, this theatrical space derives from at least three sources: the text and the spaces of the diegetic universe, that is, the fictitious world in which the narrated

situations and events that the text proposes occur; the stage and its real physical characteristics, transformed or adapted through the resources of scenography and staging; and the audience, which constitutes the centre of attention of a set of perceptions that must be conducted in a certain way (Ubersfeld, 1999, p. 103).

In the same spirit we argue that adding illustrations to Ibsen's text does not mean that this work is incomplete, on the contrary, the amount of images it contains are inspiring enough to want to experiment with the illustration of Nora's world, evidencing the rich inner world these characters bring forward, especially Nora, supplementing and adding "in the sense of filling a void, perhaps even a void not apparent until the performance [or the illustrations were] created" (Carlson, 1985, p. 10).

However much they may be revered in the written form, playwrights ultimately create plays to be staged through performance, often including cues for staging within their written texts. Once a text is performed, it takes on new life and perspective through the bodies and minds of those people who perform and stage a production, encompassing new layers of meaning, context, tone, gesture and a multiplicity of new truths are generated. Images and illustrations document, explain and express, creating a "composite of words, people and place together" (Sligo & Tilley, 2011, p. 72), influencing "ideas, ways of living and pictures of the world" (Barnhurst et al., 2004, p. 63). We argue that placing images alongside Ibsen's text enlivens it, adding new layers of meaning. In doing so we have helped to create a text that contains similar aspects of multiplicity and layering that can be 'read' by audiences when a play is staged and performed. Images can gift viewers similar imaginative, interpretive and reflective space in which to make meaning:

If a picture paints a thousand words, it is also true to say that it may be read in a thousand ways, and tell myriad stories, because pictures are always open to personal interpretation, and relatively inaccessible to any who lack very specific literacies. (Schirato & Webb, 2004, p.98)

THE LIMINAL THEATRICALITY OF *A DOLL'S HOUSE*

A Doll's House narrates the story of a marriage where the loss of family balance is perceived when socially accepted gendered codes of moral behaviour are not followed. Illusions of stability and security for women are shown as achievable only on the condition that wives conform to notions of women as submissive, weak and naive 'girls' before their husbands. Nora's journey throughout the play makes her question everything she has been taught to believe in since her marriage has been put to the test.

The play ends with the husband sitting alone, sadly watching his wife leave. This ending was extremely controversial when Ibsen first wrote it. Within nineteenth century society it was unthinkable that a woman would choose to abandon her marriage, house and children to pursue her own life goals. Ibsen's work was ground-breaking in recognising the gendered challenges women were facing at that time. In fact, it was so controversial that the play was repudiated by leading theatres in Norway and it had to wait eighteen years to be produced at Norway's National Theatre (McFarlane, 2008, p. ix). For the play to be performed in Germany, Ibsen was put "under strong pressure" (Ibsen, 2008, p. 87) by German translator Wilhelm Lange to write another ending, "because forces and discourses in the theatre world and society around 1880 made the new ending more or less necessary" (Janss, 2017, p. 4). Ibsen "reluctantly" (Ibsen, 2008, p. 87) wrote a more conciliatory ending which shows Nora not leaving her house as she is forced by Torvald to watch her children sleep. In this version Nora decides not to leave but Ibsen retains a sense of protest as Nora articulates that the decision to stay is "a sin against myself" (Ibsen, 2008, p. 88). Ibsen described this new ending as a "barbaric outrage" to his original vision and intent for the work, explaining that he "wrote this play just because of its ending" (Janss, 2017, p. 7).

Carolina's offer to collaborate excited me because of the explicit focus on Nora's journey from being a housewife with no opportunities to realising her ambitions to be an empowered woman, deciding for herself what she wanted for her life. A central theme in the play is the de-objectification of women. Through theatre the author wanted to explore "the fate of contemporary women whom society denied any reasonable opportunity for self-fulfilment in a male world" (McFarlane, 2008, p. ix). Sadly, this remains a current and relevant topic for the twenty-first century society.

MOIRA: The number of women who, at least in Chile, still depend on their husband or partner to subsist tells us that there are still many women who do not have the necessary opportunities to be able to support themselves. And that in case of domestic abuse they cannot get out of the circle of violence because they do not have a job to support themselves or their children, and the state does not provide a social safety net through which to support them. This situation is also reflected in Nora's circumstances... and I think this is why this play and character remain current.

CAROLINA: Yes. This play is relevant today for several reasons... even if we don't want to look at it from a feminist perspective...⁵ more than seeing Nora as a woman who lacks skills or opportunities for self-fulfilment... She is a person who despite her history and circumstances and everything she goes through in the play... seeks her own truth, her individuality and her personal development. She is a woman who does not really fit and detaches herself from this normalized way of living where women do not have the right to pursue their own personal development.

Considering the concept of liminality proposed by the anthropologist Victor Turner and following the work of Diéguez (2007) I argue that there are plays such as *A Doll's House* "that escape the traditional taxonomies that have conditioned theatricality" (p. 8) generating "a complex area where life and art, the ethical condition and aesthetic creation intersect, as the action of presence in a medium of representational practices" (p. 17). These "liminal theatricalities" (Diéguez, 2007, p. 25) are in a border area of art and life and are

⁵ In the last decade we have seen a resurgence of feminist ideas, reaffirming the importance of women in contemporary society. It is now possible to see greater number of women in positions of political power, however, there is still much to be done and many inequalities remain. Women are still underrepresented in all areas of leadership and generally still receive unequal pay for equal work. Although in the twenty-first century the position of women in society has changed significantly in terms of women's rights there are still many issues to discuss and define. I acknowledge that this notion feeds into the idea that there are binary identities that exist for men and women, and feminism has been challenging these ideas of fixed binaries identities for a long period of time. Although it can be argued that Ibsen's play is a feminist play, specific discussion of feminist theories and perspectives are outside the scope of this article.

“immersed in the ‘between’ of the cultural fabric and traversed by political and civic practices” (p. 41). Such works are inserted as actions in the political, social and public space (Sapiaín Caro & Cortez Cid, 2020). If we consider that Ibsen wrote this work, with its powerful and subversive ending in mind, this work brings to the stage a demand for the transformation of gendered roles, a plea that is made explicit and expressed through the text in the first instance, then shared through performances of the work. *PROYECTO NORA*, extends this project through consciously privileging Nora’s perspective and experience, contributing images that reveal the feelings and thoughts that led Nora to make the decision of leaving.

ILLUSTRATION AND THE BODY

In Spanish illustration that fulfils a purely decorative and elemental role at the service of the written text are known as *vasallaje*. These types of illustrations are made from previously written texts which can be sustained without the image. They are literal representations of what happens in the narrative (Rosero, 2010). Our collaborative project does not aim to simply illustrate what the texts says but seeks to travel through the embodiment of the character towards deeper understandings of Nora’s positionality and perspectives.

We aim to translate words into images, adding new aspects to help us towards a fuller understanding of Nora’s universe, especially to grasp aspects that may not be spoken through words in the text. This approach to illustrating creates a process of clarification (Carroll, 2018) which generates new mental connections within the reader/viewer and relating to their previous knowledge. This dialogical relationship between text and image manages to create and resignify situations, facts or argumentative threads that a previously written narrative evokes directly or indirectly (Rosero, 2010). Noël Carroll (2018, p. 276) explains that clarification occurs when the narrative work becomes “an opportunity to deepen our understanding of what we already know, being able to acquire new knowledge by deepening our understanding”.

Clarification as concept allows the illustrator an infinite space to play with signifiers, symbols and signals, thus generating a space to put into play poetic, literary, and/or dramatic/embodied connections in this case. We aimed to graphically represent Nora’s silences, thoughts,

memories, emotions and sensations: the changes in perspective that, as the story progresses, portray the silent reasoning that leads her to react in certain ways throughout the play.

This project acknowledges the limitations of words and highlights the power of images, seeking to extend our understandings of characters through the body and empathy of the actor. Hall (1999) explains that:

[t]he symbolic power of the image to signify is in no sense restricted to the conscious level and cannot always easily be expressed in words. In fact, this may be one of the ways in which the so-called power of the image differs from that of the linguistic sign. What is often said about the 'power of the image' is indeed that its impact is immediate and powerful even when its precise meaning remains, as it were, vague, suspended- numinous. (p. 311)

According to Edwards (1987), the formation and recall of visual imagery and sensations is closely associated with the experience of intense emotions. Sligo & Tilley (2011) also argue that "people tend to organize and retrieve strong emotions in visual form, and visual imagery potentially conveys more emotion than words" (p. 70). In the same spirit, this project contributes embodied, gestural, spatial, and contextual understandings, offering details that cannot be 'read' through words alone. The graphic transposition of *A Doll's House* offers us a space for observation and experimentation in which visual and performative codes of illustration and theatre can dialogue reflecting on Nora's positionality through an interdisciplinary, reflexive creative process.

CAROLINA: During this project I was struck by your way of working with the body, your relationship with your corporality. Because in general when I illustrate my attention is in my head and in my hand, but it is very different to see how the emotion appears physically... when I saw you performing Nora for example, I thought, where do I feel the emotion? And I realized that when someone is sad they stand in a certain way or when someone is proud they open their chest... this project records

what the body offers in response to certain stimuli, producing eloquent creative material.

MOIRA: The interesting and challenging aspect will be to avoid the stereotype of the stylized body that is sometimes seen in more classic illustrations... and there we open a whole debate about the 'real' body... whatever that may be...

CAROLINA: The important aspect here is that it is not the stereotype of the body that a socially accepted woman is expected to have...

The art of illustration "has allowed many female illustrators to confront how they see their bodies" (Radtke, 2019) thus extending our understandings of gendered experiences. Although we were working with and through my body as the basis for the illustrations that Carolina will create, this did not mean the images she created would look like me. What we wanted to focus the work on was the gestures and postures, not the shape or size of the body or creating a portrait that was a representation of what my body actually looked like. This gave Carolina freedom of creation, allowing distance between my own body and the body of the illustration. This ability to reflect on the body with minimal constraints is an unusual opportunity for many women since "[a] body is the space no one can escape, and so it's the place from which we project ourselves onto the world, and receive its scrutiny" (Radtke, 2019). In the case of Nora, the plot of the play may not explicitly focus on Nora's body, however her role in the marriage is to entertain and dance for friends under the directions of her husband Torvald, wearing a specific socially acceptable costume. There are high expectations of how Nora's body should perform and look, and it is clear that her body is forced to continually represent and uphold gendered norms and stereotypes.

Although the actor's body does not operate outside of social, cultural and gendered norms and constructs, it is in many ways its own object, not free from constraints and limitations, however it is given space and permission to be playful and imaginative to create meaning and construct signs and symbols to express a range of specific theatrical realities (Krysinski & Gómez-Moriana, 1982, p. 19). The gestures created through this experimental methodology of using

performance to inspire and inform the illustration of a character or story, has gone through a process of reflective embodiment: starting in and moving through my body, my cultural background and all the experiences and ideas that are experienced through and embedded in my body, continuing with and through the words created by Ibsen, which were reflected on together with Carolina, and followed by the conceptualization of these words into gestures, that are finally expressed through the body (adapted from Krynski and Gómez-Moriana, 1982, p. 22), and which ultimately move from this embodied 3D representation, into a 2D illustrated transposition, returning to the page.

We conceptualize illustration as a form of discourse. Through this project we propose a point of view where we can expose the physical responses to a certain situation or relationship, and foster female empowerment as the “visual arguments about women’s bodies can operate quite differently than they do in live-action television, film or even prose novels” (Radtke, 2019). There is a freedom to express inspired by words but constrained by them. By transpositioning words into the physical expression of emotions and thoughts and illustrating them, we have the opportunity to show Nora’s internal world in greater depth and complexity than would be achieved just by reading the play. We assume that an inaudible embodied world also exists and is important to our understanding.

OUR EXPERIMENTAL METHODOLOGY

In order to know what silences, thoughts and emotions we wanted to represent graphically, Carolina and I read Ibsen's work many times, engaging in detailed discursive analysis of each of the scenes, the characters, and the relationships between them. This type of analysis is an integral part of the actor’s process when preparing to perform a play. The text is read and analysed in detail and this process can take several weeks.

The methodology with which we faced this research was organic, that is, we did not have a fixed or predetermined idea of exactly how we would do this research, so the *how* was adapted according to what we needed to do. Between March and October 2019, we held Skype meetings regularly, every two or three weeks. During that time one of

the aspects we considered was the location to photograph the images, postures and gestures that I would create. We had hoped to use the Campus of the Theatre School at *Universidad Católica*, better known as *Campus Oriente* in Santiago, as a setting for several reasons. As a former student at the school, it would have been easy to gain access to the campus and work there. Also, the Campus is a neoclassical building, which had previously been a convent, so it has corridors, stairs, patios, windows and walls that already have an atmosphere and an emotional charge that could have helped the physical externalization of silences, thoughts and emotions through gestures and postures. *Campus Oriente* also has rehearsal rooms, black and white boxes equipped with lighting consoles, providing a 'white' canvas where to try, in conjunction with lights and colours, ideas, shapes and movement as the expression of the world we inhabit.

This experimental collaboration was carried out between November 18th and December 20th, 2019. An unexpected limitation on the research was that on October 18th in Chile a series of social protests began against the government of President Piñera. This situation led to curfews being decreed on several occasions and universities were forced to close. This situation meant that we had to adapt our work schedule and rethink some aspects of our planning. At some point we even questioned the viability of the project as it became unclear whether it would even be possible for me to travel to Santiago. As we were no longer able to use *Campus Oriente*, we decided to use the white walls of a room, the dining room and a section of the backyard of Carolina's house as the backdrop for our photographs. Our ideal working hours, from 9am to 4pm, became in reality from 8am to 12pm because protests were occurring mostly in the afternoons, and it was 'safer' to move around the capital until noon. These factors forced us to work quickly, efficiently and strategically; all things that rarely occur in a creative process that is mostly based on trial and error and that requires time for ideas to settle and develop.

Once we determined our circumstances, we got to work. During the year, we had already read the play several times. Carolina reread the version she read with her daughter (Ibsen, 2016) (option 1) and while I was in New Zealand I read an English version (Ibsen, 2008) (option 2). When we met in Santiago, we created our own version of *Casa de Muñecas—A Doll's House* based on these two texts. Initially we thought about using the Spanish version, but after commenting on

the English version, we realized that the Spanish version had not only translated Ibsen's work but that the texts also laden with opinions from the translator who judged and valued the text by favouring one character over another. Another aspect we noticed was that the text was written using old-fashioned Spanish reminiscent of the type of language used in 1980's Latin-American soap operas, which does not relate to contemporary forms of expression.

Using a text that already gave a certain value to different characters seemed counterproductive. We wanted to offer a vision of Nora, in the few moments of solitude and intimacy that she has in the play, without judging if her reactions were correct or not. As neither of us spoke Norwegian and we did not have funds to commission a contemporary translation of the play into Spanish, we decided to read both versions in Spanish and English in order to produce a slightly more 'neutral' and contemporary way of communicating this story. Embodying Nora's thoughts, feelings and gestures in 2019, required a text reflecting the time in which we are living. The text is the source of inspiration for the creation of the gestures, it is necessary to have consistency so that the text and the gestures resonate and complement each other.

MOIRA: We have to remember that in the world of theatre Ibsen's works are classified as realism, a theatre that shows you a particular reality... which was a mirror of the society of that time. The interesting aspect is that in 2019 that reality continues to be a mirror of gender roles in today's society. The challenge of performing realism, that I find particularly difficult to perform, is that your job as an actor is to make the viewer see an excerpt from someone's 'real' life. Actions, movements, gestures and language have to reflect that reality. Reactions and emotions have to be 'real' and one has to be aware of the process and the mental time that takes place before reacting, in order to give space to those moments so that the reaction is perceived as real.

CAROLINA: ... thinking about the dialogues, I often think of thousands of details that are often imperceptible moving like a whirlwind in everyday life and sometimes conversations are so trivial that you let so many things pass, but later as it remains in the memory they reappear.

MOIRA: Ibsen is very economical and realistic in the dialogues, people normally say something and that is just the tip of the iceberg, so the conversation or the meaning of the conversations are completed through silences or through what is not being said... thoughts and feelings. After the first reading I asked myself: What exactly made Nora start considering the idea of leaving the house? Because for me initially it felt a bit abrupt and then suddenly you realize after reading the play again carefully and paying attention to all the details, implicit and unspoken in the text, when this idea starts to take shape.

After our text was ready, we read it aloud, paying attention to the motivations of each of the characters, to what each character said about others and to their relationship with Nora. We divided the play into fourteen scenes, and we gave each one a title that summarized the theme that we wanted to convey. This way of dividing the play into scenes also helped us visualize the illustrated book in its entirety, including the back covers where illustrations can also be added, a somewhat visual prologue and epilogue.

At the level of structure, the illustration considers the same argument as the dramatic work, so one medium dialogues with the other and rescues it to vindicate it, as a signifying system and as a play that, although it is from the nineteenth century, is still valid and very current. The following is a summary of the structure we decided to use to create the scenes to be embodied and illustrated:

Back Cover – Prologue – Nora's Entry:

This illustration represents her own shadow. The play begins with Nora who returns from shopping and enters her house singing, relaxed. The illustration aims to show her silhouette reflecting on her life, remembering her duty, the role she must fulfil at home: the singing bird, the squirrel, the one who entertains, and beautify the home with her presence.

Act I – Scene 1 – Nora's fragmentation:

In this scene we see Nora happy admiring the gifts she bought for Christmas and enjoying some macaroons hidden from her

husband. There is a fragmentation of who Nora is and who she should be in the eyes of her husband. Pleasure is not consistent with the roles she must play. For this illustration we thought of showing parts of Nora's body that are reflected in mirrors, fragmenting her. We also thought about highlighting a fast-moving sequence that Nora does to clean up the crumbs of macaroon when her husband enters the living room: her hand quickly wipes her mouth, and torso, moving down to her hips until reaching the pocket of her clothes.

Act I – Scene 2 – The male shadow:

In this scene Torvald reproaches Nora for spending money on Christmas gifts. Torvald hugs Nora from behind by the waist while berating her for the unnecessary expenses. This masculine shadow shows the husband as the extension of the demanding father, and we imagined Nora's discomfort, her resignation, hopelessness, and rage when listening to his criticism. For the illustration we thought of a closed and intimate frame of the head-hip section.

Act I – Scene 3 – The female shadow:

In this scene Cristina Linden enters the scene. There is a recognition between both women, but above all there is a comparison between the two. Rivalry, polarity, and violence are perceived. They look at each other and evaluate themselves like looking in a mirror, and the judgment that women make about the life and circumstances of other women arises. We perceive Nora's inner judgment about others, and her need to validate herself before others.



**Image 1. Act I – Scene 3: Nora and Mrs. Linden evaluating their lives.
Photo by Carolina Schütte and Moira Fortin.**

Act I – Scene 4 – Empowerment:

In this scene Nora details the motivations to ask for the loan and thus be able to save her husband's life. The most significant part of this scene is when Nora narrates that she had to work as a copyist, a job done by men. "I almost felt like I a man" (Ibsen, Unpublished, p. 22) says Nora proudly, reflecting on the pleasure of personal fulfilment, of being able to decide as a woman about her own life. For the illustration we thought of Nora walking through her studio in the dim light, touching and admiring her typewriter.

Act I – Scene 5 – The arrival of Krogstad:

The arrival of Krogstad at the Helmer house awakens fear in Nora, fear of change, of evolution, of the unknown, a great deal of uncertainty about what could happen if the whole truth is discovered. Nora confesses the forgery of the signature to

Krogstad, a ruthless, determined man who is not moved by Nora's motivations. Right now, Nora feels vulnerable, because Krogstad arrives while Nora is playing with her children, and despite her perplexity, she must confront him by showing herself as confident and brave.



**Image 2. Act I – Scene 5: Nora perplexed by seeing Krogstad in her house.
Photo by Carolina Schütte and Moira Fortin.**

Act I – Scene 6 – The total crisis:

The pressure and anguish that Nora feels. The terror of punishment, of making mistakes, of not being able to solve the problem on her own, the loneliness that this leads to of not being able to tell the secret out of fear. In a conversation with Torvald, where Nora is probing the ground to see her husband's position on this 'hypothetical issue', he launches an avalanche of recriminations to the wind, referring to the fact that it is the woman who perverts the children because she is the one who spends the most time with them and the one that takes care of their education. Therefore, the lack of ethics of the children should be paid by the mother with jail and social sanctions.

Act II – Scene 7 – The shadow of the mother:

In this scene Nora seeks contention. Ana is the woman who raised Nora since Nora's mother passed away when she was very young. As a mother's orphan, Nora lacks support, and a role model, and this is reflected in the lack of tools and options with

which some women face life. Ana represents the mother, the female lineage, the unconditional affection.

Act II – Scene 8 – Introspection:

This scene represents a series of feelings that Nora has regarding her current circumstances, for example the impotence of not being able to talk seriously with her husband, the anguish of being at the mercy of her reactivity, rigidity and under his tutelage. The powerlessness of not being able to think, decide, or act for herself, of being dependent on her husband, which makes her feel a little slave and quite alone.

Act II – Scene 9 – Complicity:

The horizontal and trusting relationship that Nora has with Doctor Rank. He is a friend of Nora's, with whom she can talk and discuss issues without fear of being recriminated, where the conflict is seen as a possibility for change. This scene seemed to us to be a mirror of Scene 2 of Nora with Torvald, but with love and without reproach.

Act II – Scene 10 – Nora imagines her death:

Once Krogstad leaves the letter in the mailbox, panic seizes Nora. She imagines the terrible future that Krogstad tells her and that he embodies. The impact is so great that the stage direction states: “after stifling a scream, she runs back to the sofa” (Ibsen, Unpublished, p. 74). Nora fears the future that she does not know how to face or resolve, and that despite showing herself as confident, she knows that Krogstad reads through her mask.



Image 3. Act II – Scene 10: Nora watching Krogstad leaving a letter in the mailbox. Photo by Carolina Schütte and Moira Fortin.

Act II – Scene 11 – Nora surrenders to destiny:

Nora makes her decision and is ready to accept the consequences of her actions. Nora celebrates her decision, empowers herself, and asks for champagne and macaroons. In this scene we experimented with the angle in which Carolina took the pictures. The blank page allows the illustrator to frame the image in any angle, not only using the x and y coordinates of the Cartesian plane, but also the diagonals.

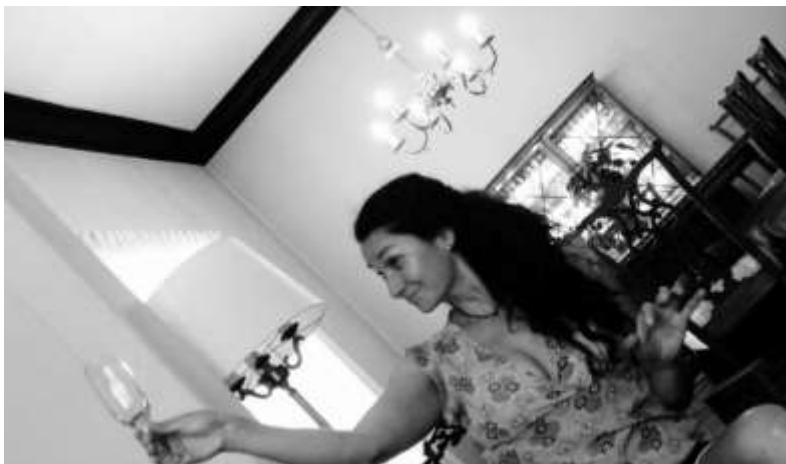


Image 4. Act II – Scene 11: Nora toasting to her future. Photo by Carolina Schütte and Moira Fortin.

Act III – Scene 12 – The disguise of duty:

As a woman and a wife, Nora fulfils her duty to entertain and dances the tarantella for her friends at their party. She uses the party as a way of distracting Torvald and making sure he is in a good mood with her, so that she can talk about the letter later in the hope that he, as her husband, will understand, support and help her solve the problem she has with Krogstad.

Act III – Scene 13 – The wife—daughter binary:

After Torvald reads the letter, the male repression is felt. When reading this scene, it seemed to us as if Nora became part of his property but in a double sense: she has become his wife and daughter. Torvald's recrimination towards Nora, and the imposition at all costs of male desire and vision of the role of women. Torvald's desire to educate and punish his wife-daughter according to the role she must fulfil. After this discussion Nora goes to her room to change her clothes where she decides that it is time to leave.



Image 5. Act III – Scene 13: Nora changing her party costume and putting her clothes on. Photo by Carolina Schütte and Maira Fortin.

End of Act III – Scene 14 – Liberation:

It is in this scene that Nora expresses herself with complete clarity and confidence regarding her circumstances as a woman and wife. She has a critical vision of society, her marriage, and the static role of women throughout history. This time Nora faces the future with hope and sees it as a possibility for change and self-development.



**Image 6. Act III – Scene 13: Nora ready to confront her husband and leave.
Photo by Carolina Schütte and Moira Fortin.**

Back Cover – Epilogue – The closing:

Once Nora closes the door of the house and leaves the marriage for good, Torvald is left alone with his children. That silence is quite loud since for the first time he has no other adult to reproach and educate. Nora closes a chapter of her life and leaves so as not to return, locking all the difficult experiences in the house.

To each scene we allocated an arrow indicating the energy and mood with which Nora faced these scenes, thus creating an emotional map of Nora throughout the play. This emotional map helped us to have a clear idea of what we wanted to express in each scene, the mood of each scene.



Image 7. Emotional map of Nora throughout the play.

By working at Carolina's home and using the white walls of her house as a background, we realised that the colour of the walls, was equally important to the analysis of the text and the creation of gestures and posture. At the beginning of the rehearsals, we had a conversation about the theatrical space, that is, the use of the black box as a background and what it involved in the production of a play. In theatre the black box allows actors to hide, so that the changes of scene or the entrance of characters are as if by magic. The black box also allows the use of the twilight (semidarkness), where the spectator cannot see clearly or can only see fragments. In the black box, light plays a very important role, because it directs the attention of the audience. In contrast, the white box, with which we finally worked, does not allow us to hide anything, it rather shows everything, without hesitation. Scene changes, character inputs are open to the view, the audience can see the space and the full context, and the movements, actions and words are what capture and guide the audience's attention. In the art of illustration, the technique used to show fragments is to move the scene partially out of frame. As this project is an intersection between theatre and illustration we can play and change the black box for the white box, depending on what we want to show, hide, or fragment. So, we thought it would be interesting to start in the black box going through the grey box and ending in the white box, demonstrating Nora's journey.

As we were progressing in the project nearing the end of my stay in Santiago, we had already tried and recorded various postures and gestures, we thought it would be interesting to create a somewhat graphic summary of Nora's journey. For this we created a collage with different images that we downloaded from the internet (Image 8.) and that served as a map to test different postures and gestures. Each of these images corresponds to a scene, so each illustration created based on the photographs and videos we took are summarised in this set of images that will go on the corresponding page in the book, but they will also be part of the illustrated graphic summary, offering a sequence of images expressing movement, emotion, action and Nora's

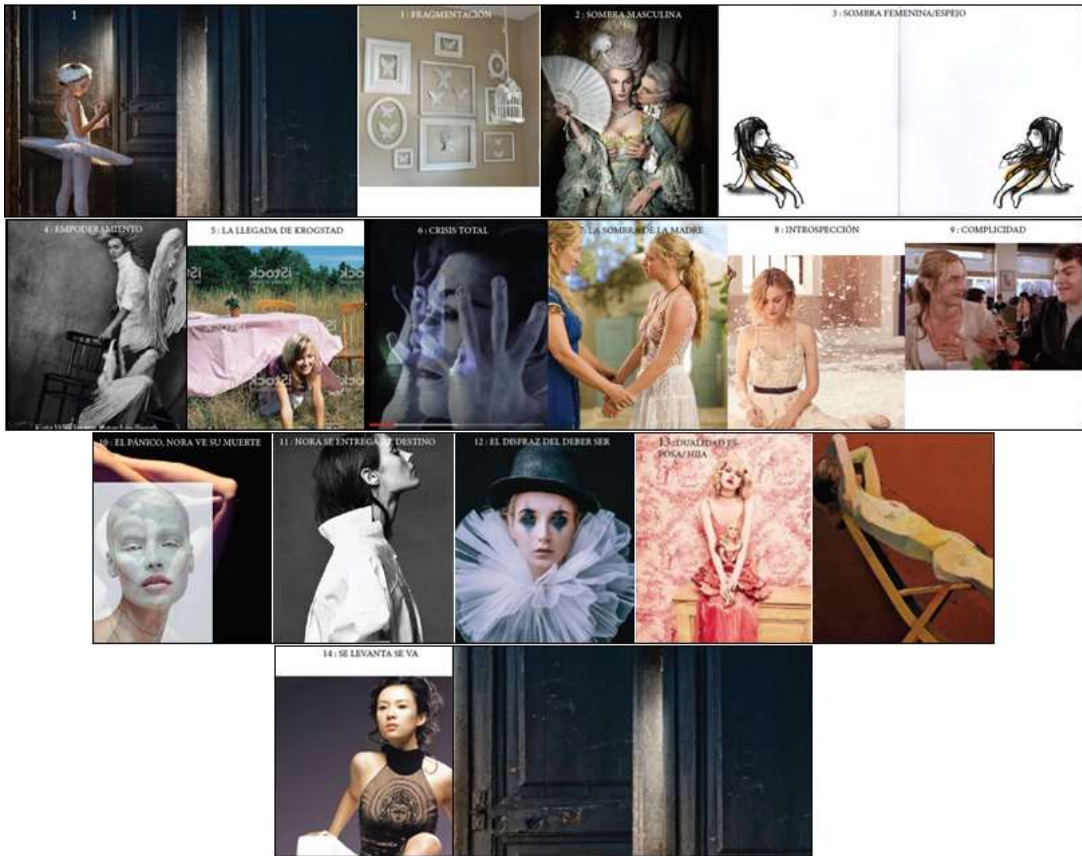


Image 8. Map of the physical expressions of Nora's thoughts and feelings throughout the play.

feeling about each scene.

The notion of clarification that drives all the interpretive power of the illustrator together with the deconstruction of stories, characters, ideas and concepts that are used in the taxonomy have the function of accounting for the entire universe that is being composed around the creation of the book, and how this requires meticulous observation that allows its problematization and understanding (Rosero, 2010). We hope this sequence will go at the end of the book, a kind of visual bonus track of the whole journey.

The challenge now is to join both disciplines, that is, how the physical expression of the character, the postures and gestures that gave life to Nora are reflected on paper. To achieve this transfer, it is necessary to take into account three factors that are transversal in illustration and theatre; light, movement and colour, which are crucial

when creating the atmosphere of the scene and composing the illustration on the page.

CAROLINA: Light is the key element in the construction of the body as a sculptural object. Light shows the body of the individual and his universe, helping to build identity. Light makes us look a certain way. It is under this light that one judges oneself and others and reflects on how I see myself, or do not see myself, how others see me and whether or not I like what it is seen. Colour is the element that gives quality, intensity and variety to the story. Colour, like light, makes parallel stories visible, accentuating specific moments or sections, creating atmospheres and emphasizing emotions and points of view in the same scene. Movement...

MOIRA: Movement is what makes us appear in the world, it's how we speak to the world, how our reactions are shaped, our emotions and thoughts are also expressed through movement... I am very curious to see what the illustrations you create will look like... theatre is very immediate... I mean we have a process of creating but as we are creating and developing each scene, I can see how the whole play will look like. So far, I haven't seen any drawings... I know your work... and how you draw, your style... but I haven't seen anything about Nora... and that is very exciting.....

CAROLINA: ...yes, I can imagine, because I work with another timeframe... In theatre you rehearse and show, in illustration I have to wait, I draw by hand, and I make lots of sketches and they tend to change, so I wait and see if the last drawing I made is the one I am after, after that I start colouring and then I have to wait for the ink to dry... it's like making bread... you have to allow time for waiting.

CONCLUSION

Throughout this interdisciplinary, collaborative, creative process we experimented with the methodology to explore and reflect upon how the performance of emotions, thoughts and feelings could constitute a parallel story to the written text and inform the illustrations of the main

female character of the story. The unique nature of this project contributes to create a new space for collaboration and experimentation, where it is possible to reflect on our own way of working. Dividing the work into themes and sections that have their own title helped us to focus on the exact moments we wanted to work on. The actor's work usually begins by reflecting on what was said, on the written word, very seldom do we begin to work from within the spaces and silences, from what was not said. The work on emotions is something that happens gradually, as one understands and delves into the text. In this case we were looking specifically at those silences, the few moments when Nora is alone and can think, reflect and has time to feel. In the case of the illustration, this method also supported the different lenses used recording and photographing the different scenes. Since these images are on paper, the illustrator could use different angles, showing a view from above, inclined, diagonal, and/or only showing a fraction of the body. Analysing the play and defining these key moments enabled us to explore different ways of conceptualizing the flow and rhythm of the play and Nora's journey. The emotional map, for example, was also a great technique for self-discovery where both artists can see how these emotions are shaping up. It worked as a reminder of what energy the actor should have, and the mood that the illustration has to show for that particular moment.

Through this experimental work, we hope to create a relationship between the written and the iconic level that will serve to overcome flat or homogeneous readings, fostering the construction of a model reader, capable of creating meaning from the multiple associations between images and words (Sipey & Brightman, 2009). Illustrated books have the ability to break predictable linear narrative sequences at the same time as opening "a range of beginnings, developments and endings" (Ordoñez-Trujillo, 2018, p. 101). Although in the future, we will propose well-defined illustrations it is important to understand that, as Foucault observes, "there is no primal coherent set of signs, but only interpretations" (Foucault, 1982, p. 12), encouraging futures readers/watchers of this work to propose their own interpretations of Nora's journey.

This is a work in progress. Due to COVID-19 and other health issues as well as social and political uprisings in Chile, the production of illustrations has been delayed. Throughout this interdisciplinary collaboration I realized that this project was a dialogue between

mirroring disciplines. Both art forms work with stories, characters, atmosphere, movement, costumes, light and colour. After working with Carolina, I had the impression that illustration is a two-dimensional version of theatre. Our methodology led us to test postures and gestures produced in a tangible corporality, which will then be translated into an illustration, transforming this physicality into two-dimensional gestures and postures on paper.

After the illustrations are ready, hopefully sometime in 2021, the aesthetic created for these illustrations will become the blueprint for the aesthetic of the play. It is here where the illustrations and the aesthetics created will once again be transformed and transpositioned back into three-dimensional to be inhabited by the actors giving life to Ibsen's characters. Throughout this project, we hope that our work will create an encounter with the readers through the illustrated book and with the audience of the play, where hopefully they will be able to recognize themselves in Nora's journey.

It was a valuable and interesting experience to collaborate in this project. I was fortunate to be working with a friend and colleague, learning from her expertise in her field, about her creative process. I experienced how different and yet sometimes how similar it is from my creative process in theatre and how both processes can create an encounter for disciplines to connect and dialogue in the creation of something new: the illustrated version of a play.

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