

Excerpt from the article "The enacting of the public (from performativity to emancipation) in Alicia Herrero's *Public Considerations, a Symposium in Three Acts*"
by Teresa Riccardi

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If it is possible for artists to dislocate the classic roles and discourses produced by the cultural field in its institutional form (whether, through parody, to destabilize the mimicry of the market or to explain the camouflage that permits the survival of autonomy) the performativity enacted and dramatized by Alicia Herrero in its capacity for self-alteration¹, is that which makes *Public Considerations, a Symposium in Three Acts* an insubordinate *speech-act* in opposition to cultural structures and policies. It is not so much because she seeks to denounce injustice or represent the prohibited through a dramatic act, but rather that her act reveals the rhetoric naturalized in the gestures that through social rituals govern and structure the everyday. When we speak or use language to communicate, the words are articulated from the speaker, whose act/action organizes them and gives them meaning, whether this be that of an announcement, an argument, a dialogue or even a gesture. These form the acts of speaking, or *speech acts*, of which there are the highly regulated (greetings or other forms of courtesy) and the less regulated, such as misunderstandings, cultural significances that impose themselves, genres that are dissolved through arbitrary use, or subjective markers that hide or repeat themselves in language understood as a signifying system. What *Public Considerations, a Symposium in Three Acts* tries to do is to study these acts of formalised speaking, put them on trial, and return them to a state that deconstructs those levels of codification, without dissecting them. *Public Considerations, a Symposium in Three Acts* attempts to return the dialogue to the public sphere in order to discern and amplify the knowledge of discourse and the shifts in meaning organized by its gestures, or in any case to exhibit these, stripping bare the expressions and exposing a display of commas, signs, pauses and hyphens indicated by the *regisseur* to accentuate the markers of subjectivity and genre. If the discourses and topic of language are altered by those who enunciate them - whether this be through their act of speaking, style or genre - what interests Herrero is their performativity and how they act in the social context. If one uses

¹ Alicia Herrero, "The possibilities of art for self-alteration, in the symposium "*Challenges presented by the globalization of visual arts*", panel entitled: "Globalization and Culture, is there such a place as Latin America?", Tres de Febrero University, Buenos Aires, 26 to 29 August 2008.

<http://www.untref.edu.ar/documentos/Simposio%20Artes%20Visuales.pdf>. Last entry 10/07/2011.

the public, how then does the public act? If one names it, how does one name it? If one disputes it, how is the dissent empowered? If, as Herrero proposes, an insubordinate artistic practice signifies seizing the word, (with respect to the indoctrination and repression occurring in the systemization of violence and acts of speaking that language itself imposes), what artistic mechanisms make that evident? For Herrero, the rostrum and panels bet on the possibility of participants to self-alter and distance themselves from passive reception. She proposes a participation that distances itself from narcissistic and histrionic vanguardism, to reconstruct the senses that make the community an acting society.