



Episode 2: Plans For The Future with Mariano Pensotti

Kris Nelson: [00:00:00] In 2020, the future was so bright. It was the decade we had all dreamed of. Then, the unthinkable happened. A pandemic that turned culture and society upside down. Now, a year and a half later, what do five leading artists and cultural producers have to say about their plans for the future? I'm Kris Nelson, artistic director and CEO of LIFT, London's biennial festival of international theater, and this is Plans For The Future.

Joining me today from Buenos Aires is internationally renowned theater and cinema artist Mariano Pensotti.

There you are. So good to see you. How are things? [00:01:00]

Mariano Pensotti: So good to see you too.

Kris Nelson: Welcome here. You're very welcome.

Mariano Pensotti: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you very much. It's both exciting and I'm feeling a bit nervous about talking another language so I promise I'll do my best.

Kris Nelson: Okay. I can't translate from Spanish. I can do French, but I don't... Anyway, we'll do our best and I'm sure you will be as eloquent as I've always known you to be. So please don't blush too much.

There's a lot to say, because Mariano is one of the world's most renowned experimental theater directors. His production company, Grupo Marea – formed of the set designer Mariana Tirantte, musician Diego Vainer, and producer Florencia Wasser – creates dramatic shows and artistic interventions in public spaces.



Much of Mariano's work, which has been truly presented to acclaim in Argentina and internationally, tests the borders between fiction and reality. Think of a theater where you're getting absolutely everything you want, think of a theater with sumptuous, stunning [00:02:00] sonography, surprising visuals and rich meta stories with deep characters, humour, twists and turns and lots for the idea hungry to feast on. Does that sound good? Of course it does. His work is brilliant.

From [Sometimes I Think I Can See You](#), where writers take over a Metro station and their observations of transit users are projected on to giant screens all around us, to [Diamante](#), which is the last thing I saw of his. Which was a total feast. A theatrical epic, over eight hours, recreating all the buildings of a town. The audience wandered through the building of the town and kind of became spies on the lives of the inhabitants of a German mining settlement in Argentina. Mariano's vision is epic, quirky fearless and full of life.

He's been recognized with the Rozenmacher, Clarin and Premio F prizes, awarded scholarships from the Unesco-Aschberg [00:03:00], Rockefeller Foundation, Fundación Antorchas and Casa de América de Madrid. There's so much to say but, without further ado, welcome Mariano. Welcome here.

Mariano Pensotti: That was such an amazing introduction now I feel like I want to see one of my own pieces.

Kris Nelson: I mean, the last piece... we'll get into it... but the last piece you saw of yours, you probably saw over zoom.

So, first of all Mariano, tell us what's happening in Buenos Aires, both in the city and in terms of arts and culture.

Mariano Pensotti: Well, the situation here is still quite tricky because the Covid crisis it's still quite hard.

So, we are still in the middle of a lockdown. It's not as strict as it was like two months ago, but still, theater's has just been reopened now, and slowly you have



some small signs that life is getting back to normality, but still [00:04:00] it's very tricky. And you can imagine that, of course, that has a strong impact in the art field.

The art community here is quite strong and weak at the same time. Strong in the sense that we are a lot of people trying to collaborate together and we have a strong community. But on the other hand, the support from the state and the city, it's quite symbolic in normal times. I'm just saying... So you can imagine that in the middle of this horrible pandemic, the situation for the art people, it's quite complex and mostly terrible.

Kris Nelson: Yes, that's, I know that you you've managed - the city managed to get its festival, [Festival Internacional de Buenos Aires](#), and other business areas open. And for those of you who, I mean, many of you who are joining us will know that Buenos Aires is one of the great theater cities in the world full of very avid audiences and [00:05:00] some really incredible makers. So it's scary to hear that so many great artists and audiences have been jeopardized at this moment.

And what's it like been like for you personally, in terms of your projects and staying connected to home and also your, I mean, you weren't travelling so much abroad. What's this past year been like for you?

Mariano Pensotti: It has been complex in the sense – well of course, as as many independent groups we have experienced cancellations of different projects that we have. And especially because we have these strange structures – at least is strange for Argentina that we are still an independent group – but using whatever want, or at least we try to do that, but still we rely a lot on co-productions and collaboration with international festivals in order to produce our pieces. We don't really have opportunities to produce [00:06:00] our work just in Argentina. So you can imagine that to produce theater, festivals and trips abroad in the last year and a half has been really a nightmare.

So we had to recalculate a lot. Luckily, we were working in, I mean, our main project in the last month has been a film project, so it was still possible to show it online and to even to produce a new version of this film in Brussels, at [Kunstenfestivaldesarts](#), which was amazing. I mean, amazing in the sense to



have the opportunity to do that and to collaborate again with local artists and to create stories, especially for the context of the pandemic, you know - it was the very first time that I started to think about what sort of stories can happen in the middle of this context, a particular context. [00:07:00]

Kris Nelson: Did you feel a block before - that it was difficult to talk about the pandemic or make work in this new world?

Mariano Pensotti: I think at the beginning, I didn't want to really incorporate the pandemic into fiction. You know, it wasn't sort of rejection or, you know, to feel that, well, maybe I need some time to reflect about what's going on, you know, and not to react too fast, too.

I feel like, you know, probably to create something on the spot about the pandemic, it will feel too forced or sort of opportunistic even. But then, when I got the invitation from Kunstenfestivaldesarts to produce a new version of [El Publico](#) for the audience - which is this current ongoing project that we have about different audiences and their experience in relation to theatre – it felt that we shouldn't [00:08:00] avoid, either, the context of the pandemic. So, I tried to create stories that felt somehow relevant for the context of an audience in Brussels and their specific relationship with fiction, with theater there, and also slightly incorporate somehow the context of the pandemic without being – without making – a specific focus on it actually.

Kris Nelson: I think we'll reference it a lot in this conversation.

So, could you tell us a bit about El Publico or The Public and what the project is and how it moved from Buenos Aires and then over to Brussels?

Mariano Pensotti: Sure. Well, El Publico - The Audience - it's a very simple project in a way, which is a - it's a film about a theater audience that go to see a theatre piece. And we, as a real audience, we go to a cinema house or a theater and we see this film where [00:09:00] a fictional audience is going to see a theater piece. Then, at some point, the theater piece starts but we as a real audience don't see it. And then we follow the lives of a number of spectators



who have been seeing this fictional theatre piece, and we follow them during the next 24 hours, and we get to know a little bit about their lives. And the only common point that these stories have is that all of them, at some moment, they tell somebody else, you know, “yesterday night I went to see this theater piece...”, and they retell one scene of this piece that they saw and we didn't. So eventually, if you follow all these short films, you have this sort of puzzle where you can recreate the piece - the theatre piece - that they have seen. So, it's a little bit about this imaginary theatre piece that they have seen. Also, to try to talk [00:10:00] about the possible life of some audience members, you know, to transform the audience into the protagonist, and especially to see how much what we do has an impact or how much theater affects people's lives.

Of course, this is not a documentary project, you know, it's just a fictional project. So I invented the stories. It's not really like a sociological experiment or anything like that. So I'm just playing with the idea of how much impact theater or fiction has on people's private lives. But that's basically the story of it.

And we did the first version in Athens actually, yeah, two years ago. And then we made a new version here in Buenos Aires is for FIBA, the international festival of Buenos Aires. And then we did a third and last experience this year at Kunstenfestivaldesarts. And of course, talking about an [00:11:00] audience at the beginning, it feels more like a conceptual or general idea. But now, during a pandemic, not being able to go to see theater pieces live, the idea of being an audience member, it becomes much more complex and central. And I think that the idea of sharing together a time and a place, well, it started to be much more problematic and that's why also we felt that the project was even more relevant without us thinking about this the beginning.

Kris Nelson: Yeah. But it was so Brussels. Like, I have to tell you, folks, if you've not seen it yet, I mean from teenagers taking the tram and having their kind of like - two guys and a girl and sort of this little love triangle that's starting up between them - to EU politicians trying to make a deal in a really swank hotel room while this [00:12:00] terrible murder scene is playing out in the bathroom in the same room, there was this incredible sense of sight to it like it felt very much *of the city*. And I was curious about this. Does the fiction imprint in Athens



and Buenos Aires? Are you creating new fictions for every city? Because it felt so wonderfully bespoke.

Mariano Pensotti: No, the stories are absolutely new for every place, because the only thing that we are keeping is the concept and the format, this idea that you have a group of audience members that goes to see a theatre piece, but the theater piece and the stories are completely different in each place.

As, as you mentioned, it was important for me that the stories that we were developing in Brussels, has a meaningful or interesting relationship with the city itself because actually we are trying to somehow portray the city through the life of their, not just their inhabitants, but their, you know, audience [00:13:00] members.

And it was a long, long process. I had the amazing collaboration of the directors of the Kunstenfestivaldesarts and actually Dries Douibi, one of the directors, was a dramaturg on the project and we were exchanging ideas for months, you know, and because I didn't want either to make like a cliché portrait of Brussels and of course that's the danger being a foreign artist. Luckily Brussels is a city that I know a little bit, because I was lucky enough to present some of my pieces in recent years in the festival, but still, you know, I really wanted to avoid this feeling of being a foreigner that jumps there and says, "Okay, this is a portrait of the city", but on the other hand, I didn't want to generate, you know, some generic stories.

I wanted to dig deep [00:14:00] on the issues of the city and to find out relevant stories. And yeah, it was very funny because one of the things that I learned about the story of Brussels is that actually, in front of the theater where we presented the project, there was a mass grave. And that was - I mean, it's a lovely square in the city center of Brussels - and there's some mass grave from 200 years ago there. And these are the people who died during the 1830 revolution, which is a revolution that actually started when people exited from the theater piece at the time and people were really encouraged because of what they saw and they started a revolution. So, this idea of being - working - on the mass grave of, of a former audience who started the revolution, and making a [00:15:00]



project about an audience, you know, it added certainly another layer of interpretation.

Kris Nelson: Yeah, saying the least! But let's talk about the future a bit now.

You've got an upcoming project called [Los Años](#) which is about a character who realizes that what he assumed about the future was very different from reality. The second half of the piece is set in 2050 - what are you imagining about that future in 2050 - his surroundings, his lifestyle and the cultural context, and why are you imagining it that way?

Mariano Pensotti: No it's very funny because we started to work on that project Los Años, actually before the Covid pandemic. It was supposed to have the premiere last year at the Venice Biennale and was canceled. Then it gave me the opportunity to completely rewrite the piece, especially because I didn't notice [00:16:00] how much the piece was based on the idea of future. And of course, the whole idea of future started to change a lot during the last year and a half, or at least the perception that we have in Argentina that, well, the future seems much more diffused and strange now than before. And I started to feel that to think about the future it was even more relevant now than before.

So at the beginning, I just had the idea to tell the story of the same character in two different times, you know - when he was young and when he is old. At the beginning, I didn't know if I wanted to have... I just wanted to tell the story of this character in two different moments.

He's a documentary filmmaker. He made a documentary about a kid who lives in a very impoverished neighborhood of [00:17:00] Buenos Aires, sort of a slum here. He makes this documentary when he's young and then 30 years later he wants to find this kid and to get to know what happens to his life and also to see if the life of the kid was changed because of the documentary, in the same way that his own life has been changed.

And at the beginning, I didn't know if this present and future or present and past was going to be like, now or in the nineties or where... where shall I place two



different times? And then I think it was during the pandemic that I decided that it would be more interesting that the young character and his present is right now and the old character and his present is the future.

So that was when I decided to place the second story in 2050, which at the [00:18:00] beginning, it felt really awkward, you know, because I didn't want to create a science fiction story or anything like that, but yeah, it was like pushing myself to, okay - let's try to imagine what is going to happen with our cities, with our life, with theater itself, in 30 years from now.

And of course, as usual, I wanted to create more like a fictional portrait of the future, rather than a realistic prediction. You know, you can create a future making an exaggeration of things that are happening right now, or you can just imagine whatever you want, which is, you know, fiction it's really about future.

Future is really about fiction. You know, you are really creating what is going to be. I mean, you can say that also past it's about fiction because you're changing the past every time that you retell it. So you are creating the past every time that you tell it again. But the future is really the landscape of fiction.

[00:19:00] And so I would have some imagine,

Kris Nelson: I think you're going where I was asking, which is what are some of your predictions? What are the conditions you're imagining in that world?

Mariano Pensotti: Well, I imagine a future where theater is really the big thing, because people doesn't want to see any recorded thing or not presential thing at all, you know, after a sequence of pandemics. They really want the real thing and being there together and experience theater, it's really the art of the future. So theaters are full of people and they are making even bigger and bigger theaters all around the city. The story takes place in Buenos Aires.

Then there is an extreme, far right party here in Argentina that they are pushing us back to become a colony of [00:20:00] Spain again, because they say that if we become a colony of Spain, we are going to be part of the European Union



and that's going to be a big advantage for us. So there's also a trend of very old-fashioned things from the times of colony 200 years ago.

So it's a mixture of things. And, uh, but then basically I didn't want to go that far - at least so far because the rehearsal process is going to start next week - in the idea of making big predictions, but still to focus more on, well, the story of an old and young character, and one of the main characteristics of the piece is that there's going to be like a, sort of a split screen on stage, and you're going to see the life of the young guy and the life of the old guy at the same time.

Kris Nelson: Wow. And in that project you've described, you've sort of posed this question [00:21:00] in your own words and I wanted to bring it to you, which is - is there a danger in making predictions for the future or is it an inevitable part of human nature?

So, is there a danger in posing questions or making predictions of the future, or can we not help but do it? Have you found an answer?

Mariano Pensotti: No, I didn't.

No, you know, it's funny because when, when you start making projects all the time you have this long list of questions and you have the impression that, well, I'm going to find a lot of answers by doing that. It's usually not my case. You know, it's more like opening new questions and I think it's we cannot stop but still imagining the future - its an integral part of humanity, luckily, because I think it's actually, I mean, it doesnt matter if the future is better or worse, but the, the feeling that we [00:22:00] have the chance to create something different tomorrow to what it is today, it should be there, I mean, without that we are nothing. Even, even if it's just the fiction that we are creating to ourself. You know, I always have the impression that we create fictions while we are being created by fictions. Also because we are reacting to everything according to the fictions that we have been consuming from the beginning of our life, but, and of course our image of future and our image of tomorrow, it's really crafted by fictions. That's especially interesting to think about now in context of pandemics - that everything seems like a very bad si-fi movie.



And it's, yeah, I remember at the beginning of the pandemic, you know, I was witnessing all these images in my neighborhood, you know, with people with [00:23:00] weird masks, homemade things on the streets. And it was really like a very bad image of the bad si-fi movie. So certainly there was some fictions that were infecting us together with the virus at the beginning of the pandemic.

But going back to your question. Yeah. I think to really keep on imagining the future and making predictions is something that we shouldn't avoid. We cannot avoid. And we shouldn't. That's it. Because I think capitalism has been very successful in selling the idea that there's no other way to organize a society other than capitalism, as there is no other possible future. And I don't really agree with that. So I think it's a very good opportunity to start imagining, well, what would be another alternative way to organize a society [00:24:00] rather than the current one?

Kris Nelson: Do you see movements in the Argentinian context, in terms of, are there examples of people being able to imagine what's next or imagine a different way of doing?

Mariano Pensotti: Well not that many, I guess, especially because as I said before, the context in Argentina it still really bad, and I think it's going to take some time to recover. I'll be really looking forward to, uh, come after all these situations. One, when the context is stabilized a little bit more, you know, and once a things starts to reopen again, I'm pretty optimistic.

You know, even though if the context, it doesn't look optimistic and it's quite terrible, what's still going on here. I'm still optimistic that in a couple of months the vision is going to be different and [00:25:00] artists are going to come out with very interesting ideas, new associations... You know, historically in Argentina, after every dictatorship, after every social or economic crisis, it has been a huge boom in the art fields and new associations and new ways of producing, and collaborations that you wouldn't have expected before. And I'm actually hoping for that.

Kris Nelson: Yeah.



Are there particular things there in Argentina or from around the world that you're drawing inspiration from?

Mariano Pensotti: Well, its true that I have more time in recent times so I've been reading a lot, probably like most of us. I also have two young daughters, so I've been really devoted to the family life which is an amazing and great thing.

[00:26:00] I've got really into Robert Ashley recently, which I have to say that I was not really familiar with his work. And I'm very much interested in the mixture or the interweaving between storytelling and music in recent times, and Robert Ashley and his weird operas from the seventies and early eighties, they were sort of a big revelation to me, so I was really into that.

And then I was reading a lot of Georges Perec again, which used to be one of my favorite authors 20 years ago. And I wanted to, you know, with this idea of past and present or present and future, I wanted to read again, some of his books, especially, *Life: A User's Manual*, [00:27:00] this wonderful book where he imagined the whole life of a building in Paris and described all the potential stories that can be found behind the front wall of the building. So, I'd been reading it again, and I was amazed about how great it is.

Kris Nelson: It's so nice to find those old treasures and also see how you've shifted in relation to something that inspired you early on.

It's interesting here too, to hear you talk about music because I mean - has music been so present for you in your work, previously?

Mariano Pensotti: Yeah, music has been always present in my work. And I always, I mean, I've been working with Diego Vainer, the musician, in our group for the last 15 years. And it's interesting that he's probably the first person that I share some early ideas for a new project, you know, and even though he's strictly a musician, [00:28:00] the approach that we have to the work, it's really like exchanging ideas from the very beginning.



And he's always making suggestions, but then it's true that, from two years ago, I had the chance to direct an opera for the first time I was invited, by the Opéra national du Rhin to make an opera. And at the beginning, I was very reluctant about doing that because I don't even have experience of directing somebody else's material.

And, you know, I never did a Chekhov or Shakespeare, because I don't know exactly how to do that, you know, because it's very difficult to make a separation between writing and directing. And for me, it's really a part of the same thing, but then this opportunity to direct an opera - it felt really right at the time.

And also an opportunity to reconnect with these more poetics and [00:29:00] visual worlds, that I also like to pay some attention, but especially because I was becoming a little bit obsessed about the way written text and music can live together. So of course, opera has been doing that for centuries.

And now I think we are starting to seriously explore this idea for. Some future projects, probably not Los Años because it's much more narrow, more like a clear storytelling and it could be a little bit problematic, but yeah, I think the mixture in between storytelling and music, it's something that is going to be in the future projects.

Kris Nelson: Fantastic. And this opera in Strasburg, is this the one that you opened, that you directed remotely from home?

Mariano Pensotti: Well, that was the second one on, yeah, the [00:30:00] first one was two years ago and it was a production of Beatrix Cenci which is a very rare and obscure opera by Albert Ginastera, an Argentinian composer, very dark and really, really good one.

And this time they invited us to make a version of Madam Butterfly by Puccini. So it was just the opposite, you know, probably one of the most presented operas, yeah, around the world. Yeah, that was the one that we just opened last Friday on Strasburg and yes, because of the situation of the pandemic, we were not able to travel.



Yeah, we didn't get the permissions and also, you know, to leave the country, it was extremely complicated. So, we decided to try to direct it in a remote way. So I was here in Buenos Aires is working with the singers by Zoom. At the [00:31:00] beginning it felt terribly bizarre and wrong. But then, you know, after probably two or three days, we get used to it and it was great. I have to say that, I mean, it's probably something that I won't wish to do in the future if the context is different, because of course I was lucky all the time, that direct contact and being there, but still, it went quite well, and I'm really, really happy with the result.

Kris Nelson: Fantastic.

For any artists who are listening Mariano, do you have any, because I know a lot of people here in the UK have been doing these kind of remote collaborations - some well before the pandemic - and many are doing it now, and we've been doing this commissioning program called Concept Touring, supporting people to create some digital projects or projects with international collaboration and without any [00:32:00] travel.

Do you have any tips for artists about how, like, what did you learn? What were your five things that you'll always do again or three things that you'll always do again, if you're rehearsing over Zoom, would you share those? The trade secrets.

Mariano Pensotti: I don't know if I really can help with tips, you know, but I'd been meaning. I mean, my main advice would be not to be too afraid of trying new things, and don't reject that because it's something that no matter the context, it seems that we should explore to see what gains after... and probably our experience with the opera was a little bit different because it was something that has been pre-created. I mean, the whole concept was created before and the set was created before. So, it was really like a traditional stage piece. And the only thing that we, I, had to do was to direct it. [00:33:00] If I were creating something new and if I knew from before that it was going to be for this format, I will probably have, include all the different things, because I think that the more interesting situation that we are facing is that, well, we need to incorporate all this that we're doing into something new. If we are expecting to



do the old thing we used to do in regular times through this medium, well, it's not going to work or it's not going to be the same.

But still it's possible. You know, at least what I personally experienced directing this opera in Strasbourg from Buenos Aires. Yeah, it was that, well, you can do it. Of course it takes a lot of time and you need to also create a specific space and environment to keep on talking [00:34:00] directly with the actors, with the singers, in this case, you know, because it's, it's pretty easy to have the distance that the screens gives you and feel more detached to what you are doing. That's the danger. So you need to create strategies to feel that you are really working with other human beings even though you are not there. You know, it probably takes more time. I mean, you will think that it's the opposite, that is going to be faster and it's just the opposite. It takes much more time, much more talking, much more discussions, in a good way. Also because the understanding that you get through a screen is not just the same that you have being present there. But yeah, I can say now that I'll be looking forward to see what comes after all this mixture of performance. [00:35:00]

Kris Nelson: Great.

So, Mariano, I'm wondering about Argentinian theater in general, because what I know of the cultural life there is truly theater is a part of a lot of people's lives. People go to the theater. It's very popular. True? Mostly?

Mariano Pensotti: So yes, it is. Yeah, it is. At least for the middle-class in an urban context, it is.

But yeah, I would say that it's actually much more diverse than what you would imagine - I would imagine.

Kris Nelson: So thinking of that, do you have a kind of, um, a hopeful vision of what arts and culture would look like there in the future?

Mariano Pensotti: Well, that's a very good question. Yeah. I always try to remain optimistic and I mean, I'm old enough to have seen many crisis here in Argentina



and to see that at the end we always overcome. And they're always interesting [00:36:00] and challenging, and one of the things coming after these uncertain times. But on the other hand, it's true that the life of a theater in Argentina - at least in Buenos Aires - this is really based on a tiny, independent venues, you know? I think one of the particularities of what I'm saying is that we have, I don't know, like I think it's 300 tiny, independent venues. It's something crazy and wonderful at the same time. And it's really the core of Argentinian theater. The core of Argentinian theater is not the national theater is not the city theater.

And these tiny venues who present probably, I don't know, five or six different pieces every week. And they are places where people gather there. Not communal centers or anything like that because they are focusing just on theater. But these are places where a newcomer can [00:37:00] present a piece quite easily and there are people going in there mostly all the time. And unfortunately, these places are the ones who are suffering the most during the pandemics. You know, they have no resources to be open.

Kris Nelson: And, uh, and there's not been a government intervention has there?

Mariano Pensotti: Really symbolic, you know, and I can't say too much because I don't really, I'm not participating on one of those spaces, but as far as I know, there's not really a strong support from the city nor the national government, to support them. Probably there's some symbolic help, but not really, I know that a lot of them have been shut down.

So there's there's going to be this huge need of rebuilding those spaces after the pandemic in the near future. I [00:38:00] think it is going to be really about rebuilding things even more than creating new things. But on the other hand, you know, probably the destruction of those spaces might take us to create something new.

On the other hand it's true that on those tiny spaces you can create a certain type of theater. Not any kind of theater because of the restrictions of the space, and so on. And there has been a lot of experiences on theatre in public places,



theater in open air in recent months, so probably that's going to create a new landscape and environment for the next things happening here in Argentina.

Kris Nelson: Great. And do you see important things that the west, that the rest of the world could learn from that example? [00:39:00]

Mariano Pensotti: That is also a good question. I think, I always feel, well felt, really proud of how theater makers in Argentina are making things with the desires, just, you know, with a free association between us and not thinking that much about, well, in terms of career or... But on the other hand, it's tricky because I don't really want to make a romanticization about, you know, sometimes I have the impression that it might look like, you know, in Argentina with all our economic crisis and dictatorships look how wonderful art we are creating, or look how wonderful theater we have, and we have that because we have this economic crisis and so on. So it's very tricky. And [00:40:00] my impression is that yeah, I mean, we were able to create all those things in spite of all these difficulties and, yeah, I think there's a lot to learn through that endurance and desire of, uh, keep on doing things.

You know, the sense of togetherness and the sense of community that creates, which is certainly something that you can feel here. But on the other hand, that still is something that I would much prefer, you know, to have a city government who takes much more care of the art field, and to have much more protection for artists, and to have much more opportunity for new artists, especially.

I mean, we are a sort of a strange group because it's true that we create stage performances and at the same time we have been doing some site-specific work and [00:41:00] some installations.

It's true that it's not always that easy in Buenos Aires to show these other projects, you know - not the stage performances, but the other ones - because even though if, as we have been saying that the theatre scene, Buenos Aires, is wonderful and quite diverse, in some aspects it's a little bit conservative and you don't have that much spaces to show projects, which are not strictly theater. But going back to the question, I think I always, I mean, the trigger or the starting



point of a project it's always very diverse. It can be a story, or it can be an image or a space.

I think when we are working on public spaces, always the question that we pose to ourselves is how much we can transform this space with our fiction, [00:42:00] but also how much this space can transform our fiction in a different way, you know. How much we can transform this specific reality of this place that we are taking, but also how much this space can have an impact or an influence in the stories that we will create. Because if not, it won't make any sense. It's not just, you know, to make an implementation of our stories in a public space and to take them out of the black box, but more to make a reflection of what's what's meaningful here and what would be interesting to tell specifically here. That said, I think that I am still seeing myself as a sort of storyteller, so probably the texts and the stories are always the main core of everything that we do for me. Yeah. I just started to see myself as a sort of director [00:43:00] very recently. You know, I always see myself more as a writer for some reason. So stories, I will say that they always comes first.

Kris Nelson: Stories. That's a beautiful place to leave us on today. That stories come first.

Thank you, Mariano for joining us. I wish you all the best for your plans for the future. It's great to have you.

Mariano Pensotti: Thank you. Thank you so much. It was great. And, yeah, amazing to talk to you.

Kris Nelson: Thank you for joining us today. This is one of five conversations in our series Plans For The Future, so do check out the other episodes where I speak with intrepid arts makers around the world. To find out more about LIFT and our work challenging, artistic, political, and social conventions, supporting an equitable rebuild post-Brexit and the pandemic, and connecting the world to London, follow us @liftfestival or visit www.liftfestival.com. Even better, sign up to our newsletter for a monthly dose of LIFT. We promise not to bore you. LIFT [00:44:00] is a national portfolio organization supported by Arts Council



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