

Inheritance under the gabled roof

The performance 'Paredes de Papel' by Lesley Telford, a high point of Madrid en Danza EL PAIS/ Roger Salas, Madrid, 26 NOVEMBER 2012

The festival Madrid en Danza closed last Sunday with what was undoubtedly its best creative work in dance: Paredes de Papel (also known as *Brittle Failure*). Working with a very thoughtful and sustained balance between the intellectual and the choreographic material, Paredes ... demonstrates how aesthetic awareness, maturity in scenic knowledge and the right selection of interpreters, are the basic ingredients for a successful work of ballet or contemporary dance and not mere platitudes. The choreographer adapted with ease to a space as unique as it was compromised: the heritage of Corral de las Comedias, and in fact used the lights, hollows and perspective of the space to incorporate the installation by the Japanese artist Yoko Seyama into a harmonious whole.

Let's start with aesthetic motivations. In 1997, Lesley Telford starred *Self* by Nacho Duato (with sets by himself and music by Alberto Iglesias in CND). In this work, the Canadian appeared in a small house with a gable roof, also a heritage of the houses of the sets of Swedish Mats Ek, almost always designed by artist Marie-Louise Ekman. The house, in ballet, has always been present, functioning as an element of the dynamics. When we consider *La Sylphide* (Taglioni-Bournonville): the first act is in an interior. In *Giselle*, the house (exterior) is the symbol of the first act, as well as in *Coppelia*: exterior, then interior; this is also the case of *La Fille Mal Gardée*. In all these works the house is associated with the female lead. In 1991, the Breton artist, Loïe Le Groumellec, conceived *Giselle's* cottage for the Paris Opera (in the failed version of Parick Dupond) with a gabled roof with no doors or windows, inaccessible, hermetic. The house-home is an ideographic haven of identity, yet at the same time it should be avoided, as Jung advised; he says this, but analyzes it mercilessly.

Paredes de Papel

Telford, who has also danced repertoire of Ek, goes back to that almost childlike house, but "minimalises" and multiplies it to create an infinite perception in a powerful and moving image that is replicated and destroyed in a visual metaphor of temporality and risk, of fragility and discord. Then, all that is delicate and precious is razed to the ground, in cues given by the soundtrack or the silent movements of the three artists, all ex-members of Compañía Nacional de Danza. The heritage from Duato and from the Dutch School of modern ballet is very present.

Iratxe Ansa, powerful with her feet first, an obsessive force "en dedans", was I believe intentionally confrontational and even reflective, giving a painful twist to the image. The American Clyde Archer, with a seemingly limitless powerful plasticity, guides action towards a classic battle of survival, exploration of the opponent. And the Spaniard Fernando Carrión, wearing tight jeans that were somewhat suggestive, shows his histrionics and good work. They also recite text and approach the poetics of Bachelard and even though this was contradictory, it moderated the weight of symbolism, modernized the approach to domestic drama and sowed the path with seeds of inquiry. And all this is brought to the stage through the unfolding of phrases and breathing.

Paredes de Papel demonstrates how small formats or chamber settings open up possibilities when designed with enormous rigor in the production and the integration of the work. It is unfortunate that the texts are said and projected in English. In consideration of the public, it should be said in Castilian or at least subtitled in the language of Cervantes, there in Alcalá de Henares. The work will next be seen in the Netherlands and Canada.