

CA NE DO

text written by Rivet and weareQQ

Original Spanish version published in Territorios y Fronteras published by Universidad del País Vasco, 2012

Ca

*Every thing / every one

Every film is a mini-factory because it produces another object—the filmic image—and because it depends on a clear division of labor. In Canedo, nevertheless, there is a complete integration of the filmic image with its manufacturing process. The preferences and specialties of the extra-cinematic field inform the raw material of the film: the rally driver is a rally driver, the printer's bookbinder is the bookbinder in Canedo. None of these is called upon as actor who represents a story. We witness the production of an emotional and personal event as enunciation of the link between life and art, without any intention to bring real life to the screen from a subjective perspective. We also witness the construction of reality through practice and ways of doing things. In Canedo there's no observer or observed. The camera is a mechanism that registers the integration of an event in time and whose fabrication describes the affective relations that surface in a family, the modes of production of a particular locale, and the making of the work in itself.

Canedo is therefore not a film about daily life, observing human beings in their natural habitat doing what they usually do. Each person is featured in his/her best life role and together they bring into existence a film. Together, they form a productive assemblage—the saw that cuts the tree, the director of photography, the trunk or the smoke of the cellulose factory, or the 124Abarth. Canedo couldn't be further away from the costum-brista or simply documentary genre, that is, from emphasizing types and from staging or observing them without forcing connections or suggesting 'atypical' collaborations.

Things and people converge to co-produce Canedo, a name that refers to both place and film. In fact, the cinematic observation of natural or human landscape becomes impossible because the classical distinction between figure and ground is absent. Likewise, there is no clear abstraction or subjectivity. That's how Canedo furthers what happens at each instant in the living plane: actions and expressions come about through concatenations rather than through the ultimate will of a single, directing being.

Right now, for instance, something similar takes place: this text is written thanks to a series of caffeine-enriched conversations, raw materials excavated in the heart of Africa working hard underneath the dirty keyboard, our theoretical preferences, "style", and the affect created by Canedo. The associations between all actors—such as father, tree, music, tape, camera, weather, realizers, edition and mood—determine Canedo. Keeping a democratic equilibrium among these associations means avoiding any judgements about the events. Where the documentary film pretends to be disinterested, in Canedo the preference towards associations is definitely evident.

Reality in Canedo emerges from relation both human (family) and non-human (book, machines, kinetics, gravity, folklore, verticality and horizontality—the falling tree—, rhythm—the music of the band but also the musicality of machines and swords—, energy). In a sense, achieving a valid expression in the audiovisual is tangible, in as far as it is language, in the production of meaning that starts from the heterogeneous. This is why there's an important immaterial dimension to Canedo. That is, where the ritual, artisanal, physical, natural, cultural, historic and human show their constructive similarities and their ever temporary associations. It is also here where the work interpellates categories such as culture, nature, family or tradition, accepting them as formations in transit, like collectives, and not as frames, structures or skeletons to inhabit.

Ne

*No speaking

It is very possible that Canedo produces this affect in the viewer or these relations among collaborators because it rarely uses verbal language. At the beginning, there are directions from the photographer who, at the end, is singing on a stage with other musicians. And there's no other words between beginning and end. We see an apparently ritualized language, as much by the industrialized mechanisms (cellulose, paper printer, sawmill) as by the cultural elements (there's a procession, a burial, a dance). We are in an environment of communicability rather than of communication: things are understood and understand each other. There's no need of words so that an action develops. Instead, there is a plurality of non-verbal languages, including the rhythm of editing or of the procession, gestures and cuts, all of which exceed a merely instrumental function.

The combination of the practical, mechanical language with ritual and collective elements is crystallized in the tree, which functions as symbolic site that signifies home and family (like trees have done in the myths and legends of the past) but it is also a material given that produces paper, gives work to the truck driver or the printer, etc. Such apparently symbolical elements are rooted in concrete things. These figures (the dance, procession, martial arts, burial) have a kinetic character, just like the conversion of wood into cellulose, the truck, or the offset printing of the photo. They show that each allegory is a projection that serves to get closer to a tradition (theatrical, fiction film), but it also serves to mark the difference.

Similarly, the antinomy between work and leisure is demystified and both come forward as interconnected: there is continuation more so than rupture or inversion. Maybe Canedo works because we are amongst family, something one understands without much words, but maybe it can also be appreciated as any integral productive community, thus questioning received notions like alienation or the bifurcation between life and work.

Do

*All that for nothing

Two references spring to mind—something else seemingly absurd that's ritualized: the burial of the sardine at the end of lent, and Francis Alÿs's motto "maximum effort for minimal result." If Alÿs focuses on physical force and duration because of the subject's will, in *Canedo* we can see the transformation of a tree into a family photo almanach that's also titled *Canedo*. This trajectory literally speaks to the dematerialization and conversion of the thing into image (of a reality in itself to a referential reality), and that is how we reach a self-reflexive level that talks about visual production per se. In other words, it confronts us literally with the take of the photo (that is, the assemblage that creates the photo in the very instant) and its following ordering into book-format. The almanach, as photographic product and result of the same chain of associations that creates the film, emerges as the place of the film itself.

But the video doesn't end once the almanach is fabricated: it is brought back home (and in celebratory accompaniment) and buried there. The burial and celebration bring us to the most difficult part of *Canedo*: that is, its impossibility to really grasp it. This gesture annuls the representativity or use of the object and prioritizes its production; it annuls the material product in favor of its audiovisual story. The printed photo, then, does not fulfill its representative function and the indexical relation between photo and take remains perpetually postponed. Added to that is a subtle notion of the absurd (the drummer appearing unexpectedly on the side of the road, the anti-documentary rhythm) that suggests the film may very well be talking about art—that is, about the production of supposedly inoperative/unnecessary/non-applicable/impractical things. That is to say, things don't obey to the 1=1 evaluative ratio of uniform or measurable representation. In part, this is due to the fact that the "product" in *Canedo* doesn't depend on the valorization or compartmentalization of each component of the assemblage.

Quite the opposite: there's a resistance to instantaneous commodification, which also (for good and for worse) generally goes for the work of art. What comes forward as absurd in Canedo, then, doesn't have to do with the folkloric but rather with this difficulty of economizing to achieve an equal or measurable relation between the means and the end. That is why the final result of a certain assemblage isn't that important because for Canedo communicability resides in the process more so than in the final objective.

Canedo's activity is its force.

As a film, it is narrative but not dramatic,
or it is drama in a degree zero,
bringing drama to sheer activity, prior to its codification into genres.

As an artifact, it does more than it says.

As a device, it is performative rather than discursive.

As a work of art, it is more constructive than theatrical.