

Does a shipwrecked person love  
the board to which so firmly he  
sticks?" -Hans Blumberg, *Shipwreck*  
with by Spectator

By Avelino Sala

Some independent ideas about *La Espera*, an on going performance project, which was performed at the *Waterways Intervention* during Venice Biennale (2005) and officially featured at the Istanbul Biennale XIV. *Waterways* was a collaborative project of 33 artists, curators and scholars which appeared on a working Vaporetto. *La Espera* took place off the plank of the Vaporetto in the public space of the Grand Canal.

We spend a great part of our life waiting. The artist spends all his life waiting. This activity of waiting is something that we all assume is inevitable or necessary. (A normal condition of man, a way of living, actually, as we all look toward the future instead of centering on the present.)

Fifteen years ago, I began surfing on the coast of northern Spain. As my surfing developed into a personal obsession, I began thinking about the process of waiting in the most public of spaces, the oceans surrounding the private space of nations. My current performance project, *La Espera* (The Wait) stems from my personal experience as a surfer. Surfing is not only a deep-rooted social sport but also a distinct culture with its own codes of visual speech, which are most often only accessible to the young. *La Espera* seeks to find a

metaphorical action or performance of surfing that is understood by different generations in disparate locations from the Grand Canal in Venice to swimming pools in Miami.

*La Espera* suggests that waiting is linked to the worry that emerges when we do not know what or whom to expect. Yet, even when we know the dangers, we continue the senseless action of worry because we already know that we are before the remains of the unattainable thing and this turns into the metaphor that Blumenberg placed in the shipwreck of the philosophers: the table of values is inverted.

I decided not to contemplate the waves in the action of surfing. Instead, in *La Espera* I try to harmonize, as Jankelévitch would say, the adventure, the boredom and the serious thing with the same means used in advertising— a metaphor of seduction and persuasion.

The surfer continues waiting for a wave he knows will never arrive in places which are a physical impossibility but, it doesn't matter. The artist will be there, waiting in Venice's Gran Canal, in a fountain in Madrid, in a pool in Miami, because, maybe, just maybe, the extraordinary will happen, and the wave will appear. *La Espera* is an infinite act of nihilism as well as hope, as it will continue in the most unexpected waters.

**Avelino Sala (1972) was born in Gijon, Asturias Spain. In addition to being an artist, Avelino is also the director of *Sublime* magazine and a curator with the group Commission. His next solo**

exhibition will be in May 2009 at Virgil de  
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