



“Why do you invite me when you know how I get?”

Charles Benjamin and Manuela Morales

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“There’s a word in Spanish... Instead of saying ‘to wake up,’ you say recordarse, that is, to record yourself, to remember yourself...”

- Jorge Luis Borges

Fuck, this is some historical hangover we’re in the thrall of. I wonder how much Gatorade® we need to overcome history? Is it possible to subdue this ache through merely shunning it in an act of “amnesic amnesty?” At most it seems to offer a respite from the shakes.

Acción Antipoética, the first collaborative video work from Charles Benjamin and Manuela Morales, follows an inebriated Benjamin as he attempts to walk the path of the former Berlin Wall. It aims to parody the history of male artists making grandiose gestures. “Now then get up, Picasso, Hemingway.” Morales, also intoxicated, says to Benjamin after he falls, egging on his personification of the Herculean white male. There’s no documentation of Bas Jan Ader climbing out of the canal or Chris Burden applying antiseptic cream to his chest. Acción Antipoética is the inglorious aftermath of those performances.

Benjamin continues to stagger along his route. Jubilee Street by Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds begins to play in the background. Benjamin joins in, acting as the hype-man to Cave, seemingly goading him on throughout the song.

The Russians moved in
oh no, oh no, not the Russians, oh no

I’m too scared
What?

Here they outta practice just what they preach
PRACTICE WHAT THEY PREACH *

Acción Antipoética continuously cuts between various moments throughout the day, effectively obscuring time. Talks between Morales and Benjamin about re-shooting in the evening occur after we have watched them transgress lamppost lit streets. The journey turns into an ouroboros. At one point Benjamin repeatedly proclaims, “It’s done!” as he stumbles forward. Moments later he repeatedly asks, “What’s going on?” as Morales drops a lens cap on his face. The two have seemingly succumbed to the effects of European history. They’re lost in the currywurst sauce.

* This verse is an ode to the Spanish poet Mario Santiago Papasquiaro. Who famously refused to look before crossing the street and (unsurprisingly) met his death after being hit by a car (for the fifth time.)