

Matías Piñeiro's *Viola* and the Resonant Drift of Love

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If music be the food of love, play on.
Give me excess of it that, surfeiting,
the appetite may sicken, and so die.
That strain again, it had a dying fall.
Oh, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound,
that breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing and giving odor. Enough, no more.
'Tis not so sweet now as it was before.
O spirit of love, how quick and fresh art thou,
That, notwithstanding thy capacity
Receiveth as the sea, nought enters there,
Of what validity and pitch soe'er,
But falls into abatement and low price
Even in a minute. So full of shapes is fancy
That it alone is high fantastical

—William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, Act 1, Scene 1

With this brief monologue, Orsino, the Duke of Iliria, opens *Twelfth Night*, the Shakespearean comedy that is being rehearsed by a group of female performers in Matías Piñeiro's film *Viola* (2012). Although the fragment quoted above does not appear in the film, it aptly expresses how the discordant "spirit of love" resists categorization into a single meaning. The spirit of love emerges as a synesthetic "sweet sound" that "breathes upon a bank of violets," later turning into an intolerable noise that falls "into abatement and low price." *Viola* articulates the precarious shapes of "fancy" through the entanglement of different discourses, genres, and subjects, allowing theatre,

literature, music, design, maps, text messages, emails, and pirated films to intersect in a vibrant dialogue.

It is now firmly accepted that one of the characteristics of contemporary aesthetic production pertains to the loss of boundaries between disciplines and artistic genres. As Florencia Garramuño states: “Contemporary aesthetics’ transformations propitiate modes of organization of the sensible that put into crisis ideas of belongingness, specificity and autonomy” (245). Such porosity of language not only questions automatized categorization of genres (how a form responds to an identity), but also strengthens new forms of interaction between fiction and reality, art and spectator. By means of technical and narrative operations, *Viola* positions itself in that interstice in order to create an indiscernible zone where gender identities and meanings are dissolved. In this article, I will first examine how the tension between cinema and theatre that lies at the heart of the film breaks boundaries between different forms of perception. Second, I will explore in what way the baroque imaginary unleashed by the Shakespearean play contributes to blurring the limits between reality and artifice. Finally, I will explore how the performative² repetition of texts and gestures creates an unstable affective network in which bodies, sounds, and gazes contaminate characters’ everyday lives. I will conclude that *Viola* shows that the resonance of love, as a social and affective force, circulates beyond what is visible.

Cinema and Theatre in Tension

Matías Piñeiro (1982, Buenos Aires) is a graduate of the Universidad del Cine in Buenos Aires, currently living in New York. He has made five films to date: *El hombre robado* (2007), *Todos mienten* (2009), *Rosalinda* (2011), *Viola* (2012), and *La princesa de Francia* (2014), the last of which was released at the Lorcano Film Festival. The first two films engage with the work of 19th-century Argentine writer and statesman Domingo Faustino Sarmiento,³ while *Rosalinda*, *Viola*, and *La princesa de Francia*⁴ are part of a series of films that explore the feminine world in William Shakespeare’s comedies. *Viola* was released in September 2012 at the Toronto International Film Festival and shown at the Buenos Aires Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente (BAFICI) in 2013, where María Villar, Agustina Muñoz, Elisa Carricajo, and Romina Paula shared the award for best female performer. As in other Piñeiro films, a literary text (in this case the rehearsal of a scene from a Shakespeare comedy) becomes the catalyst for a series of unexpected connections. The film’s plot is apparently simple. The title character delivers

pirated DVDs throughout the Buenos Aires as part of her boyfriend's video business. Along the way she joins up with a group of actresses who are performing in an all-female production of Shakespeare's classic. As film critic Frank Scheck explains:

Within this mode, characters shift from everyday conversation to thick Shakespearean verse, often within the same scene, and with whiplash speed. Ostensibly justified as textual rehearsal bleeding over into real life, the brilliance of this "open workshop" conceit is that it paradoxically shifts the Bard's perennial themes of love, identity and destiny into broader dialogue with 21st century relationship culture.

There are few critical articles on Piñeiro's filmography and even fewer on *Viola*. The existing ones are available in online cinema magazines and are mostly written by English-speaking film critics, a testimony to the existence of an already captive New York audience for Piñeiro's work. Although Piñeiro is known and appreciated within the local Argentinean film network, his films differ greatly from the realist style of the so-called New Argentine Cinema, in which the use of non-professional actors and documentary techniques are influenced by the low-budget strategies pioneered by Italian Neorealism.⁵ Piñeiro's cinematic aesthetic is more akin to his contemporaries Mariano Llinás and Alejo Moguillansky, with whom he shares common experimental methods, actors, and technicians, as well as friendships, so much so that Moguillansky was the film editor of *Rosalinda* and *Viola*.⁶ In a relatively recent interview with *The New York Times*, Piñeiro declares in relation to the New Argentine Cinema: "I enjoy cinema much more in terms of artifice and composition rather than the obsessive naturalism that sometimes I think those films fall into" (Dargis and Scott). In his review of *Viola*, film critic Dennis Lim presents a similar view:

If many recent art films have made prominent use of non-actors, typically cast as some version of themselves, Piñeiro's beguiling, hyperverbal movies revel in the transportive potential—and sheer pleasure—of actors acting. Instead of rooting stories in the soil of the real, they emphasize the alchemical properties of fiction, the power of the written and spoken word to warp the world and generate their own reality.

The fact that Piñeiro's film was a low-budget production is not related to the political aim of depicting a precarious world or addressing class struggle, as it is the case with many Argentine films of the period. On the contrary, as film critic Quintín (pen name of Eduardo Antín) claims, Piñeiro's characters are

usually detached from the rest of society. They are of similar age and belong to a middle-class artistic milieu devoted to leading some kind of bohemian life, a feature that has led some film critics to relate Piñeiro's films to the contemporary subgenre mumblecore, low-budget films made by young people about (more or less) their own lives ("Role Models"). In Quintín's opinion, if Piñeiro's films do have a political component, it is most likely expressed by the fact that his characters live according to their desires; this freedom from state constraints stands "as an attempt to avoid the increasingly authoritarian atmosphere of the Kirchner years by suppressing all links to the omnipresent political reality." In such an independent world, Quintín continues, "[T] here is no daily life, because daily life is connected to family, to politics, to social issues, to regular jobs." In other words, Piñeiro's characters are free because of their micropractices of dissent and their disengagement from political reality, contrary to the Kirchnerist youth, who are committed to active militancy.⁷ However, I believe there is something more powerful in Piñeiro's proposal that does not necessarily happen in the referential realm. I adhere to film scholar Laura Podalsky's idea that "sensorial dynamics" at play in regional cinema of the last decade "solicit particular emotional responses and/or stimulate more diffuse, affective reactions from the spectator" (7). In her opinion, such affective engagement might unsettle "hardened oppositions between mind/body, reason/emotion, and masculine/feminine" (9). In *Viola*, the appropriation of heterogeneous cultural forms leads to an exploration of this sensorial dynamic at different levels.

Within the crossover of disciplines and languages, theatre occupies an important place in Piñeiro's films. In the series based on Shakespeare's comedies, there is always a group of female performers rehearsing and repeating lines from a particular scene that is being filmed by an observant camera. The encounter of two different dramatic languages disrupts the spectator's habits shaped by the conventions specific to each genre, affecting the way reality is perceived through time and space. At first sight, it looks as if *Viola* is playing with the limits of theatrical format through the use of cinematic medium. In her article "Cinema and Theatre," Susan Sontag argues that the rise of cinema was conceived as the emancipation from theatrical artificiality:

The history of cinema is often treated as the history of its emancipation from theatrical models. First of all from theatrical "frontality" (the unmoving camera reproducing the situation of the spectator of a play fixed in his seat), then from theatrical acting (gestures needlessly stylized, exaggerated-needlessly, because now the actor could

be seen “close up”), then from theatrical furnishings (unnecessary “distancing” of the audience’s emotions, disregarding the opportunity to immerse the audience in reality). (24)

This tension between theatrical language and cinematic language can be seen throughout the film, opening indiscernible zones of meaning. In one of the first scenes of the film, the camera records the staging of a scene of the play *Twelfth Night* in a small local theater. One character, Cecilia, plays the role of a woman (Viola) disguised as a man (Bassanio), while another, Sabrina, plays the role of Olivia, who wears a black lace veil over her face.⁸ In this scene, Bassanio, Orsino’s page, has been sent to declare the duke’s love to Olivia. For this mission, he has learned a text, remarking “[M]e costó mucho trabajo aprenderlo y es muy poético,” to which Olivia replies: “[R]azón de más para que sea fingido, te pido que te lo guardes.” The dramatic importance of words and the effect of pictorial chiaroscuro created by the stage lighting presents theatricality as an art that creates fake compositions of artificial dialogues and movements.

Yet while the scene emphasizes the feature of theatre acting, the filmic medium also challenges theatrical frontality. The camera’s movement, with its intrusive interaction and various perspectives, undermines the fundamental pact of theatre as an event during which the spectator is fixed in her seat and therefore cannot change her angle of vision. The lens of the camera, which continually shifts in distance and direction, creates an illusion of permanent motion (Sontag 27). The insistent close-ups and the optic effect of faces going in and out of focus tend to dissociate the scene from the whole plot by emphasizing textures, luminosity, and color. Indeed, the voyeuristic camera eye adopts different perspectives, beginning with Agustín (the play’s director and Sabrina’s ex-boyfriend), who is watching from the balcony. From this elevated viewpoint, Sabrina’s face appears at the forefront of the frame, but not for long, because the camera soon takes up the viewpoint of a different young man (Gerónimo, Viola’s boyfriend). He is staring at Cecilia, who becomes the focus of the next close-up. In this way, the spectator seems to be located in the middle of an intersection of people looking at each other with varying degrees of intensity. The decentered position of the viewer creates a kaleidoscopic effect that challenges the possibility of representing an objective reality. Such an intertwining of looks might recall the baroque image of Diego Velázquez’s painting *Las meninas*, with the exception that rather than a relation of power, what is displayed in this case is an orgy of gazes in which everything and everyone is eroticized. On the one hand, these visual

strategies hint at something else going on between the camera and those eyes, something that cannot be recorded but that nevertheless interferes in the composition of the frame. On the other hand, they make visible the artificial language of cinematic medium.

In fact, in Sontag's opinion, the view that movies are regarded as advancing from theatrical stasis to cinematic fluidity, from theatrical artificiality to cinematic naturalness and immediacy, is far too simple: "[I]t's tempting to draw a crude boundary. Theatre deploys artifice while cinema is committed to reality [...] Cinema, at once high art and popular art, is cast as the art of the authentic. Theatre, by contrast, means dressing up, pretense, lies" (24, 26). Images registered by the camera are in fact arbitrary because they are a selection of the whole. In other words, cinema is not only an art but also a medium, a mechanical reproduction of reality that creates illusions, a time machine that constructs narration through a visual grammar made of associative and disjunctive rhythms. For Sontag, the distinctive unit of films is not the image but the principle of connection between shots, the arrangement of screen images and sounds, which unlike theatre is confined to a discontinuous use of space that creates a sense of disorientation (29).

Regarding this debate and in dialogue with Sontag, Philippa Page claims that cinema is the successor and rival of theatre, just as theatre is the successor, rival, and reviver of cinema. Drawing on performance studies, Page deconstructs the notion of genre as a fixed category and defines it as "a contingent construct that attempts to ensure a sense of agency that is based at the very least on the illusion of a stable identity and subjectivity that can underpin legitimate political engagement" (15). In *Viola*, theatrical and cinematic languages are brought into such tension that they collapse into each other's boundaries. The film does not aim to confront both languages but to create a playful and hybrid form of representation that will go beyond a self-reflexive practice to become a performance of daily affective alliances.

All the World's a Stage

Whether it is expressed through theatre or film, language's artificiality is constantly exaggerated in *Viola*, showing the illusory character of reality, identity, and meaning. Reality and fiction are merged to the point of becoming indistinguishable.⁹ In one of the first scenes, the actresses appear in the intimacy of a dressing room talking about how and when to end a relationship, a timely topic given that Sabrina has just broken up with her boyfriend. As they talk, they look in the mirror, put on makeup and fake eyelashes, and

style their hair as if performing femininity. An intrusive camera follows the situation, closing in on faces, eyes, and mouths as if it were eavesdropping on a private conversation, coming closer to a sympathetic female gaze rather than a male gaze. With such excessive closeness, the depth field becomes extremely short and impedes proper focus. Moreover, when the camera positions itself behind the mirror, it creates the impression that the girls looking at themselves are in fact staring straight at the audience. There is something artificial about the conversation as the girls show themselves insensitive to the pains of love. After being interrogated by her friends about her now ex-boyfriend, Sabrina decides to take his phone call, declaring poetically, “Ahora como puedo y quiero, yo decido. Así que ahora decido atenderlo.” At the end of the scene and following Sabrina’s departures, the girls conspire to test her love—or lack of it—for her ex-boyfriend through the following ploy. Cecilia is to seduce Sabrina during rehearsals, specifically during the scene the audience has already seen rehearsed at the beginning of the film where Cecilia plays Bassanio, a man declaring his love to Olivia, played by Sabrina. Their language changes as they plot together and appropriate lines from other Shakespearean plays in their dialogue. Thus, although the play is over, the use of poetic language and artificial gestures make the actresses look as if they were constantly rehearsing for a bigger and endless play, emphasizing the baroque topic of *theatrum mundi*.



Photo: Alessio Rigo de Righi

The performative appropriation of an Elizabethan imaginary in the urban context of twenty-first century Buenos Aires involves a dialogic imagination in which, according to Mikhail Bakhtin, “languages of various epochs and periods of socio-ideological life cohabit with one another” (*Dialogic* 291):

The word in language is half someone else’s. It becomes one’s “own” only when the speaker populates it with his own intentions, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language, [...] but rather it exists in other people’s mouths, in other people’s contexts, serving other people’s intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one’s own. (294)

For Bakhtin, there is neither a first nor a last word, and there are no limits to the dialogic context. This is why dialogic expression is always incomplete; meaning is never closed and always oriented towards the future (*Speech Genres* 170). In Piñeiro’s film, Shakespeare’s dramatic lines are uttered with different intentions according to the context. These words populate characters’ mouths not only during the staging of the play, but also in everyday life speech, where they acquire new meanings. Yet *Viola* not only appropriates Shakespeare’s “words,” but also his baroque aesthetic, which emphasizes the possibility of blurring the boundaries between being/seeming and reality/fiction. In *Twelfth Night*, deception and conspiracy are common instruments of revenge and humiliation. For these purposes it displays a game of appearances where characters usually impersonate others: A young aristocratic-born woman named Viola pretends to be a man in order to conquer Orsino’s heart; the fool pretends to be a priest; a sister and brother are taken for the same person, the sane for the insane, and the coward for the brave. Similarly, in *Viola*, love conspiracies, games of mirrors, oneiric passages, and the play within the play (and in this case also the play within the film) are all commonplace. Such baroque mechanisms contribute to mobilizing meaning and decentering the figure of the subject—who could have served to anchor the action—in order to show that perhaps, as is the case in *Hamlet*, there is more truth in artifice than in what is perceived as real.

According to J. Hoberman, there is also a crossover between Shakespeare’s character Viola and Piñeiro’s Viola, as the latter is a character “who is invited to replace one of the actresses in *Twelfth Night* and who contributes to the pervasive theme of copying and doubling by acting as a courier for her boyfriend in the business of duping and distributing bootleg DVDs”

(“The DVDs.”) While Shakespeare’s Viola (in the role of Bassanio) is the messenger of Duke Orsino’s declaration of love, Piñeiro’s Viola delivers films that are ultimately representations and fantasies that people want to consume. But there are other things that circulate in the transaction, like money and love. Although it is true that both Violas are somehow emissaries¹⁰, in Piñeiro’s film, Viola is moved by her own desires, showing no clear direction in her decisions. She seems to be attracted to almost any person who crosses her daily circuit, male or female. For example, in one scene she is lying on the bed of one of her friends/customers, looking at her mobile. Or later, when one of the customers asks her, sounding a little upset, whether she has received his emails and invites her to the local bar. Without replying, Viola takes the money and keeps moving. It seems that both love and money function as coins of exchange in *Viola*. But this notion of love is not connected to a sentimental feeling of identification, but one of connection. In fact, as Melissa Gregg claims, it is disassociated from the conventions of middle-class propriety, where property and intimacy are linked together in a mutually beneficial pact (397). It seems that what connects bodies in *Viola* is not the love for sameness, but a power that generates social bonds and organizes social and intimate relations. In fact, in *Viola* men and women circulate along with goods and words, creating precarious relationships. Somehow the indiscernibility of identities and genres makes perceptible the force of love that moves in between stable forms as a “motor of both transformation and duration or continuity” (Hardt 676).

Another baroque staple borrowed by Piñeiro in *Viola* is verbosity. During the film, characters are constantly talking, rehearsing, texting, calling, and ringing doorbells. There is an intense exchange of ideas, tips, and gazes that shows an intense human connection. Usually, characters tend to go around and around to say something. This verbosity seems to detach from the laconic characters who have prevailed in New Argentine Cinema, as in the films of Adriano Caetano, Lisandro Alonso, Lucrecia Martel, and Martín Rejtman, among others. In *Viola*, on the contrary, there are few scenes without dialogue. Sometimes the noise comes from the city itself, as for example when Viola cycles through different areas of Buenos Aires (in some of the few exterior shots of the film). In these long tracking shots, Viola merges with the traffic to the point of being swallowed up by the size of the highways and the vociferous city, like a soundtrack to contemporary urban life in which there is no space for either silence or repose.



Photo: Alessio Rigo de Righi

The dialogic nature of the film invites the spectator to think about contemporary human affairs from a historical perspective, as if somehow, Shakespeare's baroque plays can tell us a lot about love in Buenos Aires. Similarly, *Viola*'s affairs are able to re-enact the past through the anachronistic repetition of the same words and gestures in the present. It is the encounter of different epochs that makes Piñeiro's film a contemporary work, establishing in Giorgio Agamben's terms, "a singular relationship with one's own time, which adheres to it and, at the same time, keeps a distance from it. More precisely, it is that relationship with time that adheres to it, through a disjunction and an anachronism" (41). It is in fact a way of thought, where all the times are intertwined in the present, and with it their own forms of representation. Piñeiro combines these layers of time by means of performative appropriation and repetition, bringing to the surface an affective force that circulates in between representational forms and reverberates at the edge of vision.

I Am All Ears

According to Jonathan Sterne, vision usually offers perspective, distance, objectivity, and primarily a spatial sense (9). Unlike the intellectual dimension of vision, listening is about affect because it tends towards subjectivity; it places you inside an event, establishing an involved physical engagement with the situation (9). Piñeiro explores that affective dimension through sound

design: “The idea of the world as being something beyond what is seen is what I’m looking to express. I think besides editing, sound design can be a very economical way of communicating that idea” (Dargis and Scott). As shown earlier, the unsettling use of the camera and excessive use of close-ups produce a sense of disorientation in the viewer. At the same time, the film’s sound and soundscape exceed their diegetic function and consequently their referential content, becoming an autonomous sound image that asks the spectator to be all ears.¹¹

The repetition of Shakespeare’s lines plays an important role, transforming sound into pure materiality, through which the flow of love moves and circulates between bodies and words. The film starts with a very brief scene backstage in which Sabrina breaks up with her boyfriend by phone just before appearing on stage. She replies: “Escucháte, decí: Sabrina no me quiere. Dale decílo, dale decílo[...] Otra vez, otra, otra, otra[...]” up to seven times. Later in the film, there is a remarkable scene in which Cecilia tries to seduce Sabrina during the rehearsal, as planned at the beginning of the film. The scene, set in Sabrina’s house, lasts more than eight minutes. Apart from Sabrina’s black veil and the red plaid shirt worn by Cecilia, there are no special costumes involved. The rehearsal opens abruptly and full lines are repeated six times, word by word, usually with some variations triggered by some mistake made by one of the protagonists. In this long tracking shot, the camera becomes an active voyeur that follows every move and look, playing with seductive close-ups and sometimes taking some distance. Verbal language, that is, Bassanio’s declaration of love to Olivia, contaminates body language and unleashes an erotic choreography between Cecilia and Sabrina. The spectator establishes a sensorial engagement with the scene and lives through an embodied experience of the situation. While the looping of lines is taking place, the sounds of the doorbell, the telephone, and knocking on the front door (Viola is outside trying to deliver DVDs to Olivia) stress the presence of an “out of field” that creates a sense of urgency. It is as if these multiple elements, allegedly marginal to the main scene of the rehearsal, were contributing to bring about the kiss that Cecilia eventually manages to give Sabrina.

The loop, the repetition of almost identical sequences with some variations, is an essential part of the sound phenomenon. It expresses pulsation, speed, color, and vibration, all of which produce a psychoacoustic effect contrary to the progressive development of melody. Consequently, the sound of origin is deformed and taken out of context, losing its original meaning. The mechanical repetition of those artificial lines by the female performers

creates a resonant plane, inviting us, as Jean Luc-Nancy claims, to be all ears in order to listen to the reverberation of the unsaid:

To be listening is always to be on the edge of meaning, or in an edgy meaning of extremity, and as if the sound were precisely nothing else than this edge, this fringe, this margin—at least the sound that is musically listened to, that is gathered and scrutinized for itself, not, however, as an acoustic phenomenon (or not merely as one) but as a resonant meaning, a meaning whose sense is supposed to be found in resonance, and only in resonance. (7)

As a sound effect, repetition places the spectator between outside and inside, fiction and reality, which is also the edge of meaning. By losing the referential function, the poetic function of the text rehearsed gains prominence, so that rhythm, cadence, and height become the mobile material of the endless flow of desire. In that interstitial zone, the passive hearing of words would be insufficient, because only active listening can perceive the resonance of love. In this way, *Viola* acquires layers that endow every word and every image with an affective force that escapes rational understanding.

There are two “plays” at stake in the rehearsal scene: One is that of Basanio repeating a love text to Olivia and the other is that of Cecilia trying to trap Sabrina in her seductive net. Given that the same body is used by the character in the film and the character in the play, “the (brilliant) seduction scenes in both plays are also seduction scenes in the film” (Quintín). According to Lim:

[T]his mischievous start-stop rehearsal between Cecilia and Sabrina—looping their lines into an incantatory mantra, turning words into weapons and traps of seduction, merging their on- and offstage selves—generates both erotic tension and ontological confusion.

Such a queer twist undermines the idea of a fixed, essential, and natural notion of gender identity. The theatrical seductive game between Cecilia and Sabrina conveys instead a performative enactment of gender which, in Judith Butler’s terms, happens at the level of the body: “If the inner truth of gender is a fabrication and if a true gender is a fantasy instituted and inscribed on the surface of bodies, then it seems that genders can be neither true nor false, but are only produced as the truth effects of a discourse of primary and stable identity” (174). Similarly, in *Viola*, characters appear divested of inner life and identity, becoming a point of intersection in the drifting weave of desire. Desire connects bodies, and under its lure every subject becomes an

interchangeable empty container. In this sense, repetition is a way of involving the spectator in the precarious web of love that circulates in the scene, inviting her to listen to what flows among bodies.

But there is another side of the film that relates critically to the concept of repetition and its effects on everyday relationships. In one scene in the middle of the film, Viola is waiting outside Agustín's house for a delivery and runs into Cecilia, who invites her to wait inside the car. Cecilia is trying to learn the lines of the epilogue of *Twelfth Night* from a book, while a contemporary piece of music plays softly on the radio. They talk about theatre and the difficulty of learning lines by heart. Within the already claustrophobic space of the car, the camera moves extremely close to their bodies, as if trapped in that small space. During the conversation, no reverse shots¹² are applied, with the camera alternating between Viola and Cecilia in close-ups. Soon after, Viola falls asleep and has a dream. In the dream she is in the car with Cecilia on the same street, but outside there is a big storm. Suddenly Ruth, a mutual friend, appears in the street and gets into the car. Also an actress, Ruth will replace Cecilia in the play in the role of Viola. After declaiming a piece of the epilogue by heart, Viola is chosen to be the third replacement for the same role. Such a fortunate situation leads Ruth to question Viola's passive attitude towards life and to challenge her to be more proactive in her life decisions. They come up with a plan for Viola to break the inertia that plagues her relationship with Gerónimo. The plan is as follows: Viola must consciously break routines and cease to repeat the same empty daily gestures of love. For example, if she always kisses Gerónimo when she gets home, then she should interrupt that habit and wait for his reaction instead. If he kisses her immediately, the relationship is lost (because he would be automatically repeating a learned gesture), but if he takes his time and gives her a kiss without warning, the relationship is saved. Then, almost imperceptibly for the spectator, Viola wakes up and gets out of the car with Cecilia to meet Agustín.

This constitutes the moment when the film detaches itself from its verbosity, leaving more space for silence. Just like the actresses who are aware that they are acting in a play, by acting the role of the indifferent girlfriend at home, Viola becomes self-conscious of every word said, gesture made, and look given. After receiving a kiss at the right moment, her voice, off camera, declares that in that particular moment she felt that something true and real had happened between them; she then comments that her boyfriend Gerónimo will soon leave her for Cecilia (the actual Viola in Shakespeare's play). The film finishes with Viola joining Gerónimo in an improvised musical session

in their non-professional band. Improvisation is the counterpoint to automatic repetition, and therefore it creates a new sound image through connection and collaboration. While art is a way of repeating other people's words with new intensities, daily life must be a platform for the different within the same. The spectator becomes aware of the repetitive act and at some point pays attention to what happens beyond the visual among those forms and bodies.

Conclusion

Piñeiro's filmography is itself a reiterative aesthetic exploration of how to move at the edge of meaning. *Viola* creates a mobile tapestry of love in which affective flows call for a sensorial experience. Such openness is produced by erasing the boundaries of both gender and genre, which is accomplished via the use of diverse mediums of representation (theatre, literature, music, maps, text messages, phone calls, and the internet), the evidencing of porous boundaries between being and appearance, the fusion of reality and fiction, and the romantic entanglement in which subjects become points of intersection just like the points on the map *Viola* is constantly consulting in the city. Piñeiro puts forward a dialogic and queer aesthetic artifact where identities or genres are not fixed, with the simple aim of finding a moment of "truth" in contemporary human affairs. Yet, it is a truth that resists being represented, as it is embedded in pure resonance. It emerges in everyday life through the repetitive rehearsals of learned cultural and social knowledge. Consequently, when watching Piñeiro's films, we need to interrupt the habits and fantasies that we mechanically repeat to the point that they become naturalized and listen to the reverberation of love moving at the edges, like a "sweet sound" that "breathes upon a bank of violets" and later turns into an intolerable noise that falls "into abatement and low price." Ultimately, this intoxicating force does not belong to anyone, as *Viola* is an endless rehearsal for an opening night that may never materialize.

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Notes

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² According to Diana Taylor, "performances function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory and a sense of identity through reiterated... 'twice-behaved' behavior" (3).

³ Domingo Faustino Sarmiento was an important nineteenth-century liberal intellectual and politician who developed the national education system as part of his presidential mandate. He wrote several essays, among them *Facundo (Civilización y Barbarie)* (1845). Piñeiro has declared in several interviews that he sees in this iconic figure not only a controversial politician, but also a great writer.

⁴ *La princesa de Francia* received two important prizes at BAFICI 2014, consolidating a unique style influenced by Jacques Rivette's theatrical experiments on screen and by Eric Rohmer's talkative characters.

⁵ Particularly, it is the influence of Roberto Rossellini's, Vittorio De Sica's and Luchino Visconti's filmographies. The *lumpen* subject drifting through the Buenos Aires of *Pizza, Birra, Faso* (Adriano Caetano, 1998), and the exploration of a proletarian world in *Mundo Grúa* (Pablo Trapero, 1999) are just two examples of this tendency, which has been catalogued as realist by several film critics. (See Aguilar and Oubiña.)

⁶ Mariano Llinás is the director of *Historias extraordinarias* (2008), a film that plays with the boundaries between literature and cinema, among others. Alejo Moguillansky directed *El loro y el cisne* (2013), a film that shows the rehearsal of a contemporary dance piece. Cecilia Sosa analyzes the role of the body in Moguillansky's film in this issue.

⁷ In Argentina's current literary scene, some writers have shown an open political commitment to *Kirchnerismo*, like Sergio Raimondi, Alejandro Rubio, Violeta Kesselman, among many other poets from the '90s. However, in the context of film, aside from the work of Benjamin Ávila and Paula de Luque, there seem to be fewer examples of this brand of militancy.

⁸ In the original play, the page is called Cesario. Bassanio is a character from *The Merchant of Venice*, but it seems that like most of the characters in the film, people are easily replaceable.

⁹ A similar ambiguous articulation between reality and fiction is found in Lola Arias' theatrical work, which is further explored by Jordana Blejmar in this issue.

¹⁰ In the case of *Twelfth Night*, Olivia falls in love with Bassanio (who is actually Viola disguised as Orsino's page).

¹¹ Piñeiro's last film, *La princesa de Francia*, takes the role of sound and repetition even further, to the level of the narrative plot. The film is about Victor, a young theatre director who after a long stay in Mexico returns to Buenos Aires with the idea of reuniting five girlfriends for a radio drama adaptation of Shakespeare's comedy *Love's Labour's Lost*. As in other Piñeiro films, music, literature, theatre, photography, and painting merge in a hybrid aesthetic artifact. Part of the action happens inside a museum, where the work *Nymphs and Satyr* by the French painter William Adolphe Bouguereau is the focus of the characters' and spectators' gazes. The image represents a satyr surrounded by beautiful nymphs, recalling the female cast that surrounds Victor, vying for a place in his play and heart. Sound is present in music pieces (Schumann's Spring Symphony or the performance of the band), but mainly in the ready-made noises (e.g., the sound of someone ripping a letter) and in the intonation and cadence of the characters' voices during the rehearsal of the radio drama. While radio drama emphasises the importance of sound and voice, repetition works at the level of the plot. There are three different versions of the same situation in the film, each one with a different ending. The creation of simultaneous possible worlds is a performative demonstration of the fact that we can always repeat, but every repetition will be different and will put into play new elements.

¹² Reverse shot is a film technique where one character is shown looking at another character (often off screen), and then the other character is shown looking back at the first character.

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