

Monteverdi Método Bélico [Monteverdi Warfare Method], 2000.

This work encapsulates the group's progression over the 1990s, and foreshadows its end, which would come five years later. It was a new commission from the Kunstenfestivaldesarts of Brussels, based on festival director Frie Leysen's idea to have three groups perform three operas by Claudio Monteverdi to imagine the end of the millennium (or the beginning of a new era). In the case of *El Periférico*, they were commissioned to stage Monteverdi's *Eighth Book of Madrigals*, based on a text by Torquato Tasso. For the project, the group partnered with musical director Gabriel Garrido – an Argentinian based in Switzerland – and his early music ensemble, Ensemble Elyma. Against the backdrop of Monteverdi's madrigals, composed between the late Renaissance and early Baroque periods, the resulting performance was a treatise on war, death and pain in the contemporary world.

The group's poetic obsessions reached their peak in this opera, where the stage was filled with actors, singers and musicians, as well as the musical director, along with hyper-realistic dolls with sculptural features, which were controlled remotely, like automatons broken free from their handlers. In addition, there was a giant, four-metre tall fibreglass doll and cameras and projections of surgical operations being performed on dolls. All of this took place on an immense stage that anticipated the great Baroque ornamentation of the century to come: technology as a battlefield.