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A Heads Up with Carlos Torrijos

With Covid-19 lockdowns worldwide and health authorities urging people to self-isolate and practice social distancing on a massive scale as part of an enormous effort to #FlattenTheCurve of this global pandemic … we are reaching out to industry friends, colleagues, associates, partners, etc., and asking them to share their #StayAtHome and #QuarantineAndChill activities with us during this extraordinary time.

Carlos Torrijos is a lighting designer and member of the management board of the AAI (Asociación de Autores de Iluminación) from Spain. He also creates Light Art sculptures and installations and is the co-director and curator of the Umbra Light Festival (staged annually in Vitoria, Spain).

Additionally, he designs and makes craft lamps for his own brand 'Studio and Light' https://www.studioandlight.com/.

Robe: Where are you right now?

Carlos: In Madrid.

Robe: How are things emerging from the lockdown in your region / country?

Carlos: Right now, we are a bit worried about all the virus outbreaks, but I think things are not going to be as bad as they were before.

Robe: How did you spend your time during lockdown?

Carlos: COVID-19 forced me to stop, same as other colleagues in the industry, it obliged me to think about the rhythm of life I imposed on myself, about the time I spend working, and about the direction that society and others want me to take.

So, the pandemic kept me at home and made me live the day-to-day with my beloved family in the vital space that I constructed with great effort. I enjoyed my son's company: we worked together and worked out to stay in shape! Furthermore, I learnt to wake up leisurely, without the necessity of running away to fulfill the daily agenda, this is something I have not been able to do for a long time.

Fortunately, all my relatives are ok for the moment.

I consider myself an active person. I am part of the AAI (Spanish lighting designers association) and I spend a lot of time on this. That is why I thought it would be a great idea during the lockdown to stay connected with other Spanish lighting designers through a series of talks. This would enable us to get to know each other better during these difficult moments.

So, for that reason I have been involved as has the rest of the AAI's management board, in the release of "Diálogos de Luz en la red".

Robe: What are your biggest concerns / considerations as lockdowns ease worldwide?

Carlos: Unquestionably, I am concerned about the actual outbreaks.

Our industry is little by little recovering from the financial loss and we cannot afford another full lockdown. I am also concerned about the number of technicians who may not find work until next year, and who have families to support. For many of them, when work re-starts again, they will have spent more than a year without working!

Robe: Do you have any thoughts / predictions about how and when live events and the industry will re-start?

Carlos: 2020 was the year that I had more professional projects than ever in my life, new designs and numerous important plans.

On Wednesday 11th March, we were preparing the approach of the Sound Insides lighting design at Reina Victoria Theatre (Madrid) when the executive producer appeared and sent us home. The production, ready and practiced, was cancelled.

Antonio Bandera's musical "A Chorus Line", that we released last year in Málaga, stopped in Barcelona in March due to covid19, and the Madrid, Broadway and UK tours are on standby.

Billy Elliot the musical, of which I am the co-designer, this year was planned to travel to Barcelona. Also, Tina Turner's musical, produced by Stage Entertainment, was planned to come to the Coliseum Theatre (Madrid). A new design for "Aquellas pequeñas cosas" (Serrat's musical) for Amapola Productions should be released in 2021.

The Joy Eslava Theatre Madrid's remodeling will see it become a new space and the design of the first show of is still 'pending' - these are just some of the projects that maybe and hopefully will start or

continue next year!

Robe: Going forward, how do you think live events and the entertainment technology industry will change in a post-Covid 19 world before there is a vaccine widely available?

Carlos: This matter is up in the air, but with all the prevention and health measures our industry is introducing (masks, sanitizing, social distancing, etc.) shows could go on with relative normality.

There are some experiences from these last two months by theaters here in Spain like the Royal Theater or the Canal Theater in Madrid and festivals like Salzburg that were open throughout the month of August with 0% infections.

I believe that each of us personally plays a vital role in the transmission routes of the virus. Responsibility is more important than fear.

Robe: Has anyone / anything particularly inspired you since this crisis started?

Carlos: Definitely, young artists – and thinking about all of them who have stayed at home and, also in planning the 2021 Umbra Light Festival, for we launched a call to artists aged under 35. I think these are moments for creativity and the amount of submissions we have received have been so rewarding.

Training as a professional and making my knowledge available to others has been another thing I have done at home during the months of lockdown – design courses, lectures, new softwares…

Robe: Own question / answer / message of solidarity or something you'd like to say?

Carlos: The human can overcome any barrier – we have shown it in more complicated situations. The responsibility of each one is very important and the help of the social agents, the politicians, is very important. Perhaps it is a good time to see the things we have neglected in our profession and try to solve them. In difficult moments, the strength is in being united and active together.