

SERGIO CABALLERO > FAMOUS ALL OVER THE WORLD

By Tite Barbuzza

I was with several groups at the beginning of the electronic music movement in Barcelona, some years ago. I worked on music for Fura dels Baus; also with Los Rinos, a group that carried out 'plastic terrorism' ... We painted our symbol, a dartboard, all over the city and even had suits with a dartboard design. We did concerts, a theatre play... I was always involved in lots of chaotic situations. Once I did an exhibition called Sergio Caballero, Famous All Over the World, I signed the paintings bought in flea markets with my name and gave them a date and a place in order to give them a little sense of history. I did two or three exhibitions like that and they went pretty well, then came the installation 'The Scream of Humanity Oppresses me with its Turmoil I See Myself Deprived of Sleep', which was a globe with three dissected pigs, whose ass holes you had to look through... I received good press, was invited on television programmes... didn't go, and somehow I got tired of the world of plastic arts. It stopped interesting me. At that time I formed Jumo with Enric (Palau, co-director of Sonar) and we composed electronic music. Also Sonar started and all my artistic efforts were committed to the festival, along with Enric and Ricard (Robles, co-director of Sonar).

In Sonar my main responsibility is in the area of image management. The process is like creating an installation... it's something to discover: a door, a line. The idea is what I work on, on a creative level, there should be a basis on which I can develop the graphic images and when people see it, it makes them think, it's not what you normally see and then say, 'great, the same as usual'. It's important not to have creative limits and to move people. Before that I did solo exhibitions. Now I work in a team on the

image of a festival. The advantage is that you can pool an idea and reach more people than in an exhibition, it has different channels, if you do a flyer, you could be in the bookstore of a museum, a bar or a travel agency. On a communicative level, you could be in many places, and that's great because you transmit much more than with an exhibition, where it's seen by three hundred people if you're lucky. Each year the image of Sonar is like an artistic creation. Sonar is highly regarded and the image helps this, and viceversa. It's really nice, you can have a good time, and I have great fun.

Sonar 94: my first Sonar. At that time in Spain electronic music was associated with the so called 'ruta del bakalao'. People were really afraid of dance music, it was a bit of an unknown resource. Of course the more sussed people preferred to listen to electronic music, but only electro-acoustic or experimental music. On the other hand, we were undergoing a Catalan design boom: everything nice and clean and well presented. There were neither the flyers nor the amount of people who work in design today; we didn't have the immediacy we have today about design. While in music there were a lot of people doing things, in graphic design there were few. That was at the beginning. The first Macintoshes, the arrival of Photoshop, filters, kpts... Now I've got this filter, and now another, and hey! Smoke a joint and have some fun on the screen. Until we came up with the symbol of the whirlpool, which is also a sound, and that became the logo... in fact the image of the first Sonar was sort of prehistoric.

Sonar 95: I want my KPT. There was already a small scene, more designers working with computers, creating images and we continued on this synthetic course, parallel to the evolution of Photoshop filters. It's the same kind of exploration: technology being applied to the synthetic image.



Sonar 96: pump it up. There's a break... flyers start to appear everywhere and we ask ourselves "Instead of employing techno aesthetics... why don't we do something which has nothing to do with electronic music, but which does make a statement of intent? The idea of using an inflatable Zanotta's sofa and spaces illustrated with books on 50s and 60s decoration was good at the time.

From this year on there was a purpose, there began to be hints which if you get them you get them, hints which weren't necessarily linked with music or multimedia. And we

wanted to disassociate ourselves from the typical image of techno music.

Sonar 97: Spain is different. We decided to change everything. We worked on the festival image with our parents. Each parent represents a space and we made a kind of road movie, to bring it to life, on the Costa Brava with its great skies. We took a series of photos that told the story of the film. Here's where we definitively broke with the traditional image of electronic music, we used elderly people to represent a festival geared towards young people; and from there on we had the start of a point of provocation that has continued to grow each year. In some respect it's the desire to break with everything that had come from outside and with the image that an electronic music festival ought to have. We have a festival of advanced music and multimedia art; we take our parents and do that. And we were really happy with it. We don't try to follow what's happening in London or Paris, or worry if they're wearing silver or orange, or decide to look Japanese as if we were from Japan, and all that Manga animation stuff. Features that are characteristic of this scene. So, if neither the young

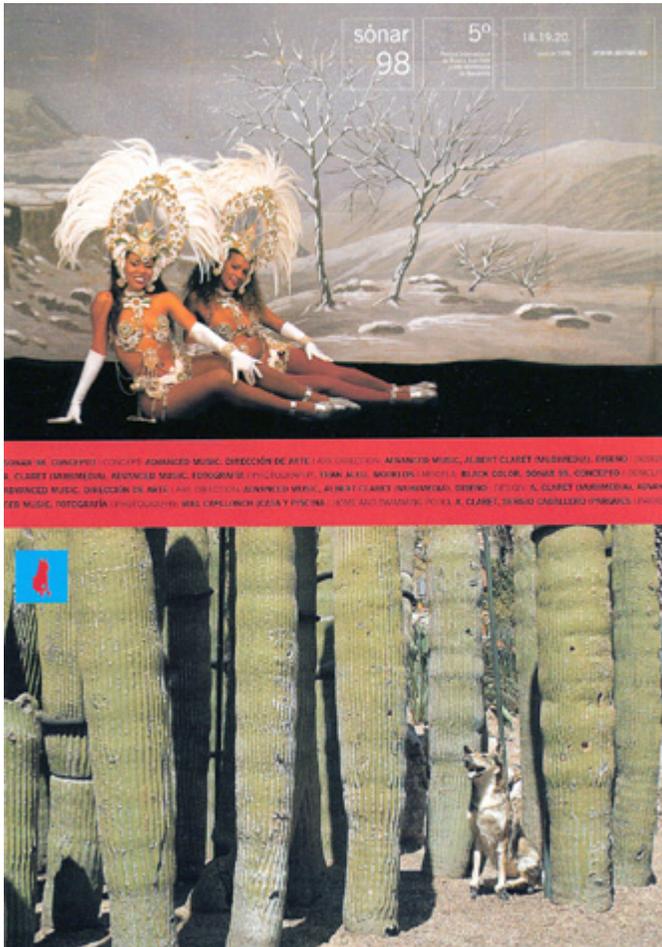
nor the old understand, by doing something different we are being provocative in a way. The pull of Sonar on a media level is powerful, allowing us to have a 'weird' image but still get recognition, which is the most important thing. And getting asked what you're going to do next year. Using our parents in Sonar 97 surprised people, made an impact, was like a breath of fresh air.

Sonar 98: luxury and fantasy. Brazilian aesthetic. Nothing to do with electronic music. We receive a lot of magazines at our office, promoting dance orchestras with a look all of their own. We came up with the idea of playing with Brazil. Brazilian girls are really sensual, very hot in comparison with the coldness that some associate with electronic music. We took the idea of luxury and fantasy and added some backgrounds: 'pastorets catalans', landscapes and snow. In contrast with the orchestra with all its light, colour, Latin American flavour, feathers... we incorporated this traditional Catalan countryside stuff, pastoral stuff. You stir all this up and you get the image of the festival.

That was the first time that anyone used in the visual campaign appeared in person at the festival. It was great; the Brazilians came out and performed at Sonar on Saturday night while people were dancing. It was like pulling them out of the poster. People were having their photos taken with them.

Sonar 99: Me and my mascot go to the park. The motto was a 'mascot thing' like Naranjito (Spain's 1982 World Cup mascot) in his time. The idea came from a lighter, the kind the Chinese make. There were some with elephants and others with dogs. And I thought it'd be cool to have a dog as the festival mascot, something like Rintintin. It wasn't easy: to find a dog, a taxidermist who knew how to work with dogs and finally, once the dog was embalmed, we decided to put wheels on him, like the Sony robot. So, the dog became mobile and the festival had a mascot. We photographed him in a landscape that resembled Texas, in parks and gardens. And then the dog showed us his own home. Just like when famous people show their homes, dissected animals with wheels, having their photos taken in various parts of their mansions. The dog in his gardens and in the interiors of his house. Very big, very bourgeois, with flowers and a swimming pool. On a

visual level, we did a catalogue copied from the 'super couché' pages of Hola magazine, continuing the idea.



Sonar 2000: Although you may not believe it. The idea gets more warped each time. The basic idea was to work with twins who had paranormal powers. We had two pairs, two sisters who were able to breathe underground and two girls who had powers of telekinetics and levitation. The relationship between twins is very unusual. When something hurts one of them, the other also feels it. I don't know where I started with the subject of paranormal powers..., I got wrapped up in it and that how things were that year. As a logo we used Uri Geller's bent spoon. We had quite a few problems. The TV commercial was censored, they told us it couldn't be broadcast as the twins appeared with plastic bags on their heads, and it wasn't considered appropriate to be

seen by children. The ad could only be shown after midnight. We made some little trailers announcing that at 12 midnight they'd be showing the ad. And even more people watched it! Later some people said it was abuse of women as in the ad the two women are seen with their heads buried. It doesn't matter if they're women or men! And there was no abuse; they just have this ability to breathe underground. We were on the front page of the newspaper because of that controversy, and at the end of the day it was very good promotion for the festival.

Sonar 2001: A very normal family. The idea was to create a quite conservative Spanish family, where each member had a particular

personality. The mother is very powerful and nasty. One of the daughters is very close to the mother and a bit of a bitch. Another is a squatter and fights for various NGOs. Then there's the son, who is only interested in sports, he never reads a newspaper, he doesn't care about anything. The mother dresses the youngest up in horrible dresses. She's the apple of her eye. The boy will join the army, like his father and his grandfather. Based on this idea, we developed this family, using a series of photos, the typical ones families take: Christmas day, the mother's birthday, the daughter's communion... and the sports photos, where everyone plays his own, with people of the same ability, or they think they have the same ability... I want a little, but I can't. The only interesting 'thing' about this family is that they've all pissed in their pants but they haven't noticed. They do it all the time and they think nothing has happened. About the controversy, we did very well out of it. We said no, it's not a family that urinates they just have sweaty legs.

Like a photo I saw one day, in the magazine *Lecturas*, of a Mexican family who all looked like werewolves. They had hair on their cheeks, on their eyelids... well, like that, these were just people from here, from Castilla, who had very sweaty legs. The TV commercial showed a girl dancing in 'sweaty' shorts. TV3 said they wouldn't broadcast it. I presented the same ad, but this time with a censorship strip over the stain on the girl's pants. They still refused to show it because it was so obviously censored. I said 'Yes, of course, you censored it yourselves'. As the girl had some vases beside her, we took one and we stuck it digitally over the damp spot. In magazines, people saw the girl with her sweaty legs, but on the TV ad they saw her with a vase attached and asked themselves 'what the hell is this?' It was even stranger to see a vase floating around the girl's public area. At any rate the TV people said OK, it was now politically correct, or socially correct, I don't know which.

Sonar 2002: Passion of crowds. This year we're working with football, mainstream. Sonar is really big, massive according to some, so, football in all its excesses. We'll fill more than a club and we're going to do something related to the subject of football. 'Cool' people look down on football. Some people say that Sonar Festival has got too big. Well, Sonar has grown. If it were smaller, I'd be delighted. Less suffering and less work, but it's grown because the scene has and because it's a good festival. It's grown with

affection; things are really taken care of. We're making a great effort to make the spaces work better and to provide the best line- up each year. There are a lot of people... you grow and grow.

One day I'd like to gather all the concepts and let the people see them. If you see all the images you notice a line. A clear line, with a certain irony. Well, my job is quite ironic. There's always a double meaning and humour, that's something you can breathe. There's always a twist, and that's the connection.

SONAR 96 > ART DIRECTION: ADVANCED MUSIC. DESIGN: ALBERT CLARET. IMAGES: KOXOK, MASERA (SOFÁ BLOW / BLOW SOFA, ZANOTTA).

SONAR 97 > CONCEPT. ADVANCED MUSIC. ART DIRECTION: ADVANCED MUSIC, MUBIMEDIA (ALBERT CLARET). DESIGN: MUBIMEDIA (A. CLARET). ADVANCED MUSIC. PHOTOGRAPHY: SERGIO CABALLERO, A CLARET, LEILA MÉNDEZ (FAMILY PHOTOGRAPHY).

SONAR 98 > CONCEPT: ADVANCED MUSIC. ART DIRECTION. ADVANCED MUSIC, ALBERT CLARET (MUBIMEDIA). DESIGN A. CLARET (MUBIMEDIA), ADVANCED MUSIC. PHOTOGRAPHY. FRAN ALEU. MODELOS / MODELS. BLACK COLOR.

SONAR 99 > CONCEPT. ADVANCED MUSIC. ART DIRECTION: ADVANCED MUSIC. ALBERT CLARET (MUBIMEDIA). DESIGN: A. CLARET (MUBIMEDIA), ADVANCED MUSIC. PHOTOGRAPHY: BIEL CAPLLONCH (HOME AND SWIMMING POOL), A. CLARET, SERGIO CABALLERO (PARKS).