

(Newspaper article published in *La Razón*, Wednesday 22 nd January 2003), by Pablo Caruana.

“Desert Rain”, an atypical virtual journey to the Gulf War for groups of six people.

“Blast Theory” is a company which takes theatre to its limits. A powerful performance that stimulates the curiosity of those taking part. This is the way in which the British press (The Guardian and The Sunday Times) has described this English company, born in 1991 and which from yesterday until the 27<sup>th</sup> January is performing in the *Cuarta Pared* “Desert Rain”, an installation “performance” about the Gulf War in which the public has to carry out a mission. A performance in which computer work and new technologies speak for themselves.

In groups of six people per function –in total there are fourteen showings a day from 12.30 to 22.30-, the English company tries on the one hand to show the thin line that lies between virtual reality and “real” reality and on the other hand to show and feel the reality which journalists, soldiers, activists and tourists underwent whilst living during the Gulf War.

As soon as they arrive to the room, each spectator has to leave his/ her jacket and put on a hooded rain coat. Next each of them will be assigned a mission which they will have to carry out. For this purpose the group has set up a foot pad on which each of the participants can move forward through a virtual space: a cybernetic desert which is projected on a thin layer of rain. The headphones, with a microphone included, and the fine water spray, produced by the humidity inside, finish off the ambience of the room. Once they have passed the test, if they pass it, the participant then enters a fictitious hotel room to meet up with the rest of the members of the adventure group. Together they can reflect on their experiences. Without revealing more about the staging, the performance, full of surprises, is the opening act of *el Ciclo Experiencias*.