

AND...

THE WORKSHOPS OF THOUGHT

Dialogue artists-audience with Didier Ruiz and the team of *TRANS (més enllà)*, July 16 at 16:30, site Louis Pasteur Supramuros de l'Université d'Avignon

NAVE OF IMAGES

2014 comme possible by Didier Ruiz (2014), July 11 at 14:30, église des Célestins

CINEMATIC TERRITORIES

Cinéma Utopia-Manutention

Work in progress : voyage avec les trans by Stéphane Mercurio and *Victor XX* by Ian de la Rosa, encounter with Stéphane Mercurio, Didier Ruiz and Ian de la Rosa, July 10 at 11:00

Après l'ombre by Stéphane Mercurio, encounter with Stéphane Mercurio et Didier Ruiz, July 10 at 14:00

Une Femme fantastique by Sebastián Lelio, encounter with Didier Ruiz, July 16 at 11:00

ENCOUNTER

Summer 1968 and us - 1968, echoes and resonances in today's theaters with Didier Ruiz, July 11 at 16:00, Maison Jean Vilar

TOUR DATES AFTER THE FESTIVAL

- October 3 to 5, 2018, Grand T théâtre de Loire-Atlantique, Nantes
- January 23, 2019, Théâtre Firmin Gémier / La Piscine, Châtenay-Malabry
- January 25, salle Pablo Picasso, La Norville
- February 1^{er} and 2, Châteauevallon Scène nationale, Ollioules
- February 4 to 10, Théâtre de La Bastille, Paris
- February 12, Théâtre de Chevilly-Larue
- February 14, Fontenay en Scènes, Fontenay-sous-Bois
- March 6 to 10, Teatre Lliure, Barcelona (Spain)
- March 28, Théâtre Paul Eluard, Choisy-le-roi
- May 14, La Filature Scène nationale de Mulhouse
- May 16, Théâtre de l'Agora Scène nationale d'Évry et de l'Essonne

TRANS (MÉS ENLLÀ)

Clara, Sandra, Leyre, Raül, Ian, Danny, and Neus come onstage and introduce themselves as they are: men and women, long identified with one gender or another, in a body that feels like a prison. And when they finally escape it, the world refuses to recognise their true form. Violence, the streets, the institutions, workplace harassment, their family's refusal to understand, they've known all that... Starting in Barcelona, where they're from and where Didier Ruiz met them for the first time, they tell their stories. Struggle after struggle, it becomes unclear whether what matters is the journey or the destination. "*Meeting them forced me to look up,*" Didier Ruiz remembers, he who so often over the past twenty years has given voice to people one rarely hears from in theatres (factory workers, old people, prisoners...). Didier Ruiz describes *TRANS (més enllà)* as both creation and denunciation, to change "*an intolerant society which no longer talks about love.*" The second half of a diptych about those we don't see, this new opus is an attempt, through the question of gender, to better understand the complexity of humanity, at once personal and political.

DIDIER RUIZ

Factory workers, teenagers, researchers, former convicts, transgender people: Raul Ruiz's main preoccupation is to meet the actors of society and to give them an active part in his politically engaged creations by giving them an "*accompanied voice.*" So are born his shows, from the trust in each other thus earned and the word thus freed to be heard and shared. The stories he builds with and for others carry the political and sacred weight of the dramatic act: "*to make the audience see and hear a shared humanity.*" Didier Ruiz was previously invited to create 2014 as possibilities with youths from Avignon for the 69th edition of the Festival.

72th
EDITION

In order to bring you this edition, over 1,750 people, artists, technicians, and organisational staff, have worked tirelessly and enthusiastically for months. More than half of them are state-subsidised freelance workers.

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FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON 72°

JULY 8 9 10 11 | 13 14 15 16
GYMNASSE DU LYCÉE MISTRAL

INTERVIEW WITH DIDIER RUIZ

In parallel with your work on texts (modern or not) and with actors, you've never ceased working on many projects with non-professionals: workers, teenagers, researchers, former inmates. Would you call it documentary theatre? What drives your work?

Didier Ruiz: In 1999, I directed *Dale Recuerdos (I Think About You)*, which became a unique show which has been going on for twenty years, each time with new elderly people and new memories. It's a work I'm forever weaving, much like Penelope, and which has much to do with my relationship to death. If I were a cartoonist, *Dale Recuerdos (I Think About You)* would be a sketchbook I'd always carry around in my pocket. Then the director of a theatre who saw the show asked me if I wanted to meet factory workers. I saw it as an opportunity to talk about a subject I've long been interested in: the gestures of work. For the past five years, I've also been on a journey with teenagers, which has convinced me that adolescence is the time in our lives where everything is at stake. Then I was given the chance to work with scientists, then with ex-convicts, whom I call my rascals! Nothing is calculated, it all happens upon meeting people, from project to project. I wouldn't say that what I do is quite documentary theatre. I would rather talk of a political theatre, a theatre of the world, of humanity. A theatre where the word is freed, revealed, present on the margins of the stage. With those shows, I try to make the audience become aware of a reality they don't know in order to change their perception of the world, even to have them echo this freed discourse and help it spread. To that end, I try not to have the show broadcast a standardised message whose goal would be to have as many people as possible understand the same thing. I'd rather have it speak on an individual level to people, to spark in them a private and engaged reflection.

You are working today with transgender people from Barcelona. How did this project come about? Tell us more about how you've worked with Clara, Sandra, Leyre, Raúl, Ian, Dany, and Neus.

In July 2014, in Barcelona, I saw an Italian documentary about a transsexual mechanic who lives in a popular suburb of Rome. For a long time, he lived as a man, and sometimes allowed himself to go out dressed as a woman at night. I was surprised to see that there was nothing but love there: his wife still loved him, and his customers remained loyal. A few days later, I went to see *Cabaret Art Trans*, a series of acts by very talented transgender artists. Thanks to a contact I had there, I was able to set up one-on-one meetings with several transgender people willing to come with me on this adventure. Their appearing in public is a never-ending topic of discussion. All of them wanted to help people who might find themselves in situations similar to the ones they'd experienced.

Just like my rascals, they wanted to change the way the audience look at them. That's what led to the creation of this small troupe! Today, on the stage, you have four women and three men, aged 22 to 60. All of them told me their stories, which I turned into material for the show, by focusing on particular episodes. A material they then approved and presented one after the other to the rest of the team on a stage, when they'd never been onstage before. Then we made some cuts in order to create echoes between their stories. It allowed us to create a story, a framework, because they don't learn their text by heart: there's no text, only their stories, a freed discourse. They've been prepared to freely tell their stories according to a score, in part thanks to their work with Tomeo Vergés, a choreographer who taught them how to use their bodies.

Speaking of this show, you've drawn a parallel with your rascals and their imprisonment. Yet isn't the nature of their respective imprisonment very different? And what other topics do they talk about?

The causes are different, but in both instances, people find themselves constrained. The former inmates think that their imprisonment was the result of an action punished by society which could have been avoided if they'd had the support necessary to find a different way. Without those tools, they made mistakes, and society locked them up. A society which is just as intolerant towards transgender people. Some of them have the intellectual, emotional, social, or economic means to find a different option out of the impasse nature trapped them in. Others go through more difficult, sometimes terrible, things, to the point that they commit suicide. The show is about identity, it questions masculinity and femininity. I work with men who don't have a penis but are men nonetheless. There's no reason to doubt their masculinity. Clara doesn't need to appear with her hair done, her make up on, and wearing her prostheses, to be a woman. She just has to appear as Clara. And I find this sufficient gesture interesting, because it reminds me of the conviction of theatre. Violence is also present in the play because some of their stories are full of it: the streets, prostitution, the violence of others or between themselves, drugs, the institutions. They also talk about the professional world, with its harassment, its layoffs, its trials. In a way, their stories are a reminder that gender cannot be reduced to identity and sexuality, that it covers all aspects of our lives.

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Interview conducted by Francis Cossu and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach