

## **CURRICULUM**

Director, author, scenographer, light designer. In 1999 he establishes the Teatropersona Company, with which he stages his own works presented in many European countries, as well as in Asia, South America, Russia and the United Kingdom. He has received numerous awards and accolades, among which are the Hystrio Award for directing, the Grand Prix “Golden Laurel Wreath Award” as best director (MESS Festival – Sarajevo) and the Maschere del Teatro Italiano Award as Best Scenographer.

For more than twenty years he has been photographing the images of reality.

## **BIOGRAPHY**

### *CHILDHOOD AND THEATER*

In my childhood boarding school, during dark days, I sought for Jesus.

It was enough to see him smile.

I had only to draw my eyes close to his image

and keep them open, without ever blinking, until they they started tearing up.

So then I would close my eyes

and I would see Jesus.

Then one day, perhaps,

my first directing:

I initiated my schoolmates to the sacred vision.

There we were, our eyes closed and spinning around, like specks of dust in the sunlight.

We performed theatre in the boarding school.

We sang (those who could sing in tune, the others would only move their mouths).

We danced.

But this was only the theater of the nuns.

Ours, the secret one, cannot be told about.

I carved pieces of tree bark with a pencil sharpener blade.

I made crooked figures out of it to whom I gave voice.

My first figure theatre.

And when I returned home it was forbidden to play.

There was a nook high up in the wall, with shelves on it,

closed with a drawn curtain, just like a theater.

I brought the ladder, climbed to the last peg and opened the curtain,

and behind the curtains, on the farthest shelf,

my figurines:

First World War soldiers, nativity scene statuettes, animals of every sort, cowboys, indians,  
the nativity hut and Fort Apache.

For years, there, I composed the universe.

### *PREMONITIONS*

At 11 years old I began practicing the greatest sport there is, rugby.

A rite of war which is philosophy:

to score a goal and go forward you must pass the ball backwards.

Pure transcendence.

An unsurpassed example of team

and group:

because you can't pretend to be together when you go to war.

And war must be ritualized because it is an innate instinct,

and rather than risking for it to actually happen

it is best to make a game of it, rugby.

Or an art, kung fu.

I practiced martial arts for ten years,

and I inscribed some fundamental laws in my body,

hinted of course, but ever present and indelible.

Never would I have guessed that I would discover them anew, many years later, in books and then  
again in theater.

At age 18 I began taking pictures

and have not stopped since.

Thanks to photography I began to look at reality with a single eye

and holding my breath, so as to not make the photo shaky.

Thanks to photography I learned that with light you can compose, communicate, transmit emotions.

### *UNIVERSITY*

I studied Anthropology.  
Then I discovered cinema,  
and spent years trying to figure out how to do it without daring to.  
I transcribed many of Bergman's movies for theater,  
I only have one left, I don't know why, the rite.  
I went to the theater sometimes,  
but to me it seemed as little more than a dying animal.  
Then one evening I saw Leo De Bernardinis  
and I thought that if that was theater then I had to do theater.  
An unsurpassed example of team  
and group:  
because you can't pretend to be together when you go to war.  
And war must be ritualized because it is an innate instinct,  
and rather than risking for it to actually happen  
it is best to make a game of it, rugby.  
Or an art, kung fu.

From Anthropology I swapped to Teatro Ateneo, the athenaeum theatre,  
in the same department where in the past,  
still I find it hard to believe,  
lessons were held by Jerzy Grotowski, Eduardo De Filippo, Carmelo Bene, Peter Brook.  
I wrote a dissertation for my degree on the dramaturgy of image  
and it was a precious occasion to give a name to that which I didn't know I had learned in years of  
research and creation.

### *FORMATION*

In the meantime for several years I inflicted upon myself a formation as an actor in the path of  
Grotowski's tradition.  
A formation which happened with and through actors.  
Those whom I learned from and who have been my teachers,  
but especially the actors with whom I created the first works.

Creating the first performances, failing and starting over again, I also learned the trade of the director.

And it is a good thing, I believe, that this has happened through my body and my voice in harmony with that of the actors who have accompanied me over the course of the years.

I learned even when I imagined teaching them something I yet did not know.

And over the years I kept on learning from the actors I have met, especially from those with a formation far from my own.

Even in these last few months...

It is only through the trade of the actor that the secrets of scene art are revealed.

I never wanted to study with a director. Which is not to say that I haven't studied directing.

### *FIRST ENCOUNTERS*

I owe the most part of my formation as an actor to Francis Pardeilhan: the work on physical action, acrobatics, the voice, the resonators, a knowledge which comes to some extent from the Odin Teatret, but also and mostly from Ingmar Lindth with whom Francis has studied.

And it is no happenstance, perhaps, that I eventually had the need to explore the sources:

Decroux (with whom Lindth had studied) and Grotowski (towards whom he then gravitated).

Francis taught me to have no prejudice and to assume a humble position towards scene practice, for a humble gaze goes beyond any border,

he taught me the ethics of the trade.

César Brie is a poet and, as such, has no secrets, he knows that metric is within anyone's range. What he taught me is simple and disarming, it wasn't necessary to follow him in Bolivia, as I had thought to do. In a few, sporadic encounters he succeeded in making me think the scene, as his seminar is still titled to this day.

### *TEATROPERSONA*

In 1999 I founded Teatropersona.

A year later we were a small group, in Civitavecchia.

We looked for a location and we turned into theatre.

With our own hands.

We practiced training for many years:

we trained, we acquired physical and vocal abilities and competencies.

After many years of training I learned that training is necessary to liberate oneself, not to hide.

The negative way Grotowski speaks about is that which leads to the total transparency of the actor's body, so they can gain the courage to be vulnerable, the courage to reveal themselves and show the secret wound.

From a certain point onwards, the training was integrated in the creative process and every new creation imposes the discovery of a new physical and vocal training.

During rehearsals I am always on stage with the actors.

We carry on with the training and improvisation until they begin trusting me, and from that moment onwards the true creative process begins, that is to say when the actors don't defend themselves anymore, but lay down their weapons and expose themselves.

It happened, intermittently, for the first time during the first performance:

"In the city of K.", based on the works of Agota Kristof.

I say intermittently because that work was so grand and painful, and we were so young and inexperienced.

I was certainly too sure of myself.

Those were the years in which form took over and overshadowed the actors.

Perhaps though it was also necessary, we were young and as Zeami says

the young actor on stage without a mask is an appalling spectacle impossible to watch.

Now perhaps are the years when the mask comes off and it is licit for myself and the actors to face the Zen challenge: show me the face you had before being born.

### *PRODIGIOUS SUBSTITUTIONS*

Not always those without teachers have the devil for a master, says Cristina Campo.

We live in an age of replacements and prodigious substitutions are still allowed.

In theater I acknowledge three masters whom have fed and deeply influenced my work.

Grotowski, whom has reached in the art of the actor a depth until then seemingly unthinkable.

Kantor is the artist I love the most and from whom I have learned much about scene writing, the use of objects and the bio-object, but also about the art of the actor and dramaturgy.

The dead class remains the masterpiece of the theatrical 1900s.

Peter Brook, whose writings carry on accompanying me in any field, from training to pedagogy, to the study of Shakespeare, whom nobody could read like he did.

Then there are the readings of the soul, the constant nutrients: the Notebooks of Simone Weil.

### *PAINTERS*

I have learned much about scene writing by studying painters and their writings, when possible.

Leonardo's Treatise on Painting, Klee's writings, the letters for Theo, Francis Bacon's interviews...

The study of figurative art has been fundamental for the composition of space, light, for the quality of time that flows on stage, for the creation of a visual acoustic.

Thanks to Hammershøi I could enter Proust's interior camera obscura.

With Hopper I rediscovered that the intent of art is to try and embody interior life.

The works of Francis Bacon give me an emotion I cannot explain, perhaps because of how they appear in space, they have an animal strength that pierces.

Bacon has given a name to a strange phenomenon which has accompanied all the creative processes of my works for these last few years.

Fortuity.

Against the will to illustrate an idea and a vision...

And that is why I take care of every aspect of writing: lights, scenes, costumes, words, images, objects, everything must meet with and especially clash with myself and the actors according to the principle of fortuity, which as Bacon says,

makes it so that one obtains something much deeper than that which we originally thought.

Rembrandt remains the greatest for me, simply because no luminous fact can make me so deeply emotional.

In Rembrandt there is no more distinction between light and matter: matter is light and vice-versa.

It seems to me that in painting there is no way to go any further, impressionism is a step back.

To Giacometti, to his life and art I have dedicated The Evening Shadow.

In his creations he always managed to depict the pain of life rent of its flesh.

He is an ancient artist, before the Greek, when art was indistinguishable from magic.

It was a fundamental encounter, his writings, his works, in a moment when I needed somebody to remind me that art feeds off life, not art.

He maintained that he couldn't truly see a head until he began materially remaking it...

This is one of the things I have learned from him: making theater the way I make it is my way of viewing life, remaking life to protect it and learn to see it, see it better...

### *SCENOGRAPHIES-COSTUMES-LIGHTS-SOUNDS*

Over the course of my formation years I built scenes without knowing how,

so as for the lights, which I've always treated as a source of emotion and tale.

I looked for costumes in markets, which I then took apart and sewed back together.

I recorded noises of life and manipulated sounds and music.

I looked for forgotten and abandoned objects.

And I brought them on stage, offering them a second chance.

I repaired wounds, but without hiding them.

And so I learned how to make my theater.

### *FROM SILENCE TO WORD*

After ten years of research and creations we still didn't know how to act,  
and we didn't know how to listen.

So it was that for a few years, in our works, we took out the spoken word.

We stopped talking and began listening.

To tell a tale with images, bodies, objects, lights and sounds.

I began to deeply question voice and word,

starting with practicing a special art in which the two things coincide:

Gregorian chanting.

We studied and practiced it at the Abbey of Saint Antimo under the guidance of father Emmanuel Roze.

Seeking the choir,

through a chaste and simple chant, with melodies which leave no room for individuality.

A practice which reject polyphony and seeks the vertigo of the unison,

in which those who sing let themselves go and become a means.

In those same years we hosted Maud Robart in Civitavecchia.

Those were only five days, fundamental to understand that one arrives to a point in their research where either you start truly creating or you give up.

We have not given up.

### *YVES LEBRETON*

After this vow of silence, I learned that voice acts upon three levels.

Conceptual: the word says, informs. The word which tells.

Musical: the word as a pure fact of sound. The word which sings.

Magical: the magical power of the word, when it does not mean but is, acts as an energetic force, as a mantra. The word which enchants.

The same goes for the body: the action, the mime of Decroux, the shamanistic act.

I owe much to Yves Lebreton and his bodily theater. From Yves I learned a lot about the art of the actor, about the energy unleashed on stage, but most of all on composition, space, time, rhythm, lights...

I learned that which is being forgotten, but since I am not a pupil of his and since I am not a master I fear that all this knowledge will be forgotten.

### *WORKS FOR CHILDREN*

I created two works for children,

The Prince Midnight and The Great Journey.

And finally I met the people as audience,

but I also saw children among the theater seats who had already lost the ability to marvel.

Then again in other audiences, luckily, I often happen across old and wrinkly eyes which are still bright, and with a gaze of childhood.

Theater perhaps can help in recovering that lost gaze, childlike wonder.

### *TOWARDS A DISABILITY OF THE SELF*

I had the fortune of working with disabled actors,  
in Bolzano and Rimini

I learned the difference between exploiting and making use of,  
but most of all I seemed to understand where all that poetic force comes from.

To perform without reserve and without asking for anything in exchange:

we say, we act, we expose ourselves

as we have decided to do, as I remember, if I remember, as I can...

Without ever appeasing ourselves.

It is a deep and incurable disability.

A disability of the self,

that only belongs to great actors.

### *TWO DEDICATIONS*

I dedicated a performance to my mother.

In H+G something happens which has happened in my childhood, but that everybody has experienced in one way or another: abandonment. But also the return home, initiation, maturity.



And the sacrifice that someone has committed for us, for us to live free from those who cannot love us.

It is so that that which we've always seen as an act of selfishness in that dark night, the next morning, in daylight, reveals itself to be an act of love.

I dedicated a performance to my father,

*MACBETTU.*

A work which has won many awards in Italy and abroad and which has been touring the world for two years now.

The performance is played in my father's language, the barbaricino dialect from Sardinia.

The word signifies, sings and acts upon who listens, as do the images.

Archetypes light up on stage.

Looking at them and living them each evening, one learns not to confuse the essential with the transitory.

An acquirement of awareness about my origins but at the same time about the very origins of theater.

In an age populated by human beings who, as Rilke says,

are like trees which have forgotten they have roots and believe the rustling of the branches to be their life.

Roots exist and infuse nourishment even if we don't realize this or worse, if we decide to ignore them. Something ancient and forgotten, that still keeps on acting.

Theatre is a practice which feeds this connection to the source.