

Judith and the head of Holofernes

show for shadows and poetic bodies



Tu crois que c'est si simple
de se débarrassé d'un blesser?
Fermé la bouche d'un blesser?
Jean Cocteau

the ashes of your kisses on my lips.
Heiner Muller

'**Judith with the head of Holofernes**' is the result of an investigation into the biblical figure of Judith and her role as a killer. Begun in Barcelona in November 2012, the three parts of the play are presented as if they were separate paintings: Emptiness; Cage; and Judith's shadow.

'Judith with the head of Holofernes' has been performed in festivals, on the street and in various cabarets and in 2015 the show was staged at the World Puppet Theatre Festival in Charleville. Over time the show has developed and blossomed dramaturgically from fragments, fragments of Judith; Judith "in pieces".

How the show evolved

May 2015

The cultural arts space, Sala Fenix (Barcelona) invited me to expand what was a 5 minute cabaret performance into a 1 hour production. I found myself in the challenging and exhilarating situation of sewing fragments of a show into one body of work.

August 2015,

"Lampisterie" Artistic Residency, (Bayard, France)

During the 3 week residency I was fortunate to undergo an intense process of rehearsals to edit and rework the performance.

September 2015

World Puppet Theatre Festival (Charleville)

'Judith with the head of Holofernes' was programmed in the OFF section of the World Puppet Theatre Festival in Charleville. The show was staged for three nights in a historical stone courtyard holding an audience of 400 people. These performances were an important stage in the creation process.

Judith, why?

She came close to his bed and took hold of the hair of his head,(...)
And she struck his neck twice with all her might, and severed his head from his body.

Jdt 13, 7-8

According to biblical mythology, Judith was a woman of immense beauty, she seduces the army General, Holofernes, the enemy who threatens to destroy her city, and she cuts off his head.

This story has inspired a great number of artists and painters such as Caravaggio, Goya and Klimt, who represented this iconic heroine as a sensual subject that contrasts with the violence of her actions.



Seductress and murderess, Judith is a threatening character for both the artist and viewer, she awakens violence, fear and passion, in an eroticized conception of death.

In this theatrical interpretation, and unlike the original myth, Judith will not kill to defend her people, but to defend herself from the destructive passion that binds her to Holofernes; in spite of his strength and his power he suffers from a wound of mortal love.

Through three distinct paintings, Judith appears as a bird in a cage, a shadow and an empty body.

Wounded love, a contemporary tragedy

C'est également mon histoire, ma mythologie, associant tragédie et parodie, souffrance, musique populaire, pitreries et horreur, dans un univers expressionniste.

Christian Boltanski

Reading "Fragments of a Love Speech" by Roland Barthes, I found myself elaborating the grief of the loss of a love. So I went through the dark paths through which Judith passes the night she decides to "slaughter the pig", to cut off Holoferne's head, to save herself. Caged by my own desire to love, I decided to cloak even the simulacrum of the beloved (deceased to me).

The refined images of Lucas Cranach and Klimt, the most ferocious of Caravaggio and Artemisia Gentileschi, have been inspiring on this journey. The glassy look of the Judith of Cranach, the hands that wield the sword and the blood, elements of the staging. A powerful icon of castrating femininity, Judith embodies the stereotype of the femme fatale, an enchanting mermaid that overturns the balance of power between woman and man, attracting **metis**, the cunning of the Greek heroes. Ruthless warrior, she weaves a dangerous canvas in which the naive Holofernes inevitably falls.

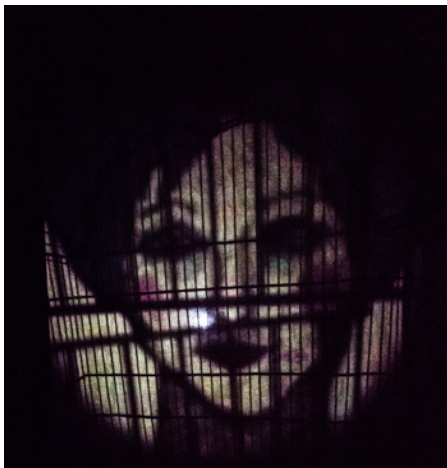


JUDITH AND HER SHADOW, FIGURE OF DESIRE

Show for shadows and poetic bodies

In Judith, the part of shadow theatre has an exact dramaturgic function: it is the radiography of the feelings of the protagonist.

In these bodies without heads, pierced or full of details and symbols, I leave the spectator to investigate, as if under a magnifying glass.



Concept, Direction and Performance Michela Aiello
Music Natan Nexus, Banda Ionica, Eduardo Rovira, Billie Holiday
Costumes Agnes Costa Olive
Poetic Texts Rose Aislander, Heiner Muller, Federico Garcia Lorca





SHORT HISTORY OF THE COMPANY: IL CAPPELLO ROSSO

Il **cappello rosso** is formed by **Michela Aiello** and her puppets.

After graduating in Performing Arts in Rome, she takes part to various theater works as an actress, performer and director, finally focusing always more in a theater without words and its fusion with puppets and dance.

She first meets puppets in Barcelona, in Pepe Ota's workshop, and takes parts with her shows to various festivals IN and OFF between France and Italy, Belgium and Spain, and travelling from Mexico to Korea (Chilgkok Puppet Festival, 2012).

She gets a research residence in Charleville-Meziers and goes on developing her knowledge about puppet theater taking part to different workshops of "Projecto Funicular", an International Training Project on Puppetry : "Behind the screen: introduction to shadow and to the shadow theatre" directed by Fabrizio Montecchi, (Lisboa, 2012), "The Body and the Object", directed by Agnes Limbos and Nicole Mossoux (cie Mossoux-Bontè) in 2013, "Apparition: Creation of a Life-Sized Puppet", directed by Natacha Belova, in 2016, "From Prop to Protagonist", an object theatre workshop with Rene Baker, and "The Actor and the Double Presence in Puppet Theatre" coordinated by Yngvild Aspeli, in July 2017.

In September 2015 presents "Judith et la tete d'Holopherne" in the section OFF Rue of the International Puppet Festival of Charleville Mezieres.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE SHOWS



2010 **Sconcerto** a concert interpreted by a bizzare creature: a woman with a cello body

2011 **Fellini Boulevard** a homage to the visionary and poetic world of Federico Fellini and in particular to one of his earlier movies, "la Strada"

2013 **Vacios** ballade for shadows and poetic bodies. What lasts in a body after having been inhabited?

2013 **En cage** show inspired to the baroque aesthetics, rich in symbols and poetic images, explores the condition of being in a cage

2015 **Judith beheading Holofernes** a contemporary version of the biblic history

2015 **The Heartbreak Hotel** a performance about the highs and lows of Hollywood love, an erotic melodrama that combines puppetry and object theatre

2016 **Fellini Zirkus Boulevard** developed form the first version of the show of 2011, a new raid in the onirique world of Federico Fellini.

2017 **Prayer For Quiet** is a prayer to the calm, to the slowness of the movements, to the fragility of a doll made of rice paper. And it is also a tribute to the Butoh dancer Kazuo Ono, who started dancing at the age of 51 and did not stop, until his death, at 101.

