

THEOS MEKHANES

THÉÂTRE DE LA MASSUE



CIE ÉZÉQUIEL GARCIA-ROMEU

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Tragicomedy

ARTISTIC TEAM

Creation and staging

Ézéquier Garcia-Romeu

Daria Holovchanska

Dramaturgy

In casting

Acting and puppeteering

Ézéquier Garcia-Romeu

Daria Holovchanska

Roxane Merten-Pallanca

Lighting

Emmanuel Guedj

Sound creation

In casting

Stage management

Thierry Hett

Production management

Marie-France Leccia

I. THE PROJECT

Theos Mekhanes stages a family whose members have been stripped of their brains by an artificial consciousness. We will use artificial consciousness as a metaphor for a higher entity to which they wholly obey, releasing them from the personal responsibility of their acts. That one replaces their critical mind, burying them in the hypnotical illusion of inner dialogues to which they grant the authority inherent to veracity.

Are they truly the members of the same family? It is at the end of the show that we will discover it. For us, they are portraits of contemporary men, women and children who live in an environment which acts on their destinities and which we could compare to our current world.

On stage, three actors, like the three Parcae or the three Norns, work on the manipulation and on the destiny of our characters. On her computer, one of them, mute, like a *deus ex machina*, shows the written transcript of our main characters' inner dialogue while they progress in an odyssey which serve as a gutter through which flows their consciousness.

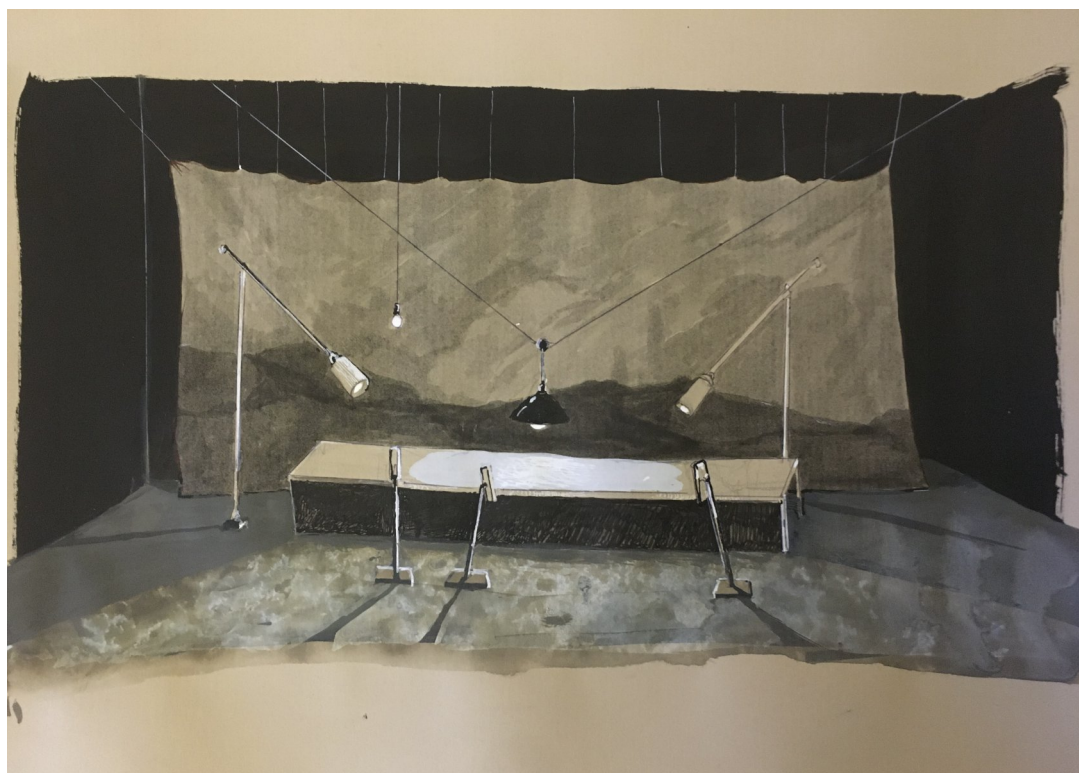


This show is an exploration of society in miniature, with notes of humour, satire, absurd as well as symbolic and poetic images. The situation develops and wears out, like a toy whose spring has uncoiled until its resting state, or has been compressed so tightly that it snapped under the strain. After that, as if through a kaleidoscope, we find ourselves in a different situation—or perhaps from a different perspective. In this way, we put together the shards of a shattered image, one piece at a time. Each character is like a chess piece: it is only with the presence of a chessboard and other pieces that a game can be played.

Each character, in the course of their usual wanderings, finds themselves confronted with events that disrupt the flow of their routine. How do they react to this unexpected turn of events? How will they behave, and why? How will their actions truly be shaped by their own conscience, and how will they redefine it? Will they be able to pick up their routine where they left off, will they get lost in a new dead end, or will they manage to find the path to a real or illusory salvation?

And so our pet dog, gazing at the stars on a summer night, realizes that his masters are slaves.
"They carry storms within them, even when the night is calm."

The main action takes place on a long table, which resembles a conference table or a dining table for a large family. It is amazing to see how a single object can transport us to completely different worlds. Objects with their own stories appear in the space. Objects that have witnessed human life. Only the humans of this world have become small figurines (puppets). The size of the people in this space is somewhat reminiscent of that of insects in the human world. Humans used to adapt the world to their needs, but here, it doesn't quite suit them, even though they created it.



II. SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Before creating our scenic world, we explore the aesthetics of solitude, alienation, and memory.

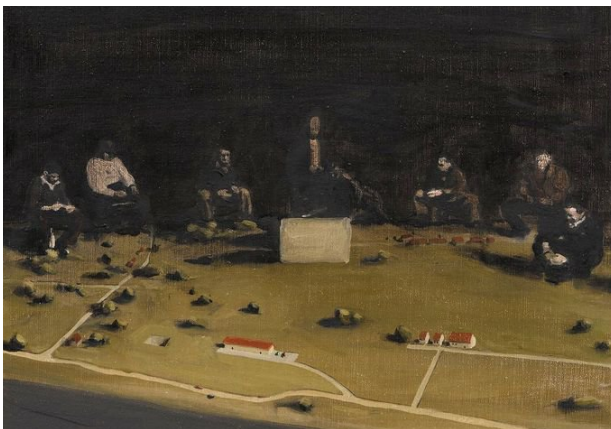
Ignacio Iturria, *Sin título*



Ignacio Iturria, *Sin título*



Michaël Borremans, *Trickland (Part Two)*, 2002



Francisco de Goya
The Dog, 1819-1823

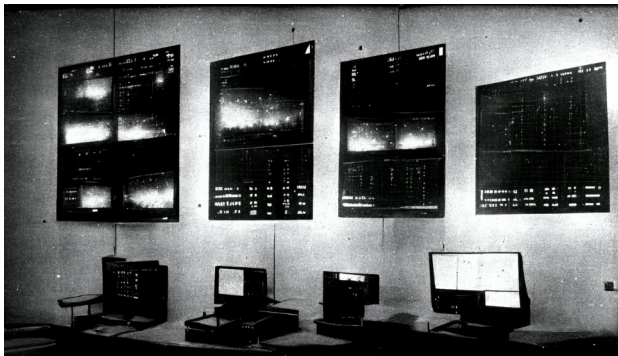


Jacek Sienicki
Untitled, 1999



Here we see a vision of a being trapped in repetition—whether that of daily life or of the duties dictated by his social roles. When he seems to distance himself from the world, he no longer knows how to respond to the failure of his consciousness. Perhaps here Goya's dog, free from the constraints of daily life, is the only one capable of gazing at a sky that would remind him that a star still shines deep within his consciousness.

Andrea Gatopoulos, *The Eggregores' Theory*, 2024



Andrea Gatopoulos, *The Eggregores' Theory*, 2024



Kamel Khélif, *Dans le cœur des autres*, 2024



There is a world of surveillance here. Machines run idle and continue to interpret the world; a mechanical shadow crosses the clouds: an exodus seems to have taken place, and a lost man searches for his guests amid the remains of a great feast.

Music

Adam Strug i Kwadrofonik - Wiecznosc

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_nQw0f0C7Yc

Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons - The Night

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V5wsT9StFS4>

Simeon ten Holt - Canto Ostinato for two pianos and two marimbas

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfBP2UNcMX8>

III. THE ARTISTS

Ézéquier Garcia-Romeu, artistic director of the Théâtre de la Massue, is a creator of worlds, a director, and a set designer.

Based at Le 109, the City of Nice’s center for contemporary culture, he explores contemporary forms of puppetry and new approaches to stage performance and design.

His shows have been presented at the Théâtre National de Chaillot, the Odéon, World Festival of Puppet Theatre in Charleville, the Festival in d’Avignon, and numerous festivals and venues around the world which he continues to tour, such as FIBA (Buenos Aires), the Berliner Festspiele, and the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival.

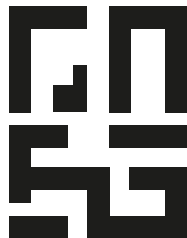


Daria Holovchanska is a Ukrainian puppeteer and independent artist. She studied at the I.P. Kotlarevsky National University of Arts in Kharkiv and then at the Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Arts in Warsaw, where she earned a Master of Arts in Puppetry. She currently works as an assistant professor of object theater.

Between 2021 and 2022, she performed with the V. A. Afanasyev State Academic Puppet Theater in Kharkiv in productions such as *The Tin Soldier*, *Aibolit*, *A Tale for a Little Rabbit*, *Princess Spec*, *The Magic Ring*, and *Mother Courage*. Since 2022, she has worked independently on projects such as *Mothermotherland* (2022, United States), *Night Call* (2023, Poland), *I Will Dance with Those Oak Trees* (2023, United States), and *Oh, Richard!* (2025, Poland), as co-director, actress, set designer, lighting designer, and puppeteer. She has completed several artistic residencies at the **Théâtre de la Massue**, notably for *Ophelia* (2024) and *Little Zaches* (2025), as well as research residencies at the International Puppetry Institute in Charleville-Mézières.

In 2023, she received the POLUNIMA Award, recognizing her as the most promising puppeteer of the new generation.

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