

# LA CONQUESTA DEL POL SUD

Barcelona, 2018



After "Nadia" (2014) and "Claudia" (2016), "Raphaëlle" is the third play of the trilogy about the role of Women, History and Identity, made by La Conquesta del Pol Sud.

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## Raphaëlle

In this piece (Raphaëlle) the experience of a transsexual woman is our raw material.

Raphaëlle Perez is a young woman -23 years old- who was born in Perpignan, France. Her journey is marked by the fact that she was born a boy, with a body and an identity apparently that of a male. Her name was Raphaël. Her process of gender transition began in Barcelona, two years ago. At present, she lives in that city, living her life on a daily basis as a woman.

Her adolescence was not easy. The family needed to relocate to different cities within France due to work obligations, until finally they settled in Normandy. As a boy she always felt that she was 'different', she didn't fit in, and her relationships with other school pupils were difficult. She decided to study fashion design pursued artistic studies in Caen, finally being accepted into the High School of Applied Arts at Duperré School in Paris. On graduation, she moved to Barcelona where she continued her studies at the Massana Official School of Arts and Trade. These three cities -Caen, Paris and Barcelona- have defined and shaped her story.

Her experience is similar to many transsexual girls and boys. They all follow a process in which they experience a continuous metamorphosis of body and mind. Within it, they need to make important decisions.

That is why we were particularly interested in Raphaëlle's experience. It isn't a finite or linear situation where everything seems clear and worked through. It is a dynamic process that evolves continually, and there is a battle to be faced every day. Each step is full of emotion, self-affirmation and also contradiction.

Raphaëlle's journey happens here in our own environment: the rich, civilized Europe. Even taking place in this Europe, Raphaëlle's life is not, has not been and probably will not be easy.

For us, in our work, the 'gaze' is a central element. The views that we exchange with other people imply almost always a judgement. We could say that it's unconscious. From a brief contact lasting only seconds, we can tell almost everything. Raphaëlle's experience is strongly linked to the gaze; the gaze that challenges, judges and questions her: 'how odd you are', 'how strange your clothes are', 'who do you think you are? why are you so...different?'



As a team we wanted to go in-depth regarding the notion of 'difference' and the way we look at things, asking ourselves some questions:

How do we look at Minorities?

What does it really mean to be a woman? What does it really mean to be a man?

What do we consider as 'marginal'? What does the word 'normality' mean?

How do we define 'mental illness'?

How do you learn to be a woman if you have been brought up to be a man?

What references do you use; which images of women do you choose?

What are the behavioural patterns that we pass on in bringing-up boys and girls?

The collective perspective

From the collective point of view regarding Raphaëlle's case, we want to document what is happening now in the present moment; it is a continuous process taking place in the present.

We feel that the world is turning to what is feminine. We are living this fact as one of the unavoidable currents of the present era. Women are becoming the image of the future, after centuries of masculine supremacy.

Raphaëlle's transsexual experience enables us to talk about societal struggles and improvements.

Is there a meaning in thinking about gender as a closed binary system, man / woman?

Is the binary structure just an Occidental construction?

How is this subject matter dealt with in other cultures?

Again, the recurrent theme of social revolution that we investigate in our work: what does it mean?



## **The company**

La Conquesta del Pol Sud is a company formed by Carles Fernández Giua and Eugenio Szwarczer and has a number of regular collaborators with whom we are interested in finding a common line of work.

We are interested in contemporary dramaturgy, which asks relevant questions and requires a challenging study concerning the theatrical language used on a project.

Now we've reached a moment in which we are looking for new forms. We find ourselves more often interested in reality as theatrical material and this brings us to the world of documentary, the world of non-fiction as a space of equilibrium between emotion and debate.

We are interested in exploring how poetry emerges from reality.





## The Team



### **Carles Fernández Giua – Director**

Has a degree in Law and Theater Direction. After studying Art History and visual arts (sculpture), he chose the theater for the possibility it offers to integrate the different live and plastic arts. In 2009 he created alongside with Eugenio Szwarcer the company La Conquesta del Pol Sud. From its origins, the company's work has explored the connection between many compelling themes of daily life using the Theater as a space for collective debate.



### **Eugenio Szwarcer – Set and Video Design**

Studied in Argentina and Barcelona. Combines set design with video design in numerous productions. The essential themes of his work are the interaction between the action on stage and projected image and the use of space as an expressive element and engine for resistance and movement. Abroad he has recently worked with premier international creators like Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui (Milonga, 2013) and (Shellshock 2014) and in Catalonia he has collaborated with directors such as Carme Portaceli, Joan Ollé, Josep M<sup>a</sup> Pou, Toni Casares and Rafel Duran.



### **Damien Bazin – Sound Design**

Studied sound techniques in Paris. His work as a technician started in 1998. Since then he has worked at the Grande Halle de la Villette in Paris, and at the MC93 theater in Bobigny as well as different festivals and cultural conventions in France. In 2002 he did his first work with Carles Santos on "Samaruk, suck, suck" at the Villette in Paris and has since worked regularly with him as a sound designer.



### **Luis Martí – Light Design**

Studied in Barcelona and Valencia. He has worked with the most important directors in the country on a special collaboration at Barcelona's Sala Beckett. He has collaborated with La Conquesta del Pol Sud on different productions including Macbeth, Contra la Democracia, Variacions sobre el model de Kraepelin, producing extremely expressive light designs specifically designed to combine with projected image.

**Raphaëlle is a production of:**



**With the support of:**



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