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Muta Imago – biographical notes

by *Gaia Polidori*

Muta Imago is a theater company founded in 2004 by director Claudia Sorace who attended the Civica Scuola di Teatro Paolo Grassi in Milan and by playwright/sound designer Riccardo Fazi, who graduated in Humanities from the University La Sapienza of Rome.

Their work project centers on a research of forms and stories that relate the sphere of imagination with that of reality. This emerges in a clear aesthetic choice inclined to constructing by images, which fits into the groove of a visionary, conceptual theater. The idea underlying the name “Muta Imago” is the will not to limit the company’s experience exclusively to aspects of the theater and to focus primarily on the image and its change. *Muta* then in the sense of “mutation”, from the Italian, but also “silent”, from the Latin, to contain within itself a universal element, a value, regardless of its relationship with space and time.¹

The approach to this visual theater finds its roots in crafts, in the taste for a “material”² theater in which it is not the narrator actor who is central, but his presence and the relationship that his presence creates with objects and sounds. A “narrating” from details, micro-stories that start from silence and investigate topics such as memory and its relationship with identity. The exemplary productions that make up the Trilogy of Memory are *(a + b)*³ (2007), *Lev* (2008) and *Madeleine* (2009), ranging from mythical to historical and dreamlike viewpoints. They tell of the condition of being in the world as “displacement”³, through a three-stage project, *Displace#1 La Rabbia Rossa*, *Displace#2 Rovine e Displace* (2011). They have explored the logic of the social networks, as regards the relationship between the fiction component and the experiential point of view, through *Pictures from Gihan* (2013) and performance *In Tahrir* (2012). Their theatrical production is paralleled by installation projects such as *Art you lost?* (2012)⁴ or *L’ora in cui non sapevamo niente l’uno dell’altro* as part of *La Terra Sonora. Il teatro di Peter Handke* (2014).

The company has received several awards, including the Special Ubu Prize in 2009, along with Babilonia Teatri, Santasangre and Teatro Sotterraneo, “[...] demonstrating a capacity to renew the stage, testing the endurance of language and highlighting the most disquieting and embarrassing aspects of our being in the world through an intelligent use of new visual and linguistic codes.”

¹ See the interview with the company in Jacopo Lanteri (ed.), *Iperscene 2: Teatro Sotterraneo*, Sonia Brunelli, Ambra Senatore, Muta Imago, Pathosformel, Babilonia Teatri, Dewey Dell, pp. 67-74, Editoria & Spettacolo, Rome 2009

² G. Graziani, *La realtà allo stato gassoso. Sul teatro degli anni Zero* <http://www.altrevelocita.it/teatridoggi/11/la-qualita-dellaria/86/la-realta-allo-stato-gassoso-sul-teatro-degli-anni-zero.html>

³ “Displace: to remove from the usual or proper place; specifically: to expel or force to flee from home or homeland”, see <http://www.mutaimago.com/displace/>

⁴ The project came into being from the Teatro di Roma in collaboration with lacasadargilla, Santasangre and Matteo Angius.