Muta Imago, Lev (2008)

creation: Glen Blackhall, Riccardo Fazi, Claudia Sorace, Massimo Troncanetti
direction: Claudia Sorace
drama and sound: Riccardo Fazi
stage tech: Massimo Troncanetti
technical direction: Maria Elena Fusacchia
stage mouvements: Fabio Ghidoni
stage dresses: Fiamma Benvignati
voice recordings: Irene Petris
piano recordings: Marco Guazzone
stage pictures: Laura Arlotti, Luigi Angelucci
performance Glen Blackhall
production Muta Imago 2008
coproduction Ztl-pro/Santasangre – Kollatino Underground; Kilowatt Festival
with the support of Inteatro/Scenari Danza 2.0; Amat; Regione Marche – Assessorato alle Politiche Giovanili e Ministero per le Politiche Giovanili e Attività sportive
in collaboration with AgoràKajSkenè (Aksè Crono 2008); Demetra – Produzioni Culturali
recommended by the jury at the tuttoteatro.com "Dante Cappelletti" 2007 award

Muta Imago, Lev (2008) - presentation
by *Gaia Polidori*

"A man opens his eyes. He looks around. The light is dim, he can't figure out where he is. Through space he counts his steps, approaches a wall, listening for noise. He puts his ear to the wall. Lights burst, the walls become heaps of mud and amid the shouts of his companions and the whistle of bullets, the man throws himself on the ground.

He starts to recall.

The world around him is a fence of indecipherable shapes. The rules by which reality moves are unknown. Space and time no longer flow along predictable lines. Memories come and go in a flash.

Alone, he must struggle to put the pieces together. To succeed in getting out." [1]

The play takes shape through the eyes of Lev Zasetsky, a patient of the Russian psychiatrist Alexander Luria. [2] Lev's speech perception and memory have been impaired by a bullet wound.

To portray memory loss and the struggle of a man to reconstruct himself, Muta Imago starts from material reality. An eighteen square-meter space, three ceiling lamps, three sheets of plexiglass, flour. A visual-emotional machine created from a primary element, a symbolic sand, which they are made of, and which Lev's objects, body and memory, his story, are soiled and corroded by (Lev being played by Glen Blackhall). Lev is alone in this space – inner and outer at the same time – to literally fight with the props that assail him, together with the voiceover that questions him ("Can you hear me?") or that simply reproduces traces of the thoughts noted down in his diary. [3]

Oblivion, memory, identity. The playwright Riccardo Fazi thus starts from details, micronarratives, to work up to universals. As director Claudia Sorace states: "Is a man the sum of his memories, or does a man exist regardless of his past?" The dilemma of a soldier with a head wound is staged to speak about the relationship between identity and memory, a theme that the company has investigated several times, creating a sort of *Trilogia della Memoria* that goes from *(a+b)³* (2007) through *Lev* to *Madeleine* (2009). This approach by way of images and fragments doesn't aim so much at finding answers or portraying a world view, as to share a theme with the spectators. And *Lev*, in his fragmented and shattered state, seems to show us, not so much his rehabilitation as a "re-education," of the character and the spectators. As Gian Maria Tosatti notes: "Muta Imago says nothing, merely exposes the inner self as it is, as a chain of fragments that can imply many things and above all leave spectators free to tell themselves the story they like, a story in which anyone can mirror his or her own fears, projecting them onto those sharp plexiglass blades that never cease to threaten Lev. A result of great dramaturgic maturity, fruit of a strongly felt choice of meaning, that of working by objective correlative, the only language capable of presenting the codes not in their glaring obviousness, but on the basis of their effects, by eliminating contradictory meanings – in whose trap the spectators would certainly end up – and letting us see only the breakdowns which the human machine goes up against. [4]

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[1] R.Fazi, from the company's website, http://www.mutaimago.com/lev/

[2] For the reconstruction of the peculiar case of Lev Zasetsky see Alexander Luria's book, *Un mondo perduto e ritrovato*, Editori Riuniti, Rome 1973

[3] Lev Zasetsky wrote his diary between 1943 and 1958.

[4] G. M. Tosatti, *Un paesaggio e una storia non raccontata*, in «differenza.org», March 17, 2008, Year 1, no. 11