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## Motus. Twin Rooms (2002)

*A show devised and directed by* Enrico Casagrande *and* Daniela Nicolò

*With* Vladimir Aleksic, Renaud Chauré, Eva Geatti, Dany Greggio, Caterina Silva, Damir Todorovic

*Audio Editing* Enrico Casagrande

*Sound* Carlo Bottos

*Lights* Daniela Nicolò *in collaboration with* Luigi Biondi

*Video consultancy* Frederic Fasano, Massimo Salvucci, Studio Nino

*Operator* Barbara Fantini *and* Daniele Quadrelli

*Stage Design* Fabio Ferrini

*Construction and technical management* Tommaso Maltoni *with* Dany Greggio *and* Nicola Toffolini

*Organisation and press office* Sandra Angelini *and* Marco Galluzzi

*Logistics* Roberta Celati

*A Motus and Venice Biennial Production, in collaboration with:* Teatro Sanzio/Comune Administration of Urbino, Kampnagel Internationale Kulturfabrik of Hamburg, Santarcangelo dei Teatri, Infinito ltd Gallery of Torino, Xing of Bologna

*With the support of* Eti, Comune di Rimini, Rimini Provincial Administration, Emilia Romagna Regional Administration.

*First performance* Venice, Teatro Piccolo Arsenale, 9 - 10 February 2002

## Twin Rooms, Motus 2002. Presentation

by Patrizia Bologna

*Twin Rooms* is one of the episodes of the Rooms project. The hotel room and movie set that debuted in February 2002 at the Teatro Piccolo Arsenale in Venice on the occasion of the exhibition “Temps d’Image.”

The story is taken mainly from Don DeLillo’s novel *White Noise*, a story that is syncopated, cut to ribbons in a display of fragments that put together suggests an elusive story that expands and contracts at the same time in multiple forms and sizes.

With *Twin Rooms* Motus reflects on the concept of movie fiction (as had happened in *Orpheus*) and initiates a phase of digital image research, adding to the specially built hotel room a second identical but totally virtual room, projected onto a screen. The two rooms – which have chamfered, rounded corners as in the best sixties style – are from any point of view the misaligned image of the same place, and foisted on the spectators, a diversified, binocular vision of the same object. The frame of this great dual screen adds another dramatic layer: the presence of a TV camera in the hands of an actor makes it possible to focus on a detail of the scene, an internal (voyeuristic), digital eye which produces a “framing” effect (whose side walls are the edges) while the spectators’ gaze, forced to follow the characters from room to room, becomes the camera’s shifting eye.

This creates a triangulation of glances that enable spectators to capture and approach the characters in intimate, detailed closeups which usually can’t be done in a theater setting. Video fragments previously assembled (during rehearsals) are superimposed on these framings to create additional levels of interpretation, made up of many small micro-stories, fragments of real and imaginary lives. The play’s narrative devices make use of movie techniques such as cuts, crossfades, wipe effects, sequences juxtaposed together, montage. Sound too plays a fundamental role, not just as a soundtrack but as a fully integrated sonic dramaturgy of the play itself. When the music stops and the sounds of water, telephones and steps fade away, there is always the “white noise” in the background, what Don DeLillo in *White Noise* defined as the death of the Western world, the noise of civilization, the noise of consumerism.

If in *Vacancy Room* we wondered about the possibilities and meaning of the stories which were the point of the play, the hero of *Twin Rooms* is the state of the play itself. The screen is given a dual role: on the one hand amplifying details through real time takes, thus showing expressions, looks and fragments that theater cannot show, and on the other confusing and mixing the temporal planes through prerecorded material showing what has already happened, what might have happened or may happen. This establishes between the stage and the video action a fast-paced, surprising dialectical game that is original, fascinating and disquieting.

From Elvis Presley to Jimi Hendrix, the dialogue fragments are taken from Ellroy (*L.A. Confidential*), Bret Easton Ellis (*American Psycho*) and Don DeLillo (*Americana*), writers who have described the frightening atmosphere of the metropolis.

Occasionally a cameraman bursts onto the scene and the offstage voice of the director tells the actors how to act. Climbing over the fourth wall (and actually framing the public), the cameraman places disrupts the viewing enjoyment of the spectators, placing them in a position of uncertainty. Are we spying on a hotel room? Are we watching a theater play? Or are we viewing a film about the making of a film?

The actors perform in a microscopic dimension (for the camera) and a macroscopic one (for the audience). A dual perspective that tests the endurance of the actors, who are constantly poised between hyperbolic gestures and barely hinted details. And it is precisely the actors who figure in and populate these twin rooms, anonymous, random figures of uncertain, boundless identity. Cate and Jack are a couple in crisis; she cheats on her husband with another man in a pink motel room. The

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fear of dying (or maybe of living) is the characteristic trait of these glossy figurines moving on high heels in an excessively narrow space that barely lets them breathe. At the end of the story, Jack kills his wife's lover, who turns out to be a friend of his. The murder takes place in an entirely verbal way, in which the separation between speech and image catches off guard and disorients. *"I sit and suck the dark, I have the dark in my mouth and I suck it. It's all I've got and it belongs to me. Et voilà, c'est fini."*