



## **REBOOT THE ROOTS AND PLAYHOUSE INTERNATIONAL THE ALTERNATIVE ACTORS WORKSHOP SERIES**

Three professional facilitators with experience in social exclusion and a great accumulated knowledge of over forty years as professors, directors, artists, performers and dramatists offer ten days of workshops meant to challenge and confront the participants with a certain evolution.

Based on an intense personal, physical, psychological and emotional plan, the workshops are built to profit actors as well as non-actors and they are accessible on all levels, no matter the linguistic ability or past experience. The key-references to our teaching practices come from "Theater of the Opressed", "Drama-therapy" and "Odin Teatret".

Even though the three facilitators come from different theater areas and philosophies, the overlap happens where theater can be applied as a personal and social transformation tool.

Our opinion is that drama and theater can be used to help people to cure old scars, be it emotional, psychological or mental, and to offer a new vision on the modality in which we can act together to bring a significant evolution in our society.

### **COORDINATORS:**

#### **GEORGE WIELGUS, KURT MURRAY, IULIA BENZE**

**George Wielgus (GB):** Spent two years on a tour in Malaysia with a drug recovery group, along with the HIV Council of Malaysia, performing tens of interactive theater shows with non-actors for a public of more than 6000 people.

He was the arts director for "The Fallen Leaves Theater Company" and lived in the same residence as the artists, facilitating hundreds of hours of workshops and rehearsals.

He is certified in Joker Training and therapy theater called "Rainbow of Desire". He trained for six months with Adrian Jackson, protégé of Augusto Boal, based in London at "TO Cardboard Citizens".

Since 2010 he is creation director for the NGO "Reboot the Roots", facilitating workshops in the "Theater of the Opressed" for NGOs and other groups from the refugee community in Kuala Lumpur, for emerging poets in Singapore or for reconciliating charity meetings in Cambodia.

He is also the "Galstonbury Slam Poetry Contest" in 2010 and he created and executed workshops and performances for a broad non-traditional audience.

**Kurt Murray (AUS):** Has over two decades of theater experience and has worked as an actor, designer, producer, professor, interpreter, street performer, wrestling consultant and director.

His quest in finding new performance levels got him working and learning with acting masters from Iran, as well as Qi Gong masters from China. He trained in London with his company "Eugenio Barba" and he teaches at Sylvia Young Theater School and Delfont Mackintosh in London.

**Iulia Benze (ROM):** Started her career in Romania in 2005 and continued it in Great Britain after graduating a Masters in "Performance Practice and Reaserch" at "The Royal School of Speech and Drama" in London. She has a vast knowledge of feminism, psycho-analysis and *stuckism* in performance. Currently she translates theater books for "Odin Theater Company" in Denmark, being as well a key-inovator and organizer of "The Alternative Actors Workshop Series".

Iulia is a co-founder of "CRAFT" theater company in London in 2012, which created the performance development style, presented in this workshop ([www.craft-theater.com](http://www.craft-theater.com)).

## **WORKSHOPS:**

### **THE ALTERNATIVE ACTORS WORKSHOP SERIES**

#### **THEATER OF THE OPRESSED WITH GEORGE WIELGUS**

The package of techniques use in "Theater of the Oppressed" is a system of games and exercises conceived to humanize humanity. These workshops are introducing three different techniques for personal development and emancipation: Image theater, Forum theater and Rainbow of Desire.

By training in "Image theater" we can learn how to study our own self and our place in the world. The participants will be guided through a process in which they will discover the false perceptions which they have about themselves and about others and, afterwards, they can create a self image and of the world in the future.

"Forum theater" is a technique used for understanding and overpassing external oppressions from our world.

By training in "Forum theater", using "Image theater" as a foundation, we discover the way in which different forces gain pressure and deform our day-to-day experience. Collectively we are creating, examining and evaluating solutions to overpass them. "Forum theater" challenges the power structures which are enforced on us every day. In "Forum theater" there are no passive observers. There are only spectators which can get involved at any point to attempt and change the events, while exploring their ideas in a "life rehearsal".

"Rainbow of Desire" is a therapy theater which helps in exploring our internalized oppressions. It tackles addictiveness, emotional scars, post-traumatic stress disorder and psychological issues.

#### **IDENTITY DECONSTRUCTION WITH KURT MURRAY & IULIA BENZE**

Using a mixture of techniques by Jerzy Grotowski, Eugenio Barba, Baji Qi Gong, Astanga, Yoga, in a recent process known as "exhaustion theater", by overpassing our limits and pushing ourselves emotionally and physically, we can rid ourselves from old behavior and thinking patterns, which became limitations to our potential.

"Exhausting theater" is connected to "Stuckism" or, better said, to "Stuckist manifesto in theater". The "Stuckist Psychoanalytical Performance" promotes the search for self-discovery and authenticity. It explores subjects such as artist's neurotics or the unconscious, generators of unseen psychological realities through novelty, shock, attraction and cruelty.

#### **SPORT THEATER WITH KURT MURRAY**

Keith Johnstone, the father of improvisation, offered the biggest gift to the improv world: sport theater: a fundamental element in entertainment.

His specific and rigorous rules open and challenge the mind. It teaches people the art of humor and creates a solid foundation for any kind of advance creation.

This workshop teaches you the necessary abilities to generate powerful improvisations on the spot.

In the beginning of a scene anything is possible. As more offers are made and the scene reality is clearly defined, it becomes a circle of possibilities. It shrinks and limits the types of offers from which the performer can chose.

## **DEBATE:**

The three will initiate a debate on the Theater of The Oppressed and the impact of theater practices in the community.



## DAVID SCHWARTZ

### TECHNIQUES, METHODS AND APPROACHES IN POLITICAL THEATER

The domination of aesthetics, the capitalization of non-politics and the "art for art" in the Romanian cultural medium post 1989 have undermined the employed component of any cultural action which regard socio-political matters.

Furthermore, the meaning which the term "politic" acquired in today's Romanian society - compromise, corruption, ideological instability - allows the actual content of the political endeavor to be lost.

But in the last ten years multiple initiatives have evolved in the Romanian theatrical context with a profound political, social or community content.

Protest performances against social inequities (such as land grabbing or racial discrimination); analysis performances of controversial moments in recent history (from fraud buy-outs to inter-ethnic conflicts and miners' uprisings); independent theater projects to sustain marginalized communities (evicted, institutionalized elders, people deprived of their liberty).

Theater with a social and political impact is increasingly present and capitalized both locally and on a European level, having a double impact: aesthetics and ethics, of visualizing or publicly debating various issues of the society.

Thus, theater recovers its political stake and it becomes an active participant to building a society based on civic involvement and direct democracy.

Purpose: acquainting the students with various research techniques and complementary approaches in the theater with a social and political impact.

#### COORDINATOR:

#### DAVID SCHWARTZ

**David Schwartz** was born on August 7, 1985 in Bucharest. He has a BA in Stage Direction (2007) and an MA in Direction of Contemporary Performing Arts (MA) (2009) both at Caragiale Academy of Theatrical Arts and Cinematography (UNATC) in Bucharest. For 3 years he studied History of Art. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, department of Theater and Performing Arts; here, he is conducting a research about directions/ approaches to theater that concerned the excluded and marginalized.

He is co-initiator of the tangaProject (2005-2008) independent theater platform, and founding member of Ofensiva Generozității (O2G Association, Generosity's Offensive).

He directed *Cabaret Balkan* (text: Dejan Dukovski, 2007), *Out! (Afară)*, text: Mihaela Michailov, 2007), *Rags*, (Zdrențe, text Mihaela Michailov, by Chuck Palahniuk, 2008), *Romania! Kiss you (România! Te pup)*, text: Bogdan Georgescu, 2009), *Make way! (Faceți loc!)*, text: Mihaela Michailov, 2009), *Heated Heads (Capete înfierbântate)*, text Mihaela Michailov, 2010), *I Hereby Certify (Declar*

*pe propria răspundere*, text Alina Serban, 2011), *Under Ground (Sub Pământ*, text Mihaela Michailov, 2012), *We were not born in the right place (Nu ne-am născut în locul potrivit*, in collaboration with Alice Monica Marinescu, 2013) *Independent Moldova. Erratum (Moldova independent. Erată*, in collaboration with Ion Bors, Dumitru Stegărescu, Doriană Talmazan, Irina Vacariuc, 2013).

Together with tangaProject, he collaborated on *RahovaNonStop – A show of 25 hours (RahovaNonStop – Spectacol în 25 de ore*, 2006), *The Evacuation of The Students House (Evacuarea Casei Studenților*, 2008) and *4X4 – Mobile Platform of Urban Observation (4X4 – Platformă mobilă de observație urbană*, 2008).

Within 4<sup>th</sup> Age (*Vârsta4* - Community art project conducted with residents of the retirement home Moses Rosen) he worked on the following: a research project on recent history called *Romanians, turn your weapons! August 23, 1944 (Români, întoarceți armele! 23 august 1944)*, two community theater shows called *Moses Stories* and *Age Objects (Vârsta Obiectelor)*; these were oral history shows in which the elderly together with the artists wrote and performed monologues based on their personal experiences.

Since January 2013 he is coordinator (with Mihaela Michailov, Ionut Sociu, Marius Bogdan Tudor) of *Gazeta de Artă Politică* - a self-financed quarterly publication that analyzes and promotes artistic approaches having socio-political component ([www.artapolitica.ro](http://www.artapolitica.ro)).

He has been coordinating documentary theater workshops/ theater starting from personal history, self-representation through drawing/ political theater/ political art – together with high school and university students, elderly in retirement homes, school pupils in mining towns, refugee children.

## **WORKSHOP: TECHNIQUES, METHODS AND APPROACHES IN POLITICAL THEATER**

The interdisciplinary workshop will be built on three different levels:

**A theoretical component:** presenting and discussing examples of theatrical methods and practices with a social and political impact, both Romanian contemporary and from a larger historical and geographical context.

**A practical component:** various exercises that can teach the discovery and development of possible scripts with a social and political impact, derived from the student's actual interests and problems.

**A political theater project:** each student makes a project proposal.

The proposals are then developed together, in teams of 2-3 students.

The next step is documentation and project development (it can be a performance project, a workshop project, a public action etc.)

## **DEBATE:**

David will initiate an open debate on sustained political art and a presentation of *Gazeta de Artă Politică*.



## **MONOTREMU**

### **PRESENCE in the PUBLIC SPACE**

We are an artist duo and family. Under the pseudonym of Monotremu we oppose two educational backgrounds - fine arts and sociology, or what sometimes it's seen as "anarchic subjectivism" vs. "totalitarian objectivism". Thus, our collaborative practice is a continuously negotiation based on feelings, intuition and facts that at the end result in works with social and political content. It's a response to the general apathy in the Romanian society traumatized by the neoliberal capitalism and the communist heritage, in form of critical commentaries and sometime mockery to the private and public actors that have unlimited powers to give shape and form our everyday reality.

Monotremu is a *ready-made* term that is tokened and borrowed from natural sciences where "*monotreme*" designates a category of paradoxical animals (platypus and echidna) that presents characteristics from different species: mammals, oviparous and reptiles. At the time they have been discovered, they've been considered a taxidermist joke and, as they didn't fit in a single zoological category, for a long time they have been justified only by their own existence. By extension, we consider monotremes to be representative for Romania and for the mix of Balkan, Slavonic and Latin features that situate us in a continuous debate over our identity and history.

### **COORDINATORS:**

#### **LAURA BOROTEA and GABRIEL BOLDIȘ**

**Monotremu** is Laura Borotea (b.1980) and Gabriel Boldis (b.1976)

**Laura Borotea** was born in Targu Mures, Romania and, if at the age of 9 she witnessed a revolution that still rises questions regarding its authenticity and purpose, two years later she lived the bloodiest inter-ethnic incidents of the post-communist era in Transylvania, also called the "*Black March*". This lead her to distrust the institutions and political organizations and, latter on, to adopt a critical, social and political commitment in her artistic and curatorial projects. She graduated at the High School of Art in Targu Mures and the Faculty of Art from Timisoara and studied Political Science at SNSPA Bucharest. She collaborate as project coordinator with ArtEast Foundation/B5 Studio, TarguMures and she is currently enrolled in a master studies of *Arts in the Public Sphere* at Ecole cantonale d'art du Valais, Switzerland.

**Gabriel Boldis** was raised in a family with strong opposites ideological beliefs, one of his grandfathers being a member of the communist nomenclature while the other was living a liberal nostalgia from the monarchic regime. He emigrate during a period of time to Spain, where he studied sociology at UNED and started to see the world as a dynamic social construct.

**Exhibitions:** *Redemption Day* Tranzit, Bucharest/RO; *Few Were Happy with Their Condition*, Kunsthalle. Winterthur, Zurich / CH; Gallery 400, Chicago/USA/2014; *Good Guys Win Only in Movies*, Salon Video showcase, HAU, Berlin / DE; *Waiting Spaces 3, intervenții în spațiul public*, Timisoara / RO; *Unfinished Ideas*, U.A.P Gallery, Targu Mures / RO; *W.A.D. interventions in the public space*, Arad/RO; *Shape.Noise*, MNAC, Bucuresti / RO; *Peter Szabo - Onward*, K'arte, Targu Mures / RO; *Disenchantment Day*, Salonul de Proiecte, Bucuresti / RO/2013; *Matters of Method*, Salon Video, Tranzit, Iași / RO; *Couleur Locale 2*, B5 Studio, Targu Mures / RO; *Dear Money*, with Salonul de Proiecte at Vienna Art Fair / AT; *Popular Unknown*, Simultan, Timisoara / RO; *Horizontal Newspaper / Dan Perjovschi and Friends*, Sibiu / RO/2012; *What we destroy and celebrate in the same time* - Salonul de Proiecte, Bucharesti / RO; *Maybe 3 - Magma Contemporary Medium*, Saint George / RO; *Wind Protest (2012 to present)*, Kiosk/Open Flat, Chisinau / MD

**Workshops:** *At the Chalkboard*, with Bartha Jozsef, B5 Studio, Targu Mures / RO 2014; *Artist using Paintings to Fly interventions in the public space*, CUCA Festival, Cartișoara Sibiu / RO 2014; *Coloring Perjovschi*, with the children of Queen Maria orphanage, Pădurea Rotundă Art Camp, Reghin / RO 2014; *The Mobile Society*, Street Delivery, Bucharest / RO 2014; *Shapes and Colors, Brancusi workshop for kids*, Magma/PulzArt Festival, Saint George / RO (2013)

**Publications:** *Dear Money*, Salonul de Proiecte

*The artists of an indifferent context*, Survival Strategies and Tactics, b2, Tranzit, Sibiu, 2013  
*100 artistes de Street Art*, Paul Ardenne, Marie Maertens FR, 20100

## **WORKSHOP: PRESENCE IN THE PUBLIC SPACE**

We will first do a presentation in which we will try to put into words a part of our visual arts and will launch a debate on contemporary urban space. We removed ourselves from the role of artists whose mission is "neighborhood and city embellishment" and we took the role of commentators of close reality, each work or intervention being actually a personal and intimate statement, made most clandestinely and transient in the public space, and having almost always as a ground the current social issues.

We'll talk about context, public spaces, interdisciplinary and radical humor - another tool of survival kits. The presentation will be followed by a workshop where we create and apply your own ideas.

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*„The artistic duo Monotremu distinguishes by artistic ironico - critical practices adressing apathy and shortcomings of the Romanian society, context and civilization, which, like the zoological monotreme category - term that inspired the pseudonym under which the two work - is situated in an uncertain area of classification and status: for monotremes, somewhere between mammals and birds; for Romania, somewhere between East and West; a special class, primitive by certain criteria, but rather, unclassifiable and hard to integrate in pre-established structures.” - Diana Ursan*

## **DEBATE:**

Laura Borotea and Gabriel Boldiș will launch in an open talk that precedes the workshop, on the themes of urban interventions and contemporary urban space.



## **VLAD PETRI**

### **SOCIAL VIDEO: civic involvement, activism, alternative methods of discourse in documentary films**

#### **COORDINATOR: VLAD PETRI**

Vlad Petri is a film-maker and photographer based in Bucharest, Romania. He graduated the University of Cinema and Theater (2005) and started freelance work on various film projects in locations such as Afghanistan, Syria, Jordan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Albania. He has taught photography for 4 years, part of an interactive workshop addressed to the general public (starting from 2008). Most of his recent projects are in the field of documentary film-making, journalism and social media with a special interest on social issues, politics and activism.

He has documented the 2012 University Square protests and the "Rosia Montana" protests (2013) in Bucharest, uploading short clips of the events on the Internet, on a regular basis. He managed to produce a full independent, self-funded feature film of the 2012 protests that took more than 2 years for the making: "Where are you Bucharest?", which premiered at Rotterdam International Film Festival.

#### **WORKSHOP:**

### **SOCIAL VIDEO: civic involvement, activism, alternative methods of discourse in documentary films**

The 9-day workshop will consist in a review of methods of representation used in the documentary film, observational cinema, ethnographic film, social video, political film and propaganda film. It will question authorial positioning documentary film-making, debating issues related to ethics and ideology; author's presence in the filmic discourse, with an introduction to the concepts of auto-ethnography and self-representation; construction of identity through audio-visual language.

The workshop has an applied aspect, where the participants along with Vlad Petri will examine issues of interest to the community, identify documenting approaches and strategies and develop practical examples, as a common theme.

#### **DEBATE:**

Vlad will participate in an open talk about citizen journalism, the new media and the alternative models of discourse.