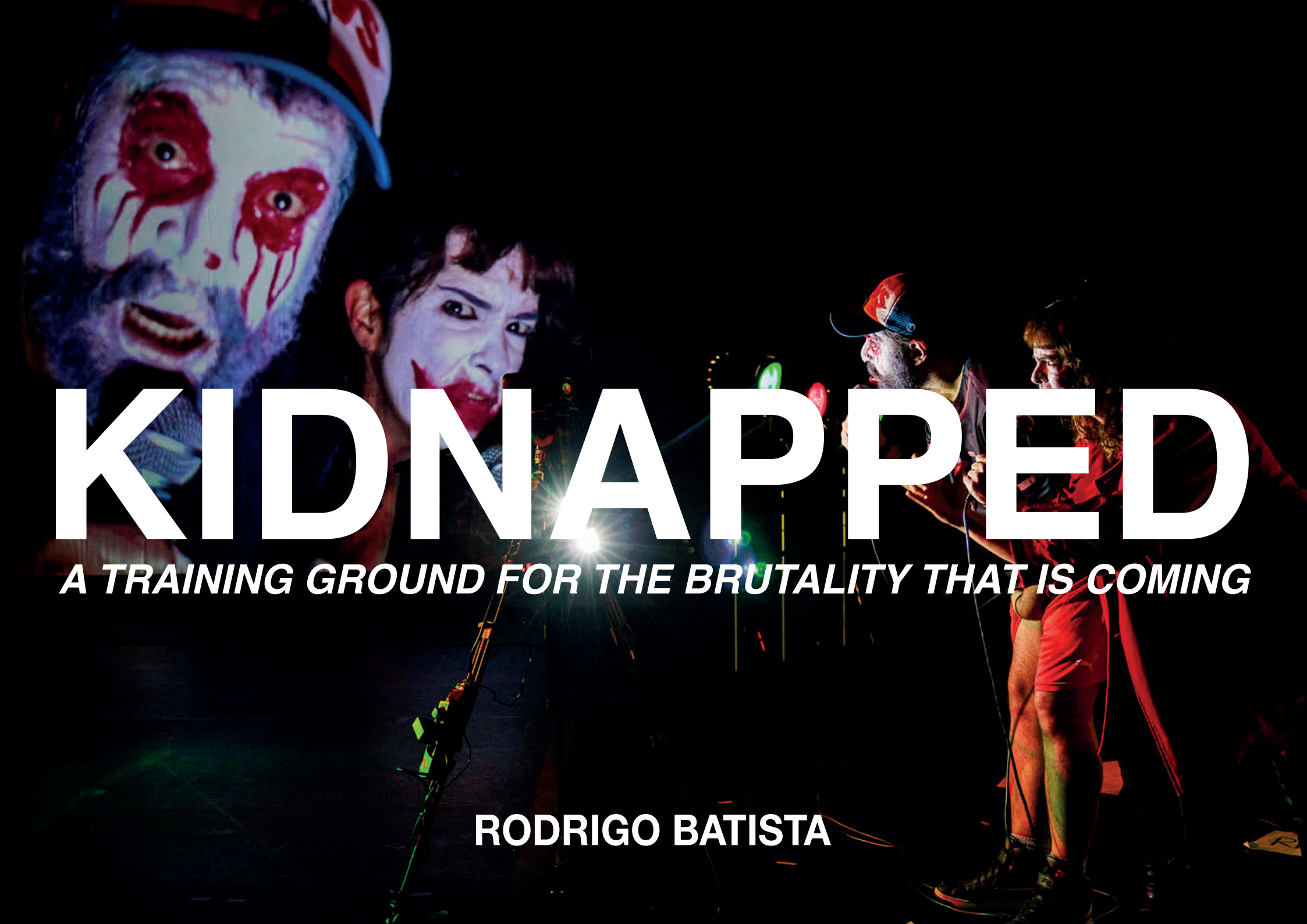


KIDNAPPED

A TRAINING GROUND FOR THE BRUTALITY THAT IS COMING

RODRIGO BATISTA

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A TRAINING GROUND FOR THE BRUTALITY THAT IS COMING

Rodrigo Batista

2027-2028

Hello, I am Shelley Duvall. Welcome to tonight's tale show. Imagine, if you will, a theater in the heart of Europe. And inside this theater, there are two clowns, Terror and Compassion, who arrive from far, far, far away... They do not bring balloons or candy. Instead, they kidnap a bunch of children to teach them that our world is in captivity. Because in this tale, the planet has been stolen, the territories are systematically robbed, the language is kidnapped, and even bodies and desires are looted and bottled. But hey, don't give up hope! Because the clowns laugh, they weep, they are haunted by déjà-vus, conjuring ghosts of history, dictators, bankers, philosophers, who march across the stage showing us how the fuck we got here. They whisper about fascism, about climate change, about our lives turned into a casino. And the children… oh, the children! They grow too fast in this captivity. Some escape, some vanish, some fall silent forever. Until, at last, the survivors sit among the ruins, listening to the final planetary journal: an Earth where the dead outnumber the living, a stage designed not for us, but for them, the corpses who inherit the Planet. So, sit close and welcome to tonight's tale show. It's called: KIDNAPPED: A Training Ground for the Brutality that is Coming.

TRIGGER WARNING

This performance kidnaps you. The scene contains climate anxiety, fascism, contemporary corpses, critical speech, colonial and capitalist ruins, and ongoing violence. The audience may be exposed to participation, loud sounds, strong imagery, flickering lights, and political discomfort.

WATCH THE TRAILER HERE

https://vimeo.com/1151430959?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci

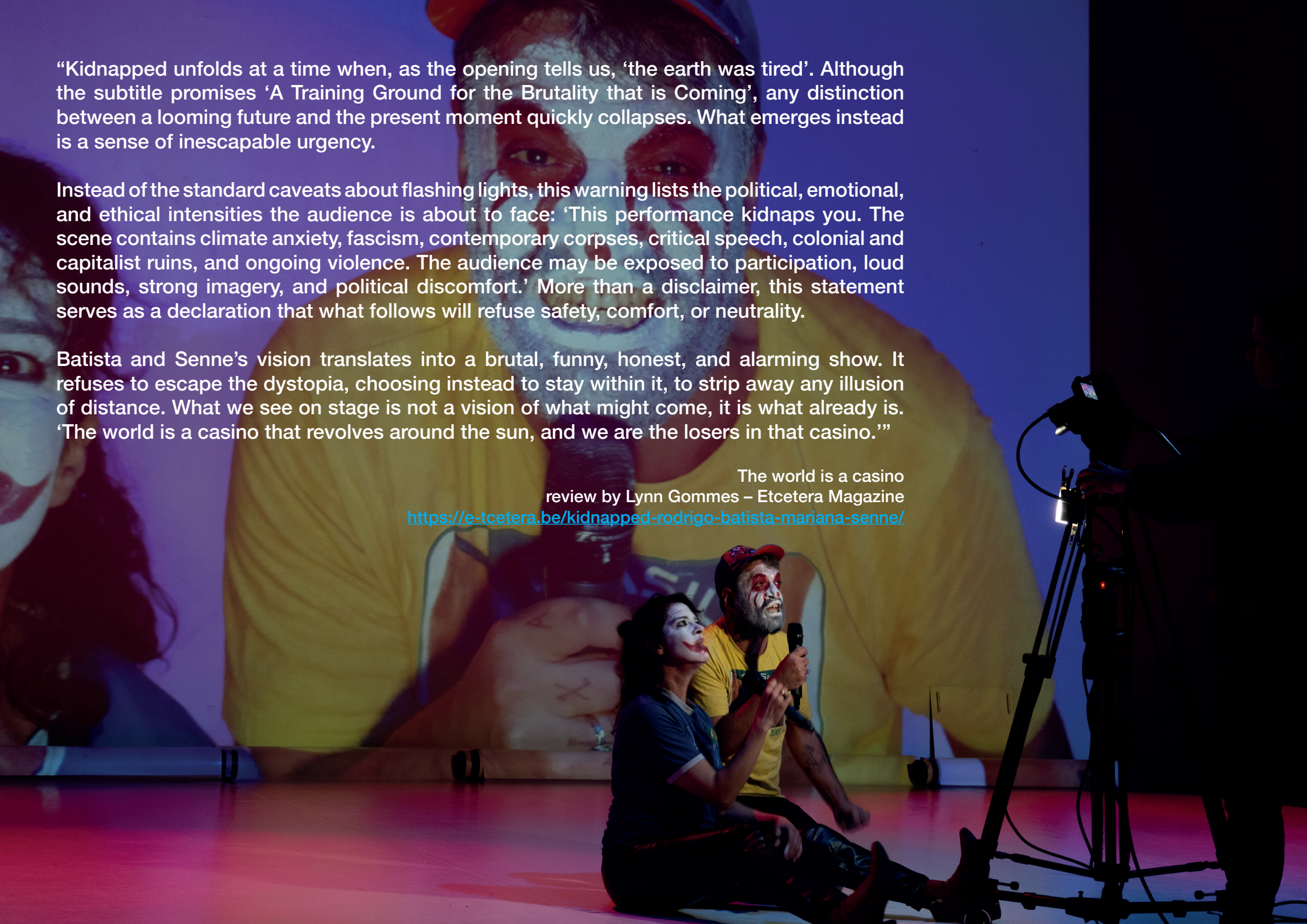
Concept: Rodrigo Batista in collaboration with Mariana Senne
Direction: Rodrigo Batista
Performance: Mariana Senne and Rodrigo Batista
Text: Luiz Pimentel
Dramaturgy: Luiz Pimentel, Rodrigo Batista and Mariana Senne
Vídeo: Kathleen Kunath
Sound Design & Original Score: Cainã Vidor
Light Design & Technical Direction: Jurgen Fonteijn
Outside Eye: Lotte Vrancken
Additional Image Treatment: Renan Ramiro
Production: wpZimmer - Gosie Vervloessem, Sarah Rombouts, Marie Luyten, Valeria Secchi and Lina Van Hulle
Co-Production: Beursschouwburg, Monty, workspacebrussels, Kunstwerkplaats and detheatermaker
Video Documentation: Zé de Paiva & Kathleen Kunath
Special thanks to: Aline Olmos, Annabel Reid, Benne Dousselaere, Campo, Caroline Lee-Jeong, Daniel Córdova, De Brakke Grond, Flávia Pinheiro, Jan Brokof, Joachim Robbrecht, Juliano Bonamigo, Katja Dreyer, KVS, Luise Meyer, Mestizo Arts Platform-WIPCOOP, Mulanga Nkolo, Peter Coppens, Proximamente Festival, Silvia Rigon, Tine De Pourcq, Tom Oliver, Vinícius Torres Machado, Vlaamse Gemeenschap (research beurs), Worm Rotterdam, Zé de Paiva, the children Samí and Antônio, and to all our mothers.



CONCEPT NOTE

Departing from the conventional notion of theater as a tool for depicting and potentially influencing notions of reality, Rodrigo's latest research reflects upon an assumed contemporary reality (or realism), born from the Post-Modern Era, which has evolved over the past six decades under the sway of the Neoliberal Regime and the misleading promises of the free market, the individual subjectivity and privatization of life. Leaving us with a landscape dominated by collective hallucinations that challenge our established understanding of truth, casting a pervasive shadow of doubt on our collective beliefs.

In this context, the project metaphorizes that in our illusory world of neoliberal freedom, we are all to some degree kidnapped. But by what and whom are we held captive? Ideologies, identities, technologies, political systems, predatory relationships, competitiveness, capital, and structural inequalities seem to be among the captors. In other words, we are kidnapped by the rooted subconscious of colonialism and capitalism, caught between the concrete and daily absurdity of globalized macro-politics and the ambiguous, abstract, and often elitist, desire for solutions in the micro-political realm.



“Kidnapped unfolds at a time when, as the opening tells us, ‘the earth was tired’. Although the subtitle promises ‘A Training Ground for the Brutality that is Coming’, any distinction between a looming future and the present moment quickly collapses. What emerges instead is a sense of inescapable urgency.

Instead of the standard caveats about flashing lights, this warning lists the political, emotional, and ethical intensities the audience is about to face: ‘This performance kidnaps you. The scene contains climate anxiety, fascism, contemporary corpses, critical speech, colonial and capitalist ruins, and ongoing violence. The audience may be exposed to participation, loud sounds, strong imagery, and political discomfort.’ More than a disclaimer, this statement serves as a declaration that what follows will refuse safety, comfort, or neutrality.

Batista and Senne’s vision translates into a brutal, funny, honest, and alarming show. It refuses to escape the dystopia, choosing instead to stay within it, to strip away any illusion of distance. What we see on stage is not a vision of what might come, it is what already is. ‘The world is a casino that revolves around the sun, and we are the losers in that casino.’”

The world is a casino
review by Lynn Gommes – Etcetera Magazine
https://e-tcetera.be/kidnapped-rodrigo-batista-mariana-senne/

COLLABORATORS

Led by director, performer, and educator Rodrigo Batista, in collaboration with actress Mariana Senne, writer Luiz Pimentel, video artist Kathleen Kunath, and sound designer Cainã Vidor, the project employs Batista's methodology. Confirmed coproducers are wpZimmer, Beursschouwburg, Kunstenwerkplaats, Monty and workspacebrussels.

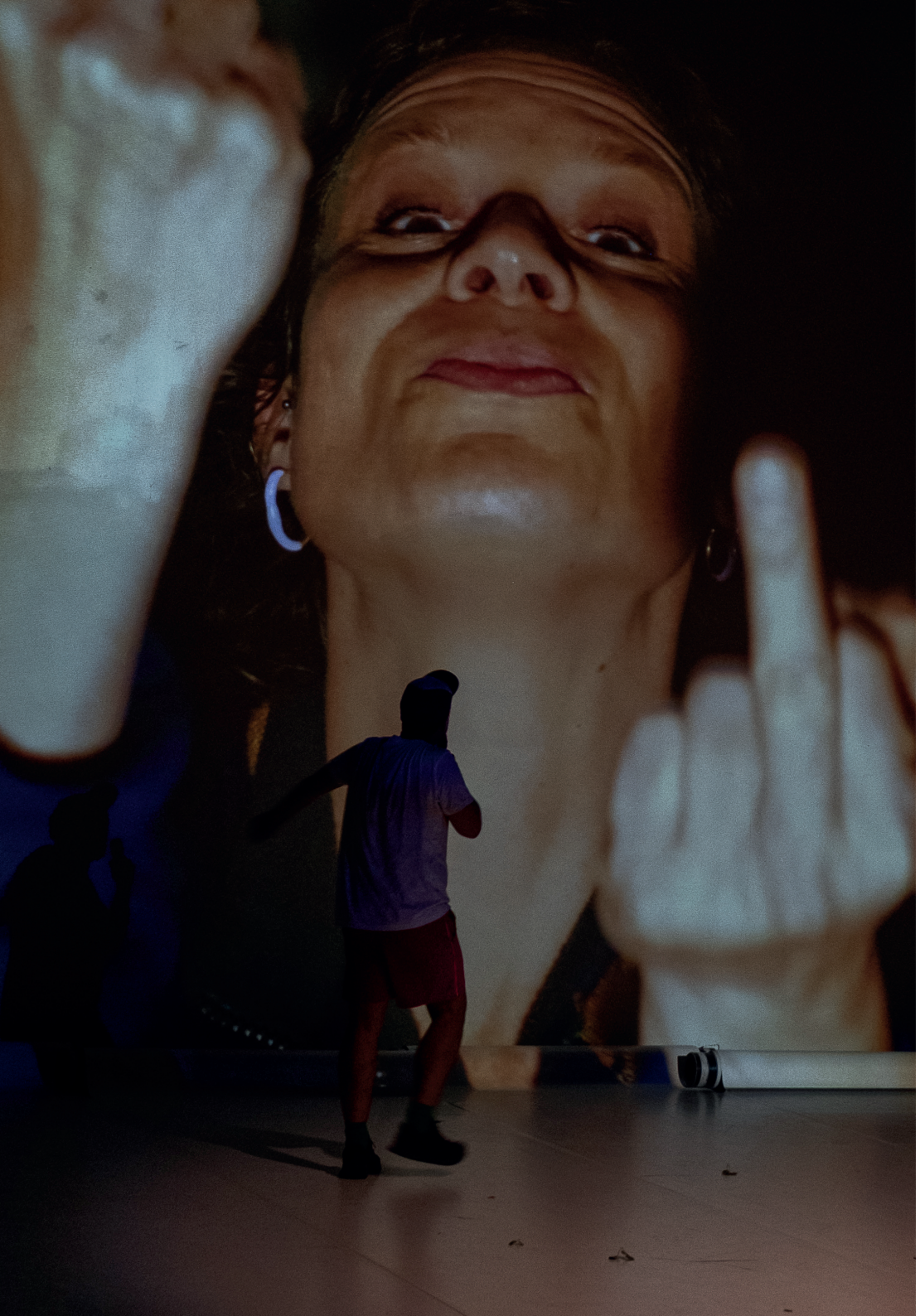
PLANNING & TOUR DATES

This project is a result of a long research phase (2023-2025), which was supported by Flanders, State of the Art, Mestizo Arts Platform, and De Theatermaker, with research residencies at wpZimmer (Antwerp), workspacebrussels (Brussels), Kunstenwerkplaats (Brussels), and Campo (Ghent). There were work-in-processes to try out specific elements with small audiences at De Brakke Grond (Amsterdam), Proximamente Festival (Brussels), Worm (Rotterdam), and KVS (Brussels). In its production phase (2025), residencies took place at Kunstenwerkplaats (Brussels), Campo (Gent), KathleenundZe (Berlin), workspacebrussels (Brussels), and De Brakke Grond (Amsterdam). The piece premiered at De Brakke Grond (Amsterdam) in October 2025, followed by showings at Beursschouwburg (Brussels) and at Monty (Antwerp).

LOOKING FOR

- Coproducers
- Tour dates
- Travel cost coverage (crew exists of 2pp from Berlin and 2pp from Belgium)





ABOUT RODRIGO BATISTA

Rodrigo Batista is a Brazilian theater director and teacher based in Belgium, known for politically charged performances composed of intense physical research practices, geopolitical commentary, and acidic criticism. With 15 years of foundation in studies about biopolitics, tragedy, economic crises, propaganda, and anti-colonial themes, his recent work explores theater as an unapologetic aesthetic response to the crises of contemporary capitalism and colonial ruins. The last work was made in the frame of Rodrigo's Master's Degree at DAS Theater Amsterdam. "*The Furious Rodrigo Batista (Side A) + The B-side + Bonus Track*" is a theater piece divided into three parts and presented at several venues and festivals across Europe and Brazil.

Review work in progress
https://www.pzazz.theater/nl/recensies/performance/intellectuele-terreur

The piece was selected on the 25 best performances of 2025 from Pzazz.
Eindejaarslijstjes 2025 – Etcetera magazine
https://e-tcetera.be/eindejaarslijstjes-2025/

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DISTRIBUTION & CONTRACT

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Images ©Victoriano Moreno - Proximamente Festival 2024 - KVS
©Ana Francisco - De Brakke Grond (Dutch premiere 2025)



“Does it make sense to exhaust yourself like this for your own congregation? What Kidnapped proves with brio is that we, as left-wing parishioners, still have quite a lot to learn. That becomes clear, for instance, in how we are left speechless by a simple question like ‘what is fascism?’, even after a video in which Pasolini has just explained it to us. Batista’s education is only partly repetition. Above all, it is an impressive warning about the excesses of profit-driven tech-capitalism to which we have all surrendered.

Rarely do you see performances that go for it this hard, that try so comprehensively to decode the whole world in its interconnectedness, precisely by unravelling its complexity.

But above all, Kidnapped’s very own aesthetic lingers, with its shouty colours, incantatory visual effects and brutal expressionism. However much the ‘I don’t give a damn’ attitude is rubbed in your face from stage and screen, it is all put together meticulously - and it looks damn appetising.”

De eigen parochie terug naar school
review by Wouter Hillaert – Pzazz
https://www.pzazz.theater/nl/recensies/performance/de-eigen-parochie-terug-naar-school