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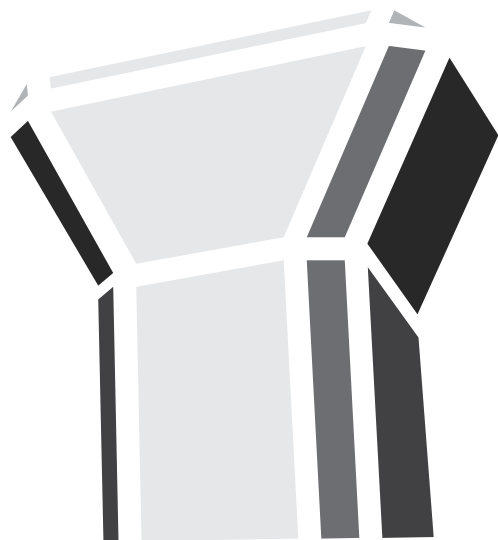
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Centro
de Estudos
de Teatro

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CONTENTS

<i>Creating and Producing, Inseparable Actions?</i> Maria João Brilhante	5
<i>Passion</i> Anne de Amézaga	9
<i>Sharing the Stage</i> Carla Ruiz	13
<i>Art and Work</i> Luis Miguel Cintra	15
<i>Changing the Paradigm</i> Debate following the initial talks	24
<i>Production: An Invisible Activity?</i> Round table with Álvaro Correia, Célia Caeiro, Isabel Craveiro, Miguel Abreu and Pedro Alves	31
<i>Survival</i> Levi Martins	63

CREATING AND PRODUCING, INSEPARABLE ACTIONS

MARIA JOÃO BRILHANTE

An opportunity to discuss

In the years following the April 1974 revolution, there was a powerful calling to do theatre. Groups of artists formed, sought out available, often unconventional spaces and audiences were prepared to watch what was on offer throughout the country. There was, obviously, the matter of getting the financial means and sufficient production conditions. Even in a collective creation, those who were first and foremost actors were responsible for ensuring these conditions. This was my role in some of Osório Mateus' creations with the Tragédia Infantil – Produções Teatrais group, from 1979: inventing new ways of producing for new ways of creating.

Since these groups did not have their own space, one of the production tasks was to look for somewhere to perform that answered the staging needs. The production requirements for funding were set early on: everyone's work had to be paid for; as did the rental of the space (if it hadn't been given free of charge); as well as turning ideas for the scenic space into reality; plus costumes, licenses and other legal aspects. Even the simplest of creations would require time and concrete action, since everything had to be done from scratch every time for each case: creating the

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show and doing the production went hand in hand. Production has since become a more demanding task, but the spirit in which it is done still has these fundamental characteristics.

The idea for the project to establish a dialogue between those who produce and those who create goes back a long way; from the many ideas exchanged with Mónica Almeida during and after our joint venture in the Teatro Nacional D. Maria II (TNDMII) Administration. It was, however, with Levi Martins and the Companhia Mascarenhas-Martins that the idea of having a discussion session on World Theatre Day in 2017 began to take shape. The focus of this session gradually became connections between creating and producing, and aimed at recognising the diversity of practices and ways of understanding production, its place in artistic activity and its contours in the current context of theatre in Portugal and beyond.

The talks and round table discussion reproduced here were therefore a first and wonderfully open opportunity to gather and listen to a group of people who had never worked together. They knew each other's work to varying extents and felt sufficiently stimulated to publicly discuss this theme based, as the reader will see, on clearly distinct practices and positions. Levi Martins and I sought to bring a diverse group together. These included highly experienced producers from widely different companies and associations (Anne de Amézaga from Compagnie Louis Brouillard in Paris, Carla Ruiz from the TNDMII, Célia Caeiro from Novo Grupo, Miguel Abreu from Cassefaz). There were also artist-producers who ran their theatre groups outside the major centres (Isabel Craveiro with Teatrão in Coimbra and Pedro Alves with Teatromosca in Sintra), as well as artists who didn't do production, but were involved in the process of making their shows viable (Luis Miguel Cintra and Álvaro Correia).

They belonged to different generations, and their theatrical practice was born out of their experiences, the historical moments they'd witnessed and, in Anne de Amézaga's case, from working in a different cultural context. By developing their theatre activities in different places, under different conditions and with different objectives, they gave us a broad and complex view of the relationship between producing and creating theatrical actions. In this first meeting, we were able to map out the theme and understand the tensions between ideas and modes of production and creation, as well as the current circumstances determining them. It is, therefore, an interim but highly illuminating diagnosis nonetheless.

On the invisibility of production and its desire to be successful

There are actually plays that have put production and its circumstances centre stage. Think of Michael Frayn's comedy, *Noises Off* (1982), which was performed in Portugal at Teatro Villaret (1985) and was even adapted for the cinema in 1992, starring Michael Caine. In this, and other cases going back much further in time (*Auto da Natural Invenção* by António Ribeiro Chiado, *El-Rei Seleuco* by Luís de Camões, *Auto dos Sátiros* by an anonymous author, all from the 16th century, but also Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or Corneille's *L'Illusion Comique* (*The Theatre of Illusion*), we see theatre within theatre. The aim is almost always to reveal to the spectator what is invisible: how the show is put together, what are its different components, from what (magical) arts comes what we see on stage. Theatre is also approached from a parodic angle, as post-modernity (as it is known) has been doing, thus paving the way for a demystification of theatre as an illusion, transcendence or parallel world.

In revealing the backstage and how a show is produced, the aim was always to highlight certain aspects of the work. Not to wipe out the talent or genius of the artist, but to link them to the profession, something that would dignify theatrical art in the eyes of those who saw little value in it. Corneille's *L'Illusion Comique* is emblematic of this, when Alcandre, the magician, refers to the art of theatre in these terms, convincing Pridamant of his son Clindor's merits in the comic profession:

Stop complaining. Currently the theatre
 Is in so high a place that all idolise it,
 And what in your time was seen with contempt
 Is now loved by all good spirits,
 It is the entertainer of Paris, the desire of the provinces,
 Our princes' most cherished amusement,
 The delight of the people, and the pleasure of the great. ¹

Discussing production, a task that is only successful if invisible, has not, however, been frequent. There are manuals for transmitting technical know-how and some training, and the demands of the official entities that finance the theatre lead companies to hire those who do the production. But what do we take from the speech of those who make shows happen? The cinema records the "making of" the film because the producers include it as added value to the object-movie that will tour the commercial circuit, contrary to

what happens with the short term show. It's true, however, that some artists are beginning to record and file away their creation processes (Romeo Castellucci and Societas Raffaello Sanzio²), where companies and production associations keep records of their activity: from seeking partnerships to funding, from finding rehearsal and performance spaces to preparing tours and contacting the public; from hiring team members and responding to legal requirements, to producing or disseminating publicity materials.

Production does what needs to be done to fulfill the creative project of a director or collective, but – and this is what I'm putting forward in these first few pages – it can anticipate possibilities that will serve the creation well; in other words, deal creatively with constraints and obstacles. It can also do the opposite and leave the mark of its error on the badly chosen space, in the poor management of the time necessary for creation, in the limited understanding of the creative process. But where do we find production after the show is over? It obviously dies with it, continuing in the post-production of certain aspects of a more administrative nature (doing the get-out, making payments, dealing with bills, etc.). We believe that production methods are consistent in some groups and that they can become responsible for the creative climate that exists in them. Creation and production are inseparable friends and it seemed to me that listening to ideas about them – how they agree and disagree, how they combine for a common purpose –, could be a good opportunity to make the act of producing visible and, at the same time, to see certain continuing pitfalls for production in Portugal more clearly.

1. Corneille, *L'Illusion Comique* (Translator's version).

2. See <http://www.arch-srs.com/home>

PASSION

ANNE DE AMÉZAGA

I'd like to begin by saying that theatre is a vocation, not a job. It's a lot of work but, above all, it's a passion. If you want to dedicate your life to the theatre, think carefully first. Although it gives great satisfaction, it also requires considerable sacrifice. You need to be truly tenacious, committed and passionate.

I don't come from a theatre family. My grandmother couldn't even read. But today I have the opportunity of working with one of the most respected French authors and directors. I started working in Paris when I was 18, where I set up a theatre with my colleagues. What I'm going to say next is something that everyone has probably heard but, having reached this age, I think it's important to say it again. Theatre is not the work of just one person. It comes from an artist's drive in the midst of a group. It's not a profession where you're alone: an author, a director, a lighting designer, a wardrobe master – and, of course, all these can be performed by men or women. A company is the history of a group. It's a life commitment with no end. I believe a group's success depends on how long it takes to do things. Therefore, when we do commit ourselves, we must really consider the group's artistic direction.

As I mentioned earlier, I started a theatre in Paris with friends when I was quite young and worked there for 20 years. While that space was running, I started another in Avignon and I think it was there I learnt my profession. It was there I truly became aware of the

ANNE DE AMÉZAGA

ANNE HAS WORKED WITH JOËL POMMERAT SINCE 2000 AND HAS BEEN CO-DIRECTOR OF COMPAGNIE LOUIS BROUILLARD SINCE 2008. SHE PARTICIPATED IN THE CREATION OF THE DIX-HUIT-THÉÂTRE IN 1979 WITH JÉRÔME FRANC AND JEAN MACQUERON. IN 1991, SHE WORKED WITH ALAIN LÉONARD AT THE FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON ON THE AVIGNON PUBLIC OFF GROUP, WHICH AIMED AT BRINGING ARTISTS AND AUDIENCES TOGETHER. IN 1994, SHE WAS INVOLVED IN FOUNDING THE TICKET THÉÂTRE(S) ASSOCIATION AND BETWEEN 1994 AND 2003 SHE WORKED IN PROGRAMMING, COMMUNICATION AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS AT COLIBRI. BETWEEN 1999 AND 2006, ANNE WAS INVOLVED IN PUBLIC RELATIONS, DISSEMINATION AND COORDINATION CONSULTANCY FOR VARIOUS ARTISTS AND ASSOCIATIONS. IN 2007, SHE CO-FOUNDED THE LÍNEA DIRECTA PROJECT WITH THE AIM OF LINKING THE BUENOS AIRES' INDEPENDENT THEATRE CIRCUIT TO EUROPEAN NETWORKS. SHE HAS ALSO WORKED WITH THE DIRECTOR, DIDIER RUIZ AT THE COMPAGNIE DES HOMMES, DEALING WITH THE DISSEMINATION AND PUBLICISING OF SHOWS, AND DEVELOPING THE GROUP. IN 2014, SHE RECEIVED THE TITLE OF CHEVALIER DES ARTS ET DES LETTRES FROM THE MINISTER OF CULTURE AURÉLIE FILIPPETTI.

immensity of the work and the possibility of creating a network. For five years, I worked in Paris and Avignon. I eventually decided to leave the theatre in Paris, however, because I thought the artistic team and I no longer shared the same spirit. What I wanted was to promote contemporary theatre and the young artists who were embarking on new adventures. That's why I went to Avignon with a colleague, to a theatre where we put a programme together that welcomed young people. I travelled the whole world watching shows... You also have to be healthy and always in shape, let's say, because there are no fixed hours. It's not a question of 35 hours a week... we're always working. That's why we must love this work.

I'm not the oldest member of Joël Pommerat's company. I've been working with him for 17 years. There are people who've been working in the company since it began, and most have been in it for 10 or 15 years. I believe we're guided by the notion of time. We can't be like a butterfly fluttering from one project to another. That's why when we commit, we've got to know why we're doing it. It can be for various reasons, but whatever one it is, we must be aware that we're going to be part of a group that's come together with a certain purpose: to run a theatre, to create a company or a show. Joël Pommerat's lighting people, the costume designers and his assistants have all been working with him for a long time. It's the same with the actors. When I started with Joël, I didn't do what I do today, of course. He called me because he knew that my passion was to attract audiences to the shows that I liked. This, in fact, went beyond my actual work. Joël knew that I had a passion for mobilising audiences and, at the time, only a few people were attending the company's shows. He asked me if I would like to be part of a mission to develop the company. I said yes. He then invited me to be his agent and represent him regarding his copyrights. I explained that I'd never done anything like it, and he replied that it didn't matter. Later, he asked me to do dissemination and publicity, which I also agreed to do. Well, all this is just to tell you that in the theatre you can't recruit through the CV. We recruit people, temperaments, people who have fibre, who have that special something – and this is seen in the look, the behaviour; not through past experience. My experience is worth nothing except to me. Peter Brook used to say that when an actor left his company, it was as if a library had burned down. Everything learnt from that actor, all the grammar, all the writing, all that had been built together was lost and you had to start again with another person. This also has something to do with the notion of time. We shouldn't rush.

I also did a lot of contemporary dance work and saw many choreographers emerge in the 80s. By their second show, they were already well known: they were terrified, they thought they were going to be the new Pina Bausch, the new whoever. By their third show, they were so under pressure, forced to succeed, that they just couldn't stand it. It's important to think about an artist or company's direction. Joël Pommerat's company, for example, has already done more than 25 shows: some, of course, better than others. We need to know how to deal with this too: failure, or relative success, is equally important. You can't always be on top. You have to be demanding with yourself and your team, both on the artistic side and in the search for funding. But the key, if anything is certain, is that you really have to know what the project is. You have to know what you want to do. Even if it changes, even if we question it later on... That is also part of what theatre is. At the outset, the artist has to have a certain vision of what they want to do, what they want to show. It's vital you're driven by a need. The theatre must be a necessity and not just a product that sells like any other. It's a necessity. There are words, a message and a situation that is shared with the audience.

It's also very important to know the theatre and festival networks, not just in our countries but throughout Europe. When we decide to export our shows, whether on French territory or not, we have to pay attention to whom we're going to make contact with. There's no point wasting time sending files, dossiers or emails that will never be read. What's needed is to establish, little by little, a network of genuine relationships. We came to Portugal because I was fortunate to meet Joaquim Benite at the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, where he saw Joël Pommerat's *Cercles/Fictions*¹ and invited us to perform the show at the National Theatre. Meeting this man was decisive. I barely knew Portugal but, since then, I have come here seven or eight times. I love this country and would really like to do even more things here. If I hadn't met Joaquim and Rodrigo Francisco in Bouffes du Nord, I'd never have come here. I don't sell shows. I'm someone who's patiently built up a network of relationships in both France and abroad. Because this is what's interesting: our profession allows us to meet people; to give something and get something back. We bring a performance and they give us the chance to show it to an audience. It's an exchange, a meeting.

As for Joël Pommerat, he's an author and director. He writes and directs at the same time. In the morning, he writes; and in the afternoon, he works with actors, designers, lighting people, sound

people... His last show took eight months to prepare. To begin with, ateliers, workshops and masterclasses were held with non-company actors. He experimented with and, at the same time, trained these young actors. He then worked with the company in four different theatres for six months. Every time we move, it's like the circus: we take the material with us. He decided not to run a theatre. He's been invited to do it several times, but prefers to create and circulate.

The production of each new show is worked out by me, by Joël, and by the administrator, with another young woman who works with us on production. We begin by calculating how much it's going to cost and come up with, for example, 100.000 euros. How am I going to raise these 100.000 euros? The word production is often used and summons up the image of the film producer, cigar in mouth, who has lots of money. I have no fortune. I have a normal life, but I know how to get financing. So I talk to theatres. If I'm going to do that, I need to be motivated about the project. Joël has to motivate me and I have to motivate our partners. We've been able to create a great support network, which includes of theatre and festival directors that enjoy our shows and are happy to put them on. That's the secret. A theatre network (today we talk about the Internet) is made up of people, not walls. Clearly these people belong to theatres but, one day, they leave one theatre and go to another. It's these people, however, we'll carry on talking to. What's important is sharing experiences. How many times, at the end of a show, does the director of a theatre come up and say, "When you do your next show, let me know because I want to get involved." When that happens, half my job is done. It's so much better to discuss things directly with people than to write emails or send dossiers.

1. *Cercles/Fictions* was performed on 14th-16th July 2011 at the Teatro Nacional D. Maria II, as part of the 28th Festival de Almada.

SHARING THE STAGE

CARLA RUIZ

My experience began at the moment I wanted to go to the theatre and be an actress. I ended up discovering another aspect that enchanted me: embracing and helping these beings who, in a very generous, dedicated and committed way, want to bring ideas and thoughts to the audience, to their own people and to the community. So I went into production.

The experience I've had, all of it empirical, has come about through festivals which were essentially put together to host international shows, as well as some national ones. Unlike the work that Anne does today, which is to establish links and connections, in these festivals there was a programmer who established these relationships to be able to do their programming, their project, and to be able to share it also with sponsors. This was the path that I finally found myself on, and where I found people who took me to a group of associations with yet other people with different ideas of different genres. I stopped at Belém Cultural Centre (CCB), where there was a team of programmers from the theatre, various types of music – classical, jazz, etc. – dance and the circus. In terms of production, this represented the beginning of a project that needed a direction. Even the programmers at that time asked themselves how to go about this, how to attract an audience.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the CCB was not what we know today. There was a public firmly against the idea. The message conveyed to us had to do with the mission that the institution had

CARLA RUIZ

CARLA TRAINED AT IFICT AND THEN JOINED THE FESTIVALS DE OUTONO DE LISBOA TEAM, WITH ADOLFO GUTKIN AS ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, WHERE SHE TOOK ON VARIOUS RESPONSIBILITIES UNTIL 1993. SHE WAS PART OF THE PRODUCTION TEAM FOR THE FIRST ESTÁDIO 1º DE MAIO FESTIVAL OF HUMOUR. IN THESE FESTIVALS, SHE WORKED WITH A DIVERSE GROUP OF THEATRE, CIRCUS, DANCE AND MUSIC COMPANIES AND ARTISTS, INCLUDING ELS COMEDIANTS, LA FURA DELS BAUS, LA CUADRA DE SEVILLA, SEMOLA TEATRE, MUMMENSCHANZ, JÉRÔME DESCHAMPS, MACHA MAKEÏEFF, TA FANTASTIKA & THE PANOPTIKUM, PAVEL MAREK, EL TRICICLE, MARCEL MARCEAU AND ELS PLASTICIENS VOLANTS. IN 1993, CARLA JOINED THE CENTRO CULTURAL DE BELÉM TEAM, WHERE SHE WAS PRODUCTION DIRECTOR BETWEEN 2002 AND 2010. IN 2011, SHE MOVED TO THE TEATRO NACIONAL D. MARIA II, WHERE SHE CURRENTLY WORKS AS PRODUCTION DIRECTOR. SHE HAS ATTENDED COURSES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AT UNIVERSIDADE LUSÍADA, AND CULTURAL AND CREATIVE MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AT ISCTE.

to fulfil. Our dedication and the fact that we were part of a growing project made that mission passionate and binding. It ended up getting into our blood. We ultimately lived and breathed all the ideas and wanted to make that project bigger than it already was. The CCB was, at the time, something daring, capable of accommodating artists and creators who, up until then, hadn't been given a space where their work could be shown on a national scale.

It was an immense challenge to work with so many sorts of people from such diverse fields: theatre, music, the circus etc. And this brought different ways of thinking to the production, including pondering what production actually is. What is outside production? What is production in a room? Moreover, what is the work of a theatre creator who comes from a smaller, more specific company with a history, who comes to this institution for the first time and has yet to finalise their ideas? We have to make ourselves available to try to find, or help them find, a direction for what they want to show.

My experience at the CCB was very extensive, involving various areas and artists, and I fell in love. When I left and went to the TNDMII, I moved on to something much more specific. I returned to my origins: the theatre. I was now working with a director, an artistic director, in a place entirely dedicated to a single field, a super-structure of creation, endowed with multiple areas: from the workshop, where the set is built, to the sewing studio. The existence of all these components reminds me how absolutely necessary it is to understand creativity. How does the process work? What does it require? What are the various steps, and where do you start? You need a detailed discussion with the director about their ideas, after which things begin to take shape. What's going to be needed? Questions of space, text, getting rights or not... basically, you discover your needs based on what an artistic director or a director thinks. This 'stage' is shared by the director, the artistic director, the production manager and, of course, people from other areas. This dialogue has no time limit. It is a period of conversation, following ideas, sharing, going out for a coffee, having a snack and getting back to the discussion table to talk and work. And sometimes it's at night, when we're alone, that we begin to see how to respond to a creator's ideas.

ART AND WORK

LUIS MIGUEL CINTRA

There are so many things that could be said about this subject that I really have no idea where to begin... Is there a union for those working in performance? [Silence] Is there or isn't there?

Maria João Brilhante: There is.

Luis Miguel Cintra: I stopped being a member right at the start because as I was the director of a company and therefore an employer, the union could not defend me as a worker at the same time. That was a lie. I should have been in the union because I was mostly a worker although, in legal terms, I was an employer of other people. But the question was put to me very clearly: do we think of theatre as an art or as a job? We think of it as both... We work like other workers and we work artistically. There are, however, differences between the groups that are needed to put on a show. Are there differences between people? Yes. There are those who are only workers, there are those who are worker-artists and there are those who are only artists. This makes the situation very complex. In my case, being a theatre worker does not interest me at all. I'm only interested in being an artist. That's why I began my life in solitude and return to another solitude. All my life, I've been looking for other people to be my partners. Looking for people to be my partners; but where? Trying to find other co-workers to be artists and work with me? Finding people in the audience who could be my accomplices in what I wanted to do? This also raises other questions: is a company one person's

LUIS MIGUEL CINTRA

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artistic project, is it a group of people, or is it a workplace where different artistic projects can be included? They are completely different things. For example, national theatres do not have their own artistic project. They have a business project, or a production project, but not an artistic one. They include fragments of artistic projects within a production project. The issue is always very confusing.

For my generation, it was much easier to find companions in the audience because, right from the start, we were offering cultural resistance. The fact that our theatre was going against the political situation, dreaming of a different situation – and people in the audience were in the same situation – soon created a solidarity that went beyond employer and employee rules and the rules of a job where you simply got paid. The companies that began to emerge aimed to have no boss. One of the main reasons for this was that: “We are artists, we want to do the theatre we like. We must have the freedom to choose the plays we want and the freedom to produce them as we want, with the hours of rehearsals we need to have, with or without a set.” It all depends on the members of each group. The independent theatre companies were practically all cooperatives, against the idea of doing theatre where they were employed by others, as some already were. There was always an entrepreneur who paid them and forced them to perform plays they didn’t like. It was during this period that I arranged many accomplices: as many from the audience as from the theatre. There were sometimes massive differences within this group. There was no unity of age, culture or taste: nothing. It’s enough to think that members of the first Cornucópia group included Jorge Silva Melo who – yes, practically thought the same thing as me – had been at high school and university with me; and we were the two directors of the company. There was also Glicínia Quartin, considered one of the best actresses in Portuguese theatre; and a less well-known actress, called Dalila Rocha, who had been a star in a very important group: António Pedro’s Teatro Experimental do Porto. Other members were Carlos Fernando who, though people have forgotten, came to be a director; and Filipe La Féria, who knew like nobody the ways and means of the professional theatre and decided to gamble on a project by new people who were to become friends. There was also Luís Lima Barreto, who came from university theatre; and Raquel Maria, who was a very talented actress we had seen performing in an amateur company in Barreiro.

We’re always aware of the difference between production and the way people view the work. We did not want to be a cooperative because that would necessarily lead to everyone having equal voting

rights, which would mean that the way the company was organized did not correspond to the reality of the human relationships within it. In the background, there was an artistic project by two people (who, by the way, were the youngest in the company and had no professional experience). There was a generous commitment from other people. There was great sense of affection and solidarity in the company in those early years. It was funny because, after 25th April, this also led to a breakup. Dalila Rocha said: "You are going to do things linked to extreme left-wing theatre. I'm in the Communist Party, so I shouldn't stay in the company." Filipe La Féria said: "You're going to do political theatre. That's not what interests me, I like spectacle, entertainment. We're still friends, but I'm going to do my own work." The group became smaller, but later other people wanted to join our project for political reasons but of different kind. This was the case, for example, with Gina Santos, who had been a leading figure in the National Theatre and Ribeirinho's Teatro Nacional Popular, which was a right-wing company, but who came to work with us. There was also Lia Gama, who was very involved in commercial shows but chose to do theatre of a different kind. We went through a period, which was fundamental for us, in which we could freely express the very nature of the company. We attracted an amazing audience that went to the theatre out of a feeling of fellowship with the actors. We made this banner: "We are workers like you who are sitting in the audience. You are working in other fields, remodelling your work committees, looking for educational reforms, trying to produce different cinema. We do theatre, so we're all comrades and you come to see our work and discuss it." And we would have a discussion every night after the show, so people could say what they thought. This created a mythical period in our minds, a period of happiness; in which, in fact, there were extraordinary examples of communication among people in a special environment. A very high standard was created in terms of what working as an artist meant. The idea of working as if it were a job had not yet come into the independent theatre.

When, however, the MFA (the Armed Forces Movement) was in power, it tried to structure theatrical activity. People were invited to give their opinion on what was happening and this led to a major debate, when mainly through the influence of the Communist Party, there was an attempt to have a State-structured theatre, without recognising the importance of independent theatre. What we proposed was that independent theatre should be nationalised and that there

should be no State theatre¹. The option we were challenging would, we felt, set a pattern for people's behaviour and relationships ahead of creative needs. And repertoire. Because it proposed theatre made in the likeness of the national theatres of the socialist countries, in which there was a State repertoire in step with the Government's ideology, and which was organised hierarchically rather than in terms of creativity. Our proposal did not win. And when the National Theatre was refounded, there was exactly that brutal difference. It's interesting that one of the people called on to run the new National Theatre was Ribeirinho, a great director, a great actor and a wonderful theatre technician, but who had been at the service of right-wing ideology before 25th April. The other was Costa Ferreira who, in contrast, was a non-militant left-wing author but linked to the Communist Party. A strange union was, therefore, made between the right and the Portuguese Communist Party, in an attempt to create an employing institution that would control theatrical activity. This made many people angry, because it had consequences for the independent groups that had begun to work. The fear of creating, for example, a directors' association comes from this time. I am still afraid of discussing these matters with João Mota, João Lourenço and João Brites. Although, basically, we consider ourselves great friends and there is great solidarity among us, in the name of this past. It's like we're brothers, in a way. But we are afraid to touch this hot spot of money and employing people.

I have always followed the reverse, both from personal nature as well as because I had the freedom to be an artist in the middle of all this. I had total freedom to do the plays I wanted, arguing a lot with Jorge. It was, deep down, as if we were the masters of a group of helpers and collaborators, more like what would have happened with the former *métiers* of medieval societies, especially before the division industrialisation made between workers and company. I was always very privileged in this respect, always being supported probably because people believed in the project. There was, not by effort but by nature (Jorge's and mine), a fraternal and even grateful relationship with people who had previous experience. We did what we wanted and I lived my whole life never caring about money and preferring the happiness of meeting other people. I was lucky – and now I know it's not as lucky as that – not to have a family, not to have children, to have virtually no personal expenses and have a family inheritance. I was, therefore, in a completely different situation from others. I began to be sensitive, as the restructuring of Portuguese society took place, to the difficulties of some of those who,

until then, I had considered artists (and who were) but who began to say: "I have to eat." And that was the problem: the enemy came to be the people who obliged us – the associations or society – to become the bosses of those people we love most and want to be companions to. This was fatal for the company, but we still held on because there was already a lot of tradition, a long history of people who had worked together and there was tremendous confidence in what we were doing. The company was able to maintain a degree of artistic coherence that defended it through its reputation, the esteem of the public and the prestige that it had. This dichotomy had been growing over the years and there came the time when we began to do theatre for the subsidies. This was absolutely fatal. I mean, before we did the programming, we saw what money we might have. With this money, what would you do? And I behaved very badly, I confess, because I made the meetings false. I pretended I would let myself be guided by these accounts that were made based on the estimate of what the subsidy might be. Ultimately, however, I always did what I had wanted, even if I had to earn less. I always subverted the salary negotiation. Like this:

- How many actors do you need to do the play?
- We need 10.
- Who are they then? Have you already talked to people?
- Actually they're not 10, they're 12. But I'm still missing one. I need 13.

It turned out like that, and then no one had the courage to turn back. There ended up being 13, even if they earned a little less. Those longest in the company, who had the right to earn more under a normal system, were the ones who accepted this. It was only when I was doing co-productions that I, for example, had a wage as the director and another as an actor. We multiplied the tasks of each person and created internal rules, difficult to follow, but that created solidarity among us. To sum up, there were different phases (and the audience also changed a lot), and a time came when the discrepancy between the running of the company and State support became enormous. We also came to the conclusion that the State did not seem to be willing to finance an artwork. The State was only willing to pay for other reasons – for creating a cultural activity, for example, which is a completely different thing. The market is virtually

non-existent; box office receipts yield almost nothing; the hypothetical sponsors talked about as a way to get more money didn't exist, because they didn't see how what we did would give the city a cultural life. So this dichotomy and separation became clear.

We were faithful to an activity with artistic criteria, even if we didn't make much money. What did we do? By using our imagination, we saved the money we would need from other situations. For example, a co-production that we proposed to a State theatre, or that was proposed to us. We accepted this, knowing that we would save a part of that money to make sets or use for other things, sacrificing people's wages and well-being. I never asked myself the question, "How much do you need to do this show?" "This show has to be done, so if you can't do it with gold, you do it with plastic." And so we carried on, adapting the style of our sets, wardrobe, rehearsal times, to our new situation. In the last four years, the idea of the State imposing a market philosophy on attributing subsidies has become so blatantly clear that those given to Teatro da Cornucópia have been cut almost to half that attributed in the previous cycle. What happened in our case, where we hadn't given up doing theatre that, in terms of attracting an audience, was competing with the national theatres? Well, we had a group of employees, who were not really involved in the artistic project, but who were needed in a theatre (like the people opening the door, working in the office, doing the cleaning, looking after the wardrobe) and who had their permanent duties and their salaries guaranteed. There was no money left to risk on building shows. This is the situation the company found itself in. "But is that how you ended up?", you may ask. No. The company continued with a similar ideal of how to work and live. The actors and workers, however, didn't. Because people had got used to having a salary. Neither did the audience, who accepted a market logic. The audience prefers, for example, to have a comfortable auditorium, with the right kind of seating, a schedule announced in good time, etc., things given to them by venues completely integrated in the market logic, such as the CCB, Culturgest, the Nationals, etc.

The company has ceased to exist and I'm still not really over it. I had a hard time and still do. And so I go back to my initial solitude. And what's happening to me now? Sorry to be talking about me, but I think it's a relatively exemplary case. At São Luiz, they decided to name their main auditorium after me, but they can't find the means to finance a show that I want to do. It's a complete contradiction. In contrast to this, a student once came to interview me for an assignment he was doing and we ended up talking for two hours.

He was so taken by what I said, that we agreed to meet again. A few years pass and this student – Levi Martins – appears and tells me that he’s decided to start a group in Montijo.

- In Montijo? What audience will you get in Montijo?

- It doesn’t matter. In Montijo, I’ve got the chance to do it.

- Who with?

- With my wife and some friends.

And I thought that sounded familiar. I thought he would be a great person to partner on a new adventure. As set design is now completely impossible and I couldn’t keep the Teatro do Bairro Alto, just as at the beginning of Cornucópia we do not have scenographer. It would be very difficult for Cristina [Reis] to give up everything she has been doing to reduce herself to working in the reduced conditions proposed. I will do without scenographer, faithful to my own heart and with whoever I want, no matter what happens. But there is money. There’s a lot of money outside Lisbon and Porto. There are cultural centres, theatres, various places used to receiving shows. It was always very difficult for Cornucópia to tour because, as in everything, it’s highly predictable: very little time to set up, practically no rehearsals in the space, the need for very transportable sets, few technicians, and so on. There is money, however, for this. It is all decided in the abstract, without paying attention to what is actually being done. As I have a reputation for never having taken Cornucópia anywhere outside Lisbon, because the company’s performances were never adapted to the production conditions, never adapted to the touring model and the size expected, there were people who began to say: “but how can I say no, given that we’ve never had Cornucópia here.”

It has been proved that people who have to programme face a contradiction that either they themselves try to solve, or do not know exists. They like our shows – or my shows, since there is no Cornucópia anymore – but they have no idea what they entail. In this case, that implies almost nothing. The people who embarked on the project were willing, and I think it’s interesting to tell you about their commitment: “As long as we don’t have to pay to act, we’ll risk it.” They only ask, as a guarantee, that their transport, accommodation and meals are paid for. If we get anything else, so much the

better, we'll divide it by all. But this is really bad. I'll only do it once. If it becomes a system, people are going to be exploited and I think there is no reason for it. People give everything to do this – some more than others, because it's not prevented anyone from accepting other jobs where they are more employees. They continue to work and, in the intervals between two plays, as they are hired for the job, if the project is skilfully put together, I think one can put it on in collaboration with bodies that have the money to take on people and give them minimum working conditions at least².

I think the current struggle should be about having solidarity with the audience, who understand what is at stake: revealing the production conditions, the difficulties, to the actual audience in order to make them also accomplices in an alternative to what was expected. I have Levi there who helps me, and with whom the point of contact is not even necessarily one of artistic taste, but rather a matter of attitude towards one's own work. And I think that's how we get there. I've absolutely no wish to hear it said that: "This is a typical Luis Miguel Cintra show." "He has a brand, a brand image." I've never wanted a brand image, except as an approach I try faithfully to stick to from the beginning and that leads me to great solitude. Which certainly proves that there is something in the evolution of the world that is very foreign to me.

Perhaps I wasn't clear at first. My anger at the union is because of this: if there is a performers' union, it's therefore a union of artistic workers. And yet, in the collective bargaining agreement and the establishment of the different professions, there were clauses that were contrary to the existence of companies with certain artistic needs that are difficult to establish in the market. If it were to follow the collective bargaining agreement, there would have to be a prompt in every company, a director's assistant, a stage manager etc. If companies had all these jobs, they would cease to exist. The collective bargaining agreement only served television and the National Theatre. They were the only two places it worked for. And the union felt that it should not discuss this matter; that it was beyond its powers. But shouldn't we argue why? It should have taken a stand, for example, over State intervention. My anger was because of these things.

1. In a document dated 26th May 1975, an important group of people and companies argued, in opposition to a draft Theatre Act that was being discussed: "That professional theatrical

activity should become a public service; and integrated within the public sector. In order for this to take place, all the theatrical spaces and all the work instruments existing in those spaces should be nationalised.” (Document available in the appendix of Levi Martins’ dissertation: http://repositorio.ul.pt/bitstream/10451/18340/1/ulfl175314_tm.pdf – *Estética e Ideologia no Teatro Português*)

2. *Um D. João Português* was put together over a year in four places: Montijo, Setúbal, Viseu and Guimarães, in a co-production between the Companhia Mascarenhas-Martins, Teatro Viriato and the Centro Cultural Vila Flor. There was a two week artistic residence in each place with rehearsals open to the public and performances of the acts prepared there. The full version of the show returned to each venue, in reverse order, on a tour that had its final performance in Almada, at the Teatro Municipal Joaquim Benite. Although the initial premise was that there could only be funding to pay for travel, accommodation and meals, it was possible to guarantee (limited) remuneration for all those involved in the project. In addition to the co-productions with the Teatro Viriato and the Centro Cultural Vila Flor, *Um D. João Português* benefited from specific support from the DGArtes. The actual touring was supported by the Fundação GDA, and there was financial and logistic support from the Montijo and Setúbal Municipal Councils, the local councils of Montijo and Afonsoeiro, as well as spaces being made available by the University of Lisbon, the Teatro Nacional de S. Carlos and APSS – Porto de Setúbal (The Port of Setúbal).

CHANGING THE PARADIGM

DEBATE FOLLOWING THE INITIAL TALKS

Maria João Brilhante: I don't know if you felt the same as I did, but there were many points that coincided: the question of commitment, of being faithful to your principles and ideas, the question of the constraint that has increased and become more visible, at least in Portugal, between production conditions and the projects' artistic dimensions – which are embraced not only by creative artists, but by all those working with them. There is also the issue of the availability to work on the part of those who create and those who accompany the process. I think these aspects may be the most obvious and consensual. What Levi and I think about what we're proposing to you is this: we are going through a moment – and perhaps it is not by chance that it coincides a little with the end of Cornucópia and the very difficult situations that the companies that emerged after 25th April have gone through or are going through – in which to create, and in which the artistic dimension, being an artist, is no longer understood in the same way as in the past. Why is it that producing, I mean, acts of production, artistic gestures, artistic creations, has become so important today? A huge responsibility has now fallen on production. The freedom of the artist, the freedom of creation, and the time artists need to do their work are not understood in the same way. Suddenly, although production continues to some extent invisible, it has taken on an increasingly important role within theatres. And production people are apparently indispensable if a group wants, despite all the difficulties, to do that show and actually manage to do it. Of course, this has to do with the fact that the associations, the companies, have got bigger. It is also because audiences have changed, and now go to the theatre with different expectations: they don't just want comfort but to be presented with a product. These are some of the issues that have made it so vital for us to talk about the relationship between creation and production.

Luis Miguel Cintra: Basically, this will give rise to a political problem that has to do with how the world evolves. There is a link, for example, with teaching. According to the current education system,

people are trained to be workers. The teaching of the arts has practically ceased to exist. It's all utilitarian. Children are trained to cut out any originality.

Maria João Brilhante: Artistic sensibility...

Luis Miguel Cintra: Any additional taste is useless. The spirit of play and the playfulness of life has been completely abolished. Knowledge of syntax has been reduced to utilitarian phrases. The way of thinking now corresponds to the functioning of computers: Yes, No, Delete. Our audiences have been largely trained in this way – and are also trained not to waste time, because “you have to go to bed early”, “can't do anything that's a health risk”, “you have to go to the gym”, “you have to have a month's holiday with your friends on the beach.” All behaviour is so pre-set, as opposed to a spirit of creativity, that audiences have also digested the model. If you want to put on a longer show nowadays, you really have to work to produce a special event, etc. All this conformity is contrary to artistic activity, because, despite everything, even companies that are based on a hierarchy are obliged to perform an artistic activity. They aren't doing other products, they're doing theatre. But the audience does not allow them, even a little, to have unexpected dimensions in the work: to deviate from the norm, to finish after the last bus has left... But these are things that people have been fighting for their whole lives: to have an exceptional moment. My hope is that the moment of going to a show is an exceptional moment in people's lives, that whatever happened in the venue is remembered as a unique experience. But everything is pre-set to the contrary. This ends up being a gigantic limitation of freedom, which many people recognise, in society as a whole, but which others fail to recognise because the power of money is stronger and, in spite of everything, it's pleasant to be comfortable. It turns out to be a political issue. And as for politics, people also no longer believe in the existing electoral system. They continue to vote, nonetheless, because they don't think they can change it. But someday it'll have to change. If it's not us, it's important that others do so a few more years down the line. We all live our lives believing that the people who govern us don't represent us and to continue voting for them is something that makes absolutely no sense. So why are they there? For whom? It's enough to think just a little. But as thinking is so dramatic, so difficult, people give up doing so.

I'd like to say something else. People have accused me of always talking about death. And they probably interpret it this way:

“he’s always talking about death because he is sick.” But my motives are not so private. The insistence on death comes from considering that the life of societies is currently set up against the idea of death. No one remembers that one day he will die. And the proof of this is that elderly people’s lives are written off. From the moment they retire, nobody wants to know about them and it’d be better if they didn’t exist. People don’t want you to talk about death. Now, I believe thinking about death is the only way to get a notion of how one can enjoy living in a society like this. Realising that death is individual. The course of life is not interrupted by individual deaths. In this relative valuation of each person’s life, made through getting used to the idea of death, a person can experience some kind of happiness. But politics never takes things all the way.

Célia Caeiro: One of the things I’ve been thinking about most is how to do long runs in theatre: putting on 30, 40, 50, 90 performances. This type of theatre, based on repetition, seems to have come to an end, and this is something that increasingly frightens me.

We – and when I say we, I mean Teatro Aberto, João Lourenço, Vera San Payo de Lemos, Marta Dias, Melim Teixeira and Francisco Pestana... – have had a lot of debates about the future. We are worried about where we are and where we’re going. How are we going to do theatre today, in this society and in this framework, where it seems that people come together to put on only three performances? This is something that frightens us so much, because it seems that theatre runs are over. This can’t happen, because it’d mean the very essence of theatre is over. I’m now going to be a little provocative, particularly to Carla [Ruiz]. The Teatro Nacional D. Maria II (TNDMII) has now done two, three performances of a show. What kind of programming is this that allows TNDMII to only present nine-day runs? I would also like to ask Anne: how many performances of each of your productions do you have? For me, doing fewer than 30 performances makes no sense – neither in terms of accounts nor for audiences. This is because if there’s one thing that guides my work, and that of Teatro Aberto, it is that we do shows for people. And if we do not do a certain number of performances, we will not reach people. How do you communicate? How is the effort justified? Because every show is almost a child. There can be nine months of preparation. Every show is a creation, a desire, but also a pain, a pleasurable pain. We often suffer because we really want to create and then present what we’ve created to an audience. And we take it very seriously. To see that effort fade away in three days, I feel it as wasted

suffering. I wonder if these new creators really feel the weight of communicating something to people. What are you communicating in three days?

CÉLIA CAEIRO

CÉLIA HOLDS A DEGREE IN COMMUNICATION SCIENCES FROM UNIVERSIDADE NOVA DE LISBOA AND A MASTER'S DEGREE IN COMMUNICATION AND CULTURAL MANAGEMENT FROM UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA. SHE MADE HER DEBUT WITH THE DIRECTOR PAULO FILIPE IN 2001, WHERE SHE WAS AN ASSISTANT IN THE DIRECTION AND PRODUCTION OF *ABAIXO DA CINTURA*. SHE BEGAN WORKING WITH TEATRO ABERTO IN 2002, ON THE PIECE *RASTOS*, ALSO DIRECTED BY PAULO FILIPE. IN THE SAME YEAR, SHE COLLABORATED WITH NPB IN SETTING UP THE PRODUCTION COMPANY, OFICINACTORES' ESCOLA DE ACTORES (ACTORS' SCHOOL). IN 2003, SHE JOINED L'AGENCE – MODELS AND PRODUCTION AGENCY, WITH THE AIM OF CREATING AND COORDINATING A DEPARTMENT AND ACTORS' AGENCY, L'AGENCE TALENTS, A PROJECT SHE WORKED ON UNTIL 2006. 2003 ALSO SAW HER WORKING ON THE OPERA, *LE VIN HERBÉ*, DIRECTED BY LUIS MIGUEL CINTRA AND, IN 2004, SHE COLLABORATED ON THE SHOW *A FORMA DAS COISAS*, DIRECTED BY JOÃO LOURENÇO. IN 2006, SHE JOINED SCRIPTMAKERS, WHERE, UNTIL 2008, SHE WORKED IN MARKETING, COMMUNICATION, ACCOUNTING AND MANAGEMENT. IN 2008, SHE RETURNED TO TEATRO ABERTO, FIRST FOR MARKETING AND LATER WORKING ON PRODUCTION AND THE COOPERATIVE'S ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT. AT PRESENT, SHE WORKS IN PRODUCTION, DIRECTION AND COMMUNICATION.

Anne de Amézaga: At Compagnie Louis Brouillard, we've never thought about a minimum number of performances. What Joël believes, since he does not run any theatre and is the director, author and director of a company, is that the shows should last as long as possible. For him, it makes sense to work simultaneously with the audience, the network, the publicising, the financing, everything. There are bigger and smaller shows from a production point of view, but we've never talked about the minimum number of shows. One aspect is previously thought about, however: the willingness to commit to teams over a lengthy period. He tells the actors that he'd like to work with them for 40 years, producing a new show every year. He told me the same thing; that he'd like to work with me for 40 years. I said, "But I'm getting old", and he said it wasn't a problem. Another important aspect is that Joël

has decided he'd like to have a repertory company, so that shows could keep touring. For example: *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*, which we presented last week in Almada, was created in Brittany in 2004, in the area close to Paris. We put it together for 5.000 euros, which is next to nothing. We earned almost nothing. Joël, however, really wanted to do it and the truth is that it's been performed for 13 years. Why? Because a show only ends when the actors want it to end.

Theatre is difficult. Even when you're known, even when you've performed shows the world over, it's always an effort. That's why I'm going back to what I said at the start: it's an effort that comes from a choice. And when you make a choice in life, personal or professional, you also renounce a series of things. No one made us do this... I, for example, don't even have a contract. Joël Pommerat

himself has no contract with the State to do shows. Still, we do them. Now we can't stop pushing for the State to change our status. Our company is nowadays the equivalent of a National Drama Centre (which corresponds to the status of theatres in a given region that are run by an artist and have the means to produce and buy shows). We don't have a theatre, although we work with several. We only have one small office in the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord. Sometimes I work at home, for example. It's crazy, but it's true. Over the years, we've been touring and creating shows – sometimes we run three or four shows. It's a lot of activity. The small team that is dedicated to publicising and production is too small. The emphasis, from the financial point of view, is made mainly on the artistic component, not the administrative. I, for example, do the work of five people. We have 50 people who work for us. There are actors and technicians; those who work in the administration, in the offices, the assistants, the artistic collaborators: lighting and wardrobe people, for example. We currently perform in many places, to 100.000 spectators a year. In recent years, we've done more than 300 performances a year, almost one a day, and we have minimum State support that corresponds to about 10 percent of our activity plan. As the idea is to create shows and establish a repertoire, we are condemned to tour. If we didn't tour the company would be doomed. It's thanks to the tours that we make enough money to pay those who work in the shows. When I sell a show, I see it guaranteeing the wages of those directly involved in it: the actors, the technicians, etc. But I don't see it making money for me, for the technical directors, press officers. So we have to tour. On the day this doesn't happen, what are we going to do?

A few years ago, we tried to change our status with the State, because although we had the maximum grant that could be attributed to a company without a theatre, we did almost the same kind of work as a National Dramatic Centre. We have the same number of employees and the same amount of activity. After four years of negotiation, we were able to create a new statute that included 44 theatre, dance, puppet and circus companies. It was a great struggle, but since we had good arguments – we had everyday reality on our side – we managed to do it. I believe that in every country, no matter what the political or financial situation, doing theatre is a fight. That is the art of theatre. It's not just reading plays and thinking, "I'm going to stage this because it seems interesting to me." No, it's a matter of necessity.

Carla Ruiz: Answering Célia [Caeiro]: Regarding the current programming, the current artistic project run by Tiago Rodrigues¹, it's effectively brought in another logic. I've known three artistic directors: I began here working with Diogo Infante, who programmed runs of 34, 39 or 44 performances of co-productions and our own shows. Each production was on for five, six or eight weeks. With João Mota, there was a reduction because of circumstances – programming with 650 thousand euros a year was the challenge he was presented with. The previous season had received a million and 150 or 200 thousand euros. This is our current budget allocation. In João's time, the programming could only think in terms of three or four week runs. Nowadays, with Tiago's programming, most of the three to nine day projects have already been presented, already been premiered and are, therefore, ready for touring to the satisfaction of the producer. TNDMII's own productions have three to four week runs, as do co-productions. Brand new shows have three to five week runs.

Célia Caeiro: Tiago Rodrigues has brought a certain lightness to TNDMII. Whether it's interesting or not is open to debate, with everyone having their own opinion. We are all thinkers, and as soon as we stop questioning, we're no longer doing anything here, especially in the theatre. If we do theatre and do not think about our art and what we are doing every day; if we don't give ourselves and are not passionate about what we do; if we don't want to be doing what we do, it's simply not worth it. It's just too difficult not to like it. I think it's not, in fact, just a job. Sometimes I talk to friends from other areas and people think I'm a little crazy for working in the theatre. For example: we started rehearsing a show on 26th December and were asked, "Are you going to work on 26th December?" And I replied, "I've worked on Christmas Day too." Non-theatre people sometimes don't understand our way of life. We work Sundays and holidays. We work when other people don't. Still on the subject of touring: we've been to Teatro Nacional S. João a number of times. When we go there, to open on a Thursday, the set has to arrive on the previous Friday in a TIR truck. You have to close the street and work morning, noon and night. If they don't give us the stage on Monday night, we run the risk of maybe not opening on the Thursday. We don't travel light. We're difficult to transport. It's complicated. We like to do things in a certain way and not cut corners. So we just go to TNSJ. We can't go anywhere because it just doesn't work. We still tried some touring in 2010, but then we needed a TIR. And we couldn't go into a town with a TIR, so we had to move the set into an 8 m truck and another of 5 m.

Just the logistics involved were very complicated.

Carla Ruiz: This is one of the concerns we have in terms of creations and co-productions. One of the first questions we ask is whether or not the show is going to tour. Most of the time, the producer and the creator don't know how to respond: "I'm trying with Guimarães, I'm trying with TNSJ, with Aveiro", but there are never certainties. This is an important premise. What's the set design going to be? If the production is very heavy, it certainly won't go everywhere. Sometimes, it's only at the end of the run that we know that it's going to tour. And suddenly there are a lot of unfeasible aspects.

Luis Miguel Cintra: That's why Teatro da Cornucópia never toured. We preferred to perform than wait for the right production conditions to present in other places.

Carla Ruiz: But often there are also companies that want to tour a show although it wasn't thought of when it was being created. The idea only comes up after creation, at the end.

Luis Miguel Cintra: But the market logic also has the opposite effect, in how it influences creators and the style of the shows themselves. Directors tend to adopt more feasible types of show. They now put together shows that solve the problem. With fewer people, fewer days to set up, etc. Little by little, production problems turn into normalised aesthetic solutions.

[Break]

1. Tiago Rodrigues was appointed artistic director of the TNDMII in 2014. Having held the position between 2015 and 2018, he was reappointed for another three years.

PRODUCTION: AN INVISIBLE ACTIVITY?

Maria João Brilhante: We've put a number of questions to our guests concerning production conditions and creative freedom¹. A short while ago, Luis Miguel was talking about this; of having felt free during a great part of his career, of his dedication to the work in hand, and of current issues to do with spaces, financing, management models that are basically taxes and accounts; and, on the other hand, creativity, invention, time, flexibility, etc. To some of these questions that have already been addressed during the talks in the first part, I've added another, which also seems important: the question of authorship. In other words, what does it mean to produce and what implications do the various forms of production have for the authorship of the show. For this second part, we have invited some artists, directors and producers who have different practices, are in different companies and in different parts of the country, and therefore, will inevitably have different experiences and different things to say.

Álvaro Correia: In the last two or three years, the artistic fabric has changed a lot in Lisbon. I get the feeling there are two contrary movements, although I don't know what they'll lead to. On the one hand, the major institutional theatres in Lisbon, such as Maria Matos and São Luiz; the Rivoli, in Porto and, to a certain extent, recently the TNDMII, function in a very festival-like way. I mean that different things happen every week – regardless of whether there are shows with longer runs. At this moment, the programmer is a highly important figure within the performing arts. On the other hand, groups and small companies have appeared that have a lot of difficulty in presenting their work, because the major institutions have created a voracity or hurricane-like effect, and the mass media practically all go to them. This makes it really tough not only for new companies, but also for more established ones to get a space in which they can become known. It's almost impossible. What matters is what is successful, and what is successful at the moment is what happens at these institutions. There is, therefore, this feeling of voracity. I

don't know whether it's good or bad, but it'll have consequences. The day before yesterday, I happened to go to TNDMII and met João Romão, who was my student – I've been teaching for some time, and there are many generations I've been meeting up again lately.

ÁLVARO CORREIA

ÁLVARO TOOK THE ESTC DIRECTING/ACTORS' TRAINING COURSE AND ANOTHER ACTORS' TRAINING COURSE AT COMUNA. HE HAS A POST-GRADUATION QUALIFICATION IN COMMUNICATION SCIENCES OF THE FCSH OF LISBON. HE WAS ALSO AN ACTOR AT THE COMUNA – TEATRO DE PESQUISA FROM 1989 TO 2015. ÁLVARO HAS ALSO DONE TV SERIES, DUBBING, VOICEOVERS AND CINEMA. AT COMUNA, HE DIRECTED TEXTS BY HAROLD PINTER, LUÍS FONSECA, ABEL NEVES, LARS NÖREN, EDWARD ALBEE, MOLIÈRE, ARNE LYGRE, SAMUEL BECKETT, WALLACE SHAWN, NÖEL COWARD, WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, HENRIK IBSEN AND FALK RICHTER. AT THE CASA CONVENIENTE, HE DIRECTED TEXTS BY BERNARD-MARIE KOLTÈS AND LUÍS FONSECA; AND AT THE TNDMII, TEXTS BY GIL VICENTE, PATRÍCIA PORTELA AND JOANA BÉRTHOLO. HE HAS ACTED IN SHOWS BY MIGUEL LOUREIRO, TIAGO RODRIGUES, MÓNICA CALLE, JORGE ANDRADE, TERESA SOBRAL, JEAN PAUL BUCCHIERI AND MONICA GARNEL. HE IS ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AT ESTC.

João wondered if it makes sense to set up festivals, when theatres have turned into all year round festivals. What would be the point, nowadays, of having a festival² in Lisbon? At the same time, there are associations that believe, unlike previous generations, in the idea of a group, of a company – and there are many: Os Possessos, Teatro da Cidade, SillySeason, Os Pato Bravo, a series of them³. I know these groups because I saw them start up at Escola Superior de Teatro e Cinema (ESTC) and have made some effort to follow their progress. And even some groups that don't have the exposure that these have within the city, but who also trained at ESTC, have set up projects in Castelo Branco, Santarém,

Aveiro, or elsewhere in the country. That also makes me happy because they are doing serious and important work in their own community, although, for lack of exposure, they do not always have a national impact. This is a serious problem that we have.

When I heard Luis Miguel [Cintra] talk of cultural resistance, I thought that there is some kind of resistance here that these young people do not know how to do, because they come up essentially against production problems. Authorship comes from a collective idea, an idea of they themselves making their texts, writing – they are multifaceted. And then they run aground on something very important, which is: how to produce? How to reach people? "I don't want to do only three or four shows, I want to make a career; but how, if I can't do it? I don't have the logistical conditions to keep a show on stage in which I have to make a big investment." We're not talking about companies of two or three people, but groups with six or seven, such as Auéééu, which has nine, or Os Possessos, with about 15 in a show. There are many. There is such a huge investment on the part of these groups that I hope they will resist until they get the right conditions.

At the same time, we are experiencing a moment of impasse in terms of what State support is – we don't yet know what the new competitions will be⁴. The Gulbenkian, at the moment, has simply ceased to support creation – it only has support for internationalisation. However little it was, it's now one less source for these small groups that are beginning to go to for some small incentive. There is GDA, but everyone tries for GDA support⁵. There's less and less available. What's the solution for this?

Célia Caeiro: If they suffer, then they'll succeed. Because if they really suffer, it's because they really want to succeed. If there are production problems, then there are production solutions. Production is about finding solutions. There's a problem, so we go looking for solutions. If they are fighting, if they want it a lot, if they think they've got something really important to say, then they go to Montijo, go looking for spaces where they'll be welcome, or to the Ribeira, to Primeiros Sintomas, where the Teatro da Cidade⁶ is now. I think that when people really want to, they get involved and find solutions. This is what I meant at first.

I have to say that I really like this theme [*Production: an Invisible Activity?*]. Years ago, I wrote something I'd like to share with you: "When spectators come to the theatre to see a show, besides what's seen – the actors, costumes, set and lighting – there's the backstage work, which is invisible, which is the more effective the less it's seen." This is my philosophy of life as a producer. I'm a very energetic person, always full of life and ready to do things, ready to go looking for solutions. But I think there are really important things to discuss, so I was very happy about this meeting: "Finally, there'll be a space where we'll talk about production." It's important that more people become interested in producing. There are few exceptional artists. There are very few people like João Lourenço, Luis Miguel Cintra, João Brites and João Mota who stand out due to their careers and their vision over the years. And these people found a space – now there are new generations, of course – as well as a group which they worked with to do the things they wanted. Identifying yourself with the artist's vision, for me, is at the top of the most important things in a producer. Following the vision of a person you admire and really wanting to do those shows.

I also think it takes a little bit of worldliness to do production. People have to know materials. They have to know people. They have to know how to speak. They have to know how to be. And you must have money. If you don't have money, you can't manage anything.

So, first, you have to have something. You have to have the minimum conditions because you have to fight to maintain your professional activity. This is very important to me. If we all work out of love, we are all amateurs and I don't know what we're doing here. I think people have to be paid for their professionalism. When I go to a hospital, I assume that the doctor is being paid. He studied to be a doctor. I think people should be paid and we should strive to be professionals. Furthermore, I think a good producer must have a good general knowledge of the area they're working in. You can't go into theatre without knowing that you need to adjust the projectors, without knowing that there are different areas: wardrobe, costumes, set, actors. That there have to be those who act, those who direct, a text, work on the text, and so on. And I think a producer must know their place: we're a team and you have to understand your place in the team. This is also very important. Apart from all this, and just to be a little provocative, you need to work for the audience. Theatre is done by humans for other humans. And if there are no humans, there's no theatre. I am the first spectator for all the shows. I sit in the audience because I really like being a member of the audience. I really enjoy watching shows. I'll see shows wherever they are being presented, because I think it's very important for people to like the theatre. If they don't like the theatre, if they don't like seeing shows, what are they doing here? We're working for the audience. But you can't just give the audience what they like. We're thinkers and we're here to think. I believe it's important for all of us who work in the theatre to be spectators. Being part of this public community, and enriching ourselves with each other.

Audience: I'm not linked to the theatre, although I like it very much. I'm more connected to poetry. I connect poetry and music. I'd like to ask you, since you're all involved in production, how do you break down public resistance, how do you create an audience?

Pedro Alves: The best way to create an audience is to procreate. I think it's the only one that really works. I have two children and I've now created a third. Seriously, I'm not joking. When we talk about the audience, what exactly are we talking about? What do we mean by audience? What is the audience? What is this entity that we believe is something fixed, easily identifiable? There are different audiences ranging from our children – I wasn't kidding – to our grandparents, our neighbours, the people we know from nowhere. I've only been doing theatre for 20 years – Luis Miguel has many

more – but in 20 years I still haven't discovered, and I believe I'll die without knowing, how to create an audience without procreating.

Audience: Speaking of the people I work with – I'm talking about Lisbon, and a small circle – I feel there is some resistance and I can't work out how to overcome it.

Miguel Abreu: First of all, it's question of relating... I set up Cassefaz 30 years ago and actually began as a producer due to a show I was doing – as it happens, at Comuna, but it wasn't a Comuna production, it was done by other people – and not a single spectator turned up from Tuesday to Friday. I asked myself: "How can this happen in a city like this?" The play wasn't actually that bad and Comuna had a certain prestige at the time. Due to the lack of audience, I wondered what was lacking in theatrical production at the time. I'm talking about 1987. I started working as an actor in 1982 and my basic background was in the law. Personal history is important because each of us sees the world as we conceptualise it. We think in the same way, but we approach reality from different perspectives. That is why it is very good when we have the privilege of working in teams whose training and social and economic backgrounds are highly diversified. What I felt was that, in fact, there was no communication with the audience. I don't mean communication in the sense of dissemination or publicity. This is something else, something empathic (a word that was not in the lexicon at the time): to be able to put myself in another's shoes. My whole relationship with the theatre came from there. What did the theatre, as a meeting space, give me that other meeting spaces didn't? This relationship also concerns the place itself, or space, in which I find the person I can love. I remember that in the first book I wrote, the *Guia das Artes do Espectáculo*⁷, I quoted an interview by Luis Miguel Cintra with a university theatre magazine, in which he said that there was a period during which Cornucópia had had large audiences because Teatro do Bairro Alto was a space where, in addition to the shows, the people met for union or teachers' meetings. Theatres are spaces that go beyond performance. But spaces in relation to what? To people who mobilise for a cause. Whether it is a more collective and political cause, which is also an individual cause, or a more intimate cause, such as knowing someone who thinks, smells, bites and eats like us.

My parents aren't especially linked to the arts – they're civil servants. Nonetheless, as my mother worked for the State radio, I was in contact with artists from a very early age. What attracted me

to the theatre was not so much going because my parents told me to or suggested I go, but the fact that I enjoyed mixing with different people, outside the box. And this happened, both in Parque Mayer, where I went at the age of 11 or 12 to see revues and my parents would drop me off at the door, for matinées, and then pick me up; as well as when I started going at night, when I was 14 or 15, to Comuna

MIGUEL ABREU

MIGUEL HAS BEEN DEVSING PROJECTS AS AN ACTOR, DIRECTOR, PROGRAMMER AND PRODUCER SINCE 1984, AND HAS ESTABLISHED HIMSELF AS A STOUT DEFENDER OF THE PROFESSION OF CULTURAL PRODUCER. TO DATE, HE HAS BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR 173 PRODUCTIONS. HE HAS STARTED VARIOUS CULTURAL PRODUCTION CENTRES, INCLUDING CASSEFAZ, CENTA AND ACADEMIA DE PRODUTORES CULTURAIS. HE HAS BEEN THE DIRECTOR OF MARIA MATOS TEATRO MUNICIPAL (1999-2004), THEATRE PROGRAMMER FOR BELÉM CULTURAL CENTRE (2000-2004) AND THEATRE PROGRAMMER AND PRODUCTION DIRECTOR OF FARO 2005-NATIONAL CAPITAL OF CULTURE.

IN 2009, HE STARTED THE TODOS FESTIVAL, FOR THE LISBON CITY COUNCIL, WHICH HE HAS BEEN RUNNING SINCE THAT DATE. THE THEATRE AND HERITAGE IS AN AREA THAT HE HAS FOCUSED ON SINCE 1990, PRESENTING VARIOUS SHOWS IN MUSEUM SPACES. HE IS THE AUTHOR OF *GUIA DAS ARTES DO ESPECTÁCULO I E II (GUIDE TO THE PERFORMING ARTS I AND II)* AND *GUIA DAS ARTES VISUAIS E DO ESPECTÁCULO (GUIDE TO THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS)*. HE HAS ALSO TAUGHT PRODUCTION, PROGRAMMING AND CULTURAL ANIMATION AT ESTC, THE SCHOOL OF DANCE, UNIVERSIDADE NOVA DE LISBOA AND ISCTE.

and Cornucópia's first shows. I remember going to Cornucópia a lot, and Luis Miguel Cintra never knew I was there. I saw shows with seven or eight other people in the room, with blankets, but it was also a community. Cornucópia smelled like the old Teatro Aberto. Today's theatres don't smell like that anymore. Like the Maria Vitória's dressing rooms. I'm kidding but, at the same time, speaking very seriously; because these smells, these mysteries, these silences that the theatres had, were things I liked. And, like me, other people liked them too. People looking for a cause that would unite them.

When I started doing theatre, the euphoria of 1974 had already passed. In one sector of the theatre (the independent theatre), we were being highly politicised, on the left and, in another (the commercial theatre), on the right. The theatre, more than po-

liticised, was split into party factions. The shows were at the service of party ideology and objectives. It was either Portuguese revues at Parque Mayer, or it was all "revolution", and the public mobilised for these causes. They affirmed they were to the left or the right by the shows they saw and the venues where they went. There was the 'leftist' revue at the Teatro ABC (but it didn't last long and then went to Adóque, in Martim Moniz). Party politics polarised people but doesn't so much today. But "causes", in my view, have always been the reason why audiences go to the theatre. For example, when I did the *Barbies*⁸, it was for some a kind of revue-style light comedy. For others, however, it was a show where, for the first time, many people from the homosexual community went to watch a play proudly

accompanied by their parents. Anyway, I always try to find things out. What is the people's cause? What worries them? What motivates them? What makes them laugh? What makes them cry? What makes them think and revolt?

I've rarely had a lack of audiences because I think a little bit the other way around. This question of the cause, to think about what's the other's cause, or the spectator's, beyond my own cause or pleasure, has led me to meet the audience. How can I give the other a voice has always been my concern? In fact, when I was a law student, I learned that the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic has several articles on fundamental rights, which are not only political and social rights but also cultural rights, almost ignored. The ordinary citizen does not know that the right to culture is their fundamental right. The State has not sensitized the citizen to this right, so they don't know how to exercise it, they don't feel it as their own: they think it's just for artists. I have never heard anyone talking about it until now, apart from a few teachers at the Law Faculty. Prof. Vasco Pereira da Silva, for example, is an exceptional case and he wrote a book in 2007 called *A Cultura A Que Tenho Direito - Direitos Fundamentais e Cultura*⁹. Within the Portuguese Constitution, there are several articles on fundamental and also subjective rights, regarding creation and enjoyment. In Portugal, the two have been confused, that is to say, enjoyment with creation. The idea persists that the citizen develops by enjoying what the artist decides to create. No one puts it the other way around: where is the artist who wants to relate to the enjoyer? The artist who wants to attract the audience, who is inspired by watching the audience, follows and listens to it. I want the audience to hear me, as long as I listen to the audience first. I'm not sure why I want to do certain shows, but I know they are the result of this dialogue. For me, the creative act is born of the dialogue that I begin with others. My head does not shift from the creative act to the act of production. In the *Guia das Artes do Espectáculo*, I propose the following: think of the artist as half creator, half producer. Because producing means creating. To produce is to create. There is no production without creation, no creation without production. They are one and the same. Then there is executive production, which is something else: how do we operate, where do we get the money, where do we find the means... But for me, if there is no common cause, no audience, it will be more difficult for money to appear (even the subsidies).

This was just to introduce the theme of the cause and responsibility towards the other, which for me is fundamental, with

everything else coming after. This cause can be common to 5.000 people, or 50, or 50.000. It's through the cause that you can evaluate the artistic project's probable impact. In fact, it's in perceiving the dimension of the cause that defines whether the budget needs a greater or smaller subsidy. I've always been afraid to depend exclusively on subsidies, which might distance me from the common causes that interest me. I, for example, have a group that doesn't depend on subsidies at this moment. I feel a certain freedom in this situation. For the last four years, I've not agreed with Portuguese public theatre policies, whether they were PSD's or PS's; even if they came from CDS or BE¹⁰. In other words, from the point of view of theatrical logic, they were all rotten. The economic crisis has led to the reappearance of weaknesses and cronyism in the central State's support system for the theatre. The system is not so distorted now by political-party interests but, I would say, by interests to do with "aesthetic-ideological" taste, which is more dangerous, because in the medium term it atrophies public support for diversity. Personally, I don't trust juries (honest jurors can't always make themselves heard in the collective). I don't trust the Ministry of Culture 'boys', or those from the Directorate-General of the Arts. I don't trust the weakened capacities of the cultural officials. I was more trusting when it was much clearer what was right and left. These radical debates, I've always loved them. Now this weird thing they are atrophying and taking advantage of is a host of new people who, as Anne said, are stars in three days, and after five days they've gone: so dazzled and dizzy with all this. Anyway, because of all the lack of transparency in public competitions, I don't compete. Of course, instead of giving work, as I did in other years¹¹, to 30 people, for example – actors, creators and technicians –, I don't give as much now. Because, and I insist on saying this, I have never lived on subsidies – it's always been so little that it's always served only for the shows and the artists in them – and I, and my group, have always made a living through working for third parties. So when it comes to having a subsidy or not, I'm like Luis Miguel. He said he had an inheritance. I had no inheritance but I've created one. I don't need subsidies to survive. So if I have to, I can tell the State to go for a ride; which is also what I want to be able to say to the market, if need be. I have to find a balance in the rule of law, as my old lessons tell me, and I am concerned about the fundamental rights that are in our Constitution: political, social and cultural rights. No one works for cultural rights. And the State does not make citizens feel – and this should be their major task – that they have the right to culture. The State has a duty

to abstain from my artistic choices, but it also has a duty to stir citizens up, alerting them to their cultural rights, which are based on the diversity of styles, aesthetics and repertoires. That is what the State has rarely done since there has been a Constitution of the Portuguese Republic. For partisan reasons or for reasons of taste. Never. For me, to understand this, to affirm this, is fundamental so as to be able to structure another whole way of thinking.

As for the health... of the producer... it's important. If we're lucky enough to be healthy, we're halfway there. I'm a born optimist. I was born like Obelix, no idea why, it even upsets me. I live by providing the services I do, because that gives me independence. Which is not to say that I'm going to do everything the audience likes, even if they think that's what I'm doing. I do what the audience might like, if the audience's cause is a cause I share. For example: I notice that there is an audience interested in the classic Portuguese authors and that there are no classic Portuguese authors being staged. So I have to make an effort. I can't do plays with 15 actors, I do them with four or five. I don't just 'kind of' do a play these days. For example, I either do a Gil Vicente as it should be done, or as I think it should be done, or I simply don't do it.

Álvaro Correia: You're right when you say repertory theatre is disappearing. It's serious.

Miguel Abreu: How can anyone do a play today with 15 actors? That's something for the National Theatre. But if the National does the same as a municipal theatre, what's the difference between a municipal theatre and a national? What's the difference between a repertory theatre and a laboratory theatre? What's the difference between a theatre group and a company? This is another grey area. Legally, companies do not exist. "Companies" are an aggregate of people who may be within a production structure. I have a limited company, like Teatro da Cornucópia, because I also wanted to be my own boss and the boss of those who worked with me. In my time as a young actor, in the 80s, when the project was going well, it was thanks to the collective. When it didn't run well, it was necessary to assume responsibilities that many fled, with unpaid artists, not paying suppliers, etc. I always said that if there was a loss, I'd pay. Neither the actors nor the people in my team have anything to do with it. You have to earn what I promised to pay you. By the way, I created a payment formula, which I still use today that, strangely, has an extremely cooperative profile. It was the one used in the

pharmaceutical industry: the K formula. I work out all the salaries in Ks: K will give the percentages, but everyone agrees with the system before the money appears. It's well defined, at the outset, that actor X earns 7 K; the director gets 10 K; the copyright is 1 K per session; the producer gets 3 K and Cassefaz gets 5 K, or whatever. That's 55 K. The money that exists, whether it's 100 or 1 million euros, is divided by 55 K. The unit of K is found and multiplies. And everyone is working on a cooperative logic, our company being a joint-stock company and not a cooperative. Basically, each project in the association is a "company" of committed artists, protected and supported by this payment calculation formula, assuming some risks, as if they were in a cooperative. That's why I can get long runs for plays, because the actors, the directors, everyone feels part of the process. And no one asks how much they're going to make at the end of the month. We earn our percentage of the revenue produced. If it's possible to do more shows, the artists try to be available. Of course, no actor can live off only one production. You have to be in two or three. It's how it works for an artist who doesn't want to have their own company, but wants to be part of that project. If there are many production associations that are discovering the audience's causes and motivations, the relational, carnal, possible communication, it's easier when the projects appear, to fit them in these relational lines. It's not about artists going to do this or that because they think there's money there, that's not what I'm saying. It's finding the artist who is on the same wavelength. If there are people who have a common cause and who want to meet, my role as a producer is to bring them together. Because they often don't know each other.

What I realise is that people will often not go to a show because they don't know what it's about. They are ashamed, because they often feel ridiculed and humiliated – I see many artists often humiliating audiences. They feel rejected and don't go. Are they going to pay to be ridiculed? I myself go to some venues today, to see a cool new group, and I feel strange there. I feel out of it and I go. They don't want me there. In fact, I'm not part of their tribe. And I respect this: "I'm not your tribe, be happy." And off I go to find another tribe with which I am happy. In fact... it's just that, it's only happiness we're talking about and the freedom to be happy with whoever you want and how you want. I've never stopped finding resources to do what I wanted to do, as long as I found like-minded people. This is what Luis Miguel Cintra was just saying: it's about people meeting. I came to the theatre to be free, to be what I thought I couldn't be through Law. And I don't feel badly treated.

I feel like I'm having a lot of fun.

Luis Miguel Cintra: What you're saying is right, Miguel, but you're thinking of yourself as a producer. Or rather, an artist-producer. If you had an accountant-producer doing the job you're describing, instead of yourself, the *démarches* would probably be the same, but you'd come to a different conclusion: the meeting is between the wallet and the ticket office.

Miguel Abreu: That's why I argue that every artist must be a producer as well. Sometimes artists come up to me and ask, "Do you know anyone who can produce my show?" "Produce your show? What do you mean?"

Luis Miguel Cintra: What is production? You've got to put the show on.

Miguel Abreu: One thing is executive production. Production-creation is another thing. There's no better producer of your own work than you.

Luis Miguel Cintra: Of course, because I'm interested in what's being done.

Miguel Abreu: There's no better producer than the creator. Creators now have to realise that they don't exist in some galaxy far, far away and that everything is due to them. Their worth lies in what they can achieve. And getting resources is, first of all, being able to organise yourself according to your capacity to talk to others.

Isabel Craveiro: That's exactly why the cause is so important...

The company I come from will be 25 years old in 2019, but we've only been in a theatre since 2008. Having a space made us think deeply about our audience, our mission and the dimension of the project. The means of production we have today is completely contrary to the existence of companies. What you want are associations that don't spend money, are highly flexible, dynamic and that do two shows in Guimarães, five in Porto, one in Aveiro, etc. Let them tour. This logic inhibits, is absolutely against, the development of a regular relationship with an audience that both spectators and artists need. We need this genuine and true meeting we're talking about, so that we all grow. If a company can't perform regularly and engage in constant dialogue with an audience, this doesn't happen.

Teatrão is a different association because it started out as a company for children. I joined in 2001, after having taken a theatre course – a rather particular theatre course, because it had a very strong pedagogical component. And Teatrão is a company with a

ISABEL CRAVEIRO

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very strong pedagogical project. The audience that goes to the Oficina Municipal de Teatro today, which is also a slightly different kind of theatre, has been very formed by us over the years. For 15 years, there have been regular theatre classes, for example. From the moment we had a theatre, we began to think: “We’re going to have a theatre. So are we now going to shut ourselves up here to create our art, our shows, and think we are the greatest; or are we going to make the plan of a municipal theatre a serious cause?” Our concern is that people feel at home. That they feel absolutely comfortable to travel with us in our project and also find programming that makes sense there, in that site, in our neighbourhoods, in the area we’re part of. I mean the city, but not only. Our educational and pedagogical project has become so important it’s had wonderful results. One of the founders of Os Possessos, for example, came from there. People who

went to other companies, who were in Cornucópia with Luis Miguel Cintra, or who are now with Mónica Calle... There are generations of people that have trained there and that like theatre and want to do and see it. These people become our audience and bring others. They identify with that space and feel right there. They feel it’s an area of freedom, but that takes many years to build.

I’ve only been in Teatrão since 2001, but I feel that our greatest achievement in Coimbra has been to get that space. It was an immense struggle... For a long time, I was an actress, production manager, everything and anything in the company, just like my colleagues. Now we have a space and, two years ago, we lost our subsidy from the Direcção-Geral das Artes (Directorate-General for the Arts,

henceforth DGArtes). We were forced to let half the company go and end our programme. The City Council did not increase our funding one cent, even in such circumstances. These two years have been spent thinking about what to do, whether we can survive despite the cut or not, and what we could hang on to. We've held on to our cause and the resilience that I think we really must have. Very strong convictions. And, furthermore, we've held on to our audience. Because when the meetings are genuine there's something in return. People tell you that you can't stop. And that's absolutely incredible. But the dominant logic nowadays creates immense contradictions. This programming logic means, for example, a City Hall with so many recuperated theatres sees no advantage in creating and stimulating an audience identity, a local community, by having a resident project. This is completely set aside because what matters is the logic of the event. I was just talking to Levi [Martins] and I asked him: "So you're going to be the resident company here at Cinema-Teatro Joaquim d'Almeida?"¹² But this doesn't seem to interest the city halls. What matters is the politics of the event. In fact, the city halls throughout the country want to have Lisbon in their theatres. Basically that's it. And Lisbon has no idea what is happening in the rest of the country. Who are the playwrights? What shows have they done? Where have the artists studied? Who do they work with? Who have they learned from? Do they go and see shows in Lisbon or not? They don't know. We don't know each other. And a big problem is not having the class representation that I think there should be.

Luis Miguel Cintra: When we talk about State subsidies, we should know what the State wants to offer its taxpayers, because the money belongs to the taxpayers. The State is acting as an intermediary between taxpayers' money and the taxpayers themselves. What's strange is that lately it doesn't matter, as Miguel [Abreu] says, whether the State is left or right. What the audience wants is always the same thing: consumable products to pass the time. This is why I think that we, as producers of our own work, can politically oppose this. We don't want to provide ready-made stuff. We don't want the State to provide people with ready-made stuff. At least, I don't.

Isabel Craveiro: Neither do I.

Luis Miguel Cintra: I think it's very dangerous for us to internalise the rules about support and then regulate ourselves to satisfy them.

And I think almost everyone makes this mistake.

Isabel Craveiro: I think so too. Everyone writes what the DGArtes wants to read.

Luis Miguel Cintra: I can't say much about what's valued when applying for support. Tours: zero. It's fatal for classification.

Isabel Craveiro: Things aren't all the same.

Luis Miguel Cintra: No, exactly, but we get a formula that makes everything the same. And, therefore, the exercise ends up being about cheating.

Isabel Craveiro: But this has been going on for ages, hasn't it?

Luis Miguel Cintra: It's been getting worse lately.

Isabel Craveiro: I know artists who have nurtured their creativity through occasional support for more than 20 years. And when I asked the DGArtes why they didn't create a specific line for emerging artists linked to higher education and the schools where the actors are coming from, the answer was, "This is not the time to think about creating new associations." What they want is to finish the existing ones.

Luis Miguel Cintra: There is no prospect of supporting theatrical activity as a public service.

Isabel Craveiro: None at all. But worst of all, Luis Miguel, is that it's intentional.

Luis Miguel Cintra: That's right, I know it is.

Isabel Craveiro: It's intentional and part of a market ideology. It's also intentional, and has always been so, to have no artistic education at school.

Levi Martins: Let me ask some other questions that seem important to me. They're to do with the law and the Constitution, which should regulate the actions of the DGArtes. I recently read Decree-Law no.225/2006 and what it clearly says there is that, for example, in relation to spaces like this (Cinema-Teatro Joaquim d'Almeida), the post-recuperation phase should focus on establishing companies

and artists¹³. It's in the law, but we never talk about it. Sometimes it seems that we are talking about these things based on this ideological collision with a new paradigm, but the law exists and is not being followed. What, after all, is a cultural policy? And what role do artists play in this cultural policy? What role can artists play in a cine-theatre? It also seems to me that, generally speaking, the idea is that it would be best for us not to be here. It would be better for artists, for us, not to be in these spaces.

Miguel Abreu: What happened in the past – I have to say I'm against resident companies in municipal theatres – was that for a long time a series of municipal theatres were the “exclusive property” of companies that only programmed for their “friends”. In private spaces, they would have been quite within their rights to do, but not in public ones. So it's gone from a famine to a feast: because now a group of programmers, “enlightened” by European politics, have sprung up, who follow highly assertive community rules about getting community funding that interests local council politics – and that has distorted a series of generous notions, many of them even discussed here on this stage, for example in the Artemrede constitution¹⁴. In my view, there should be theatres run by directors and not by programmers. With directors who could then host either companies or the programmers' programming (the programmer has now become as authorial as an exhibition curator – and I've already seen curators' names far bigger than the artists'). I remember going to Évora, to CENDREV, to do a play through the Direção Regional de Cultura do Alentejo (the Alentejo Regional Directorate of Culture), since the Theatre was municipal. They forced Mário Barradas to have us. We were greeted by a technician because they didn't want us there. Because our show was poor? Because we weren't aligned with the Communist Party? The truth is that it was a great success and there was a woman from the audience who got on the stage and said: “Thank goodness other things come!” What I realised, and without value judgments, is that they were fed up with the CENDREV shows. You must have the historical information. In the Companhia de Teatro de Almada, Joaquim Benite had a completely different stance, but most theatre companies appropriated the spaces. It was the theatre that also created these circumstances for political and ideological reasons that are completely identified.

When I started Cassefaz in 1987, since I wanted to be the boss – I was being honest – they called me a fascist brat. It was even spelt

out in several newspapers: “a fascist brat born for the theatre.” This was because I wanted to be a businessman, when being a businessman was a crime against the fatherland. I wanted to have a limited company when everybody was setting up co-ops. Cassefaz: Shows, Videos and Cultural Publications: what’s been written in the name of the company since 1987 is not artistic but cultural. This is another question. It’s one thing to discuss culture and citizens’ rights to culture, and another to discuss artists’ rights. I’m an artist but I don’t get that confused. I have to think about artistic issues within the arts. Cultural issues are much broader and can’t be distorted, as they are most of the time, by artists’ discourse.

Pedro Alves: In line with the idea that personal stories matter, I’ll start there. My parents finished school after the fourth year (only primary school was compulsory at the time). My father started as a butcher at 11 and worked until he was 67. He’s retired now. My mother was the cultural programmer at home. It was she who ran that theatre and my brother and I were, so to speak, the main actors of the story. They never took us to the theatre. I never heard my parents

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talk about theatre. I never had any contact with the theatre for 17 years and suddenly, from one moment to the next, almost inexplicably, I was invited by a teacher who had a company in Sintra to do some things and tell a few jokes. That’s how I started working in the theatre.

I remember my father... I don’t remember much because he worked from morning till night: he’d start at six in the morning and leave at eight o’clock at night. He’d arrive at home with some steaks in time for dinner. My mother cooked the steaks and we ate. I don’t remember very well, but I think I then watched a little television with him. Then we’d go to bed. I

saw little of my father in my childhood because he worked so hard. And he made a point of taking us to the butcher’s. It was easier to convince my brother. It was more difficult with me: he promised me a bicycle, various things, but still didn’t really seduce me. I was a resistant spectator. My father wanted us to inherit the butcher’s. He

started at that when he was 11 years old, damn it. It had been a lifetime, so it was important to him. It was not until much later, around a month ago, that I realized that this really was important and that I should have been left with the damned butcher's.

I got into the theatre and stuff, messing around with other meat, and it went wrong. My father worked from six in the morning to eight at night. I work from six in the morning to midnight. I have two children with a third on the way. The two already see me very, very rarely; the third will see me even less, it seems to me. A bit ago, Luis Miguel and Anne... well, we've all been repeating this idea... and I know what they mean, but I'd like to add something else. When people talk about the love of the theatre, the passion for the theatre, that being an actor is not really a profession, it's a vocation, and things like that, maybe this contributes precisely to the precariousness of our work. I work and I'm fed up with earning so little. I work a lot and I get a little. Why? Because most people, including my mother, my father, the people who are very close to me and really love me, think: "he does this because he loves it, so he doesn't have to get paid for it." I've been explaining this to my mother for 20 years: "You remember that show you went to see, and even liked?" And she's always saying, "But why don't you get a profession where you can earn something?" "But I do earn something, I even make a living." I've no problem with the idea that it's a vocation and something that is greater than life and everything. There's a kind of sanctity to it, where we can go barefoot. No problem. I'm just saying: doesn't this contribute to a certain precariousness we've always experienced, that we continue to experience and that we're going to experience even more?

In 1999, I set up a theatre company with a friend. And we decided to do exactly the same thing as practically everybody else: "I want to produce. I want to create my own shows. I don't want to do what others impose on me." And so we started a project. It wasn't Teatromosca, it was not a personal project. It was a two-headed project that, furthermore, others joined later on. I left, others arrived. Curiously, in the last few years, because things have been getting worse, either someone takes it on and carries it, come what may, or it dies. That's what's going on a lot. One of the things I particularly identify with is the idea of resistance, of political resistance to what's established. What's now established – and it's not from the National Theatre, it's from abroad, the same thing happens abroad in the municipal theatres and so on – is that there are short runs, short setting up times... If we talk about Avignon, Edinburgh or any other

festival, it all has to be done in a flash. You can't take more than an hour, because then someone else is arriving, I don't know who, and so you can't have rehearsals. Money's short. Conclusion: If time is money, then time also has to be short. If we want to resist, then – what the hell – it's going to be difficult. It's going to be very, very difficult. But we have to resist.

One of the recent policies we adopted within Teatromosca was precisely long, very long creation periods. A year of work. We've spent a year working with Ruben Jacinto¹⁵, a musician who took part in two recent Teatromosca productions. One year. Who paid us for this year's work? Nobody. Do we object to this? I could say, "Oh, Ruben, I'd like to pay you 1.500 euros a month for you to be here for a year, but unfortunately I can't afford it. You'll get 500 euros for three months and as for the other nine, look, give some lessons; do some other things. I'll try to get you some more work here and there. But I wouldn't want to cut down on this creation time and I'd like you not to do so either." Where does that lead? Everyone goes into television. Everyone does other things and nobody's available. "You see, I can only rehearse on such and such a day." It's complicated. Time is money, if you want to work with time, you have to have money.

Then, in relation to networking. Networking is very beautiful. It reminds us of the French idea about intermittent status. It's very beautiful, except when we subvert it. Like when a group of males, who tend to think only of their navel and the fluff they create, remember: "Okay, if you have intermittent status, you work six months and earn 2.000. 1.000 goes to the State, and you'll receive that 1.000 when you're unemployed. So you work with me for six months. Then you're fired but continue to work with me for the other six, receiving from the unemployment fund." This is what happens nowadays in France and many French actors are subject to this system. If they are in that situation and think about it, it's because artists, or the actors themselves are subjecting themselves to it; and employers, company directors and festivals are subjecting them to it. In Portugal, regarding the network and networks: it's an interesting idea. It's not new, it comes from abroad and it's all very intriguing. But if I can't get into the net, what's it for? What's happening nowadays, as Miguel was saying about the companies installed inside theatres, is that the networks themselves are being monopolised. Trying to get inside a network, I've already got to the point of asking a programmer: "But you want what? That I get down on my knees and give you a blow job, is that it?" Unfortunately, that's how things happen. There is a

network, yes, but it only serves a few, or because they are friends, or because they are accomplices, or because they work in a way that serves the model they've decided is the most effective for production. And the network doesn't open up beyond that. What should networks serve? They should serve to offer diversity. If we don't offer diversity: children's shows, revues, this or that kind of show... if there is no possibility of offering diversity, we are always leaving the selection of what there is to see in the hands of a few "enlightened" ones. A few enlightened ones who think they really know what an audience likes... They haven't a clue about my taste, or my mother's, or my unborn child's. Are they programming for a taste? But whose taste? Who's the audience? It doesn't exist; there is no audience.

When I wanted to go into the theatre, I didn't give a damn about Excel, forms... I wanted to do theatre. I wanted, totally spontaneously, to do what I wanted to do. Nowadays, spontaneity has been completely swept under the rug. It's impossible to be spontaneous. I have to programme who knows how many years in advance. I also have to have a whole spiel based on a series of hollow concepts serving only and exclusively to paint a few things on all the right platforms, which is all very beautiful. I believe that some of those concepts, some of those terminologies that we have to spout could be useful, but unfortunately everything is completely out of step with the real world. We have a virtual world, where we have to fill out a series of forms, which is completely disconnected from the real world. Plato was already talking about it back then, but we're now even farther away from the real. We have created a platform, a series of instruments that keep us away from reality.

I'll finish up with a surreal story about our relationship with DGArtes. In 2015, we competed and were excluded, the application was not supported. Life went on and the show took place all the same. We premiered in France and then came to Portugal. We opened here and everything went very well. We knew we wouldn't get the subsidy. On 31st December, we got a call from DGArtes: "Ah, you'll receive something. We've got some leftovers here, so you'll receive something. Do you want to get something?" 31st December. I could've been in the Maldives. Well, no; the subsidies don't stretch that far. So I was in my backyard, freezing, and I thought, "Is this guy serious, phoning from a public institution? Is that how you manage money?" I replied, "I was tempted to tell you that I don't want the subsidy, but since it's not just for me and I have to pay a lot of other people, I'll say yes. But tell me what I have to do now." "So now

you have until four in the afternoon to handle all the paperwork.” My reply: “But do you know what day it is? Go away and have fun, for God’s sake.” “No, I have to deal with it, it’s a mission I have.” “Then okay, I’ll deal with the papers and we’ll get the money.” And we received it. Amazing. In this crappy country, that’s how you manage public money. In a nutshell, it’s a gang of cowboys. I’m a cowboy, and I’m going to see if I catch some cow. If I catch the cow, I’ll take it to my father’s butcher – which doesn’t exist anyhow – and I’ll dedicate myself to that.

Luis Miguel Cintra: I think the way to react against this should basically be to remind people that these employees are also paid by them, the taxpayers. Money they don’t give us is money they receive. And, in addition, to prove by practice that there is an audience that is not necessarily the same for each group. I believe in the existence of various audiences, all having a genuine relationship with the shows. I’m sure you’ll all attract a number of people who enjoy your performances, who feel good about your language. This should be the basis for State support. What is being supported is public utility: the support is not support for the artists; it’s support for the audience to have access to certain shows. The discussion has to be all shifted there.

Pedro Alves: Still to do with the last story I told, I’d like to add the following: we submitted an application with 16 different dates and venues over nine months. We opened the show in France and toured 16 different locations in Portugal and France. We had a network, wonderful! We had an enviable tour circuit and they turned down our proposal. When, on 31st December, they called me to say, “Ah, we have a few bits of change here, do you want them?” I replied, “But look, you see, we asked for 25.000 euros for our project, to run all this and you didn’t want to subsidise this programme. Do you think I still have this network available? I don’t. Now it’s going to be a huge effort for me to recover everything I’ve had to throw away. Do you understand?” “Yes, but if you want the money you want it; if you don’t, you don’t.” So what happened? Trying to recover everything was, if not impossible, a real hassle. I couldn’t have a group of people touring the show in very poor conditions for nine months, performing at municipal theatres and leaving with 100 euros in my pocket, which wouldn’t even pay for food. Well, initially they didn’t want to give us 25.000 euros for that whole programme. On the 31st, there was some change left, take 25.000 euros there... And I’ve finished

that programme now: I didn't do 16 venues, I did eight. Who loses here? Everyone. I got the same. The 25.000 euros went into the account. It's ridiculous that this can happen.

Luis Miguel Cintra: That's why I'm against juries. I think they're a way of hiding the political responsibility of decisions. The decision is the jury's, according to a grid of values done by we never know who and is stupid in itself, completely oblivious of reality. It ceases being the politicians' responsibility and becomes that of the technicians, who in principle are the members of the jury chosen by the politicians. It's shameful.

Isabel Craveiro: Luis Miguel, would you propose that the [person in charge of] DGArtes, for example, should decide who to give the money to?

Luis Miguel Cintra: Yes, because like that at least we know who the decision maker is. For the next one, maybe we'll vote for a different party – or stop voting for any party, because they all have the same criteria, which is the self-defence of the political class.

Miguel Abreu: I happen to be in favour of juries. I think there should not be a single contest, there should be four or five different types for different purposes – for childhood and youth, experimental theatre, audience or repertoire creation, or whatever. I think there should be several competitions and each competition should have juries with nine jurors, because it is clear that jurors will end up applying cultural policy. It's no big deal to write cute stuff in the law decrees... The Arts Council, for example, which defines the internationalisation policy for British theatre, has a jury of around 50 people. A kind of State council. Of course, those who don't get support from such a body also say that it doesn't work, etc. But looking back at the last 40 or so years of theatre, in which there have already been committees making political decisions and more diversified juries for all forms, I'd prefer to have several juries, preferably with more jurors, and so technically better able to evaluate certain criteria and parameters. I don't know, for example, how a company like Cornucópia competed with the Teatro Infantil de Lisboa. In terms of creativity, the goals are completely different.

Pedro Alves: But how would we define, for instance, experimental theatre?

Miguel Abreu: By your option.

Pedro Alves: But how will the jury decide? Is it up to me?

Miguel Abreu: You decide whether you want to do experimental theatre or not. You know what you want.

Pedro Alves: But then they come back with, "You competed here but you're not experimental." I've got doubts about the work I do, about whether I'm experimental or not.

Miguel Abreu: But that's a question for you.

Luis Miguel Cintra: Everything should be experimental. I'd like to take this opportunity to say that for the past four years we'd been telling the Ministry that the subsidy was insufficient and, if nothing changed, we'd have to stop. They said in reply, "But this decision was made by a different government." So, every time the government changes, we have to go back and learn the whole story. So the ladies and gentlemen who are appointed to be there don't know the History of Portuguese theatre?

Miguel Abreu: But it's not just the theatre that suffers from that. It happens with theatre, with health, with education, with everything. It's a nationwide problem, not just about theatre.

Luis Miguel Cintra: Of course not.

Miguel Abreu: As for experimental theatre: all theatre is experimental, all theatre is an experience, obviously. But the orthodox idea of experimental theatre is that it is "against the audience, it doesn't care about the audience." I'd also argue that you may intend to do something completely new, spend a year researching and come up with nothing at all. To err is part of the creative process. Your vocation may be more in research than result. Great. Obviously, however, your work will be aimed at a very erudite audience or one prepared to appreciate the process more than the result. You can, of course, take an existing text and experiment with it, but you aren't creating an original text. The intention may be, for example, to make the public understand a certain text by Molière by staging it in its entirety. And so the audience hears and sees the four or five complete acts. Another approach is starting with the same text and turning Molière's 14 characters into one. Not for

economic reasons, but because of a particular interpretation. There are kids in France and England who see Molière and Shakespeare uncut, and then know how to recognise the creative side inherent in these innovative suggested interpretations – “I never thought these characters could all be synthesised in D. Juan, alone, speaking...” In Portugal, most kids – kids and adults – do not have the opportunity to see a complete repertoire so as to enjoy another interpretation that rewrites the original text... It’s an example...

The whole creative side is experimental. And that’s why the audience pays more or pays less. What the audience is, in fact, paying for is essentially the risk. After following an author-company for five or six years, you can almost imagine the lighting, the set and the rhythm even before entering the theatre. You may be experimenting, finding a particular line. And the audience – the faithful audience – going to Comuna or Cornucópia, or to see Olga Roriz or Paulo Ribeiro are willing to pay because they already know what they are and don’t want to run risks. The risk is much greater when you don’t know what you’ll see. So, theoretically, programmers should be good advisers to the audience, when the audience has neither the time nor the maturity to choose for themselves. The figure of the programmer is something to put an end to. Theoretically, if the audience develops and has critical capabilities, it doesn’t need programmers at all. What are needed are creators and producers, in the sense of creation-production. In music, for example, a singer can release a new cd, but they don’t stop singing those two or three songs that the audience wants to hear. That’s why they’ll pay the 100 euros. If you don’t sing them, people are disappointed.

Pedro Alves: I have to disagree completely with you there. For me, that the audience has to be taught, that we have to educate them, that they have taste, are all completely outdated ideas. I have many reservations because I see the audience, this body, as having a maturity and a greater autonomy than this.

Miguel Abreu: But if the audience doesn’t even know that you exist, how are they going to get it, no matter how mature they are?

Pedro Alves: Sometimes things happen by chance. My brother was born. Four years later, my parents had a second child who was still born. All my life, I’ve thought: “Bloody Hell! If that child had lived, I wouldn’t be here today.” Sometimes things can’t be explained, they happen by accident. And we think, “The audience this, the audience

that.” And if Luís Represas suddenly stopped singing “Hora do Lobo” and started singing Frank Sinatra songs? If, out of the 100 people there, 90 left saying: “Hey! I wanted “Hora do Lobo.” But 10 stayed and thought: “Bloody Hell! Luís Represas singing Frank Sinatra. Now that’s a surprise!”

Miguel Abreu: I’ve got nothing against that. I’m just talking about another approach. I was talking about what risk is. There are people who pay a lot to risk a lot. There are people who pay a fortune to throw themselves out of an airplane and adore the adrenaline rush. I wouldn’t do it, even if they paid me. Everyone knows what their risk is; we can’t generalise. What we can generalise about, however, because it’s sociological, is that we all deal, some more, some less, with risk. And while some are willing to pay a great deal for the risk, most people – the audience, citizens – are conservative.

Audience: In any case, this is a political issue. Things start at the base; they start at school. Until you start moving that around, you can’t do anything and it won’t change.

Miguel Abreu: But you can, because there are things that are within our reach. We can go knocking on people’s doors. We can talk to people at immigrant centres, local associations and social clubs. We can knock on doors. I’m answering what has been asked for some time now: how do you create an audience? Knocking on people’s doors.

Luis Miguel Cintra: But in that case, you decide whether they should see this or that.

Miguel Abreu: No, I don’t say what they should see. I tell them what I have. I get there and say: “I have this group of projects, do you want to see? No? Okay, that’s fine.” I did this, for example, with João Brites when Faro was National Capital of Culture in 2005. We went to surrounding villages and said: “We’re doing a series of shows. Here are tickets in your name, D.^a Rosa.” “Ah, I don’t want to go.” “It doesn’t matter, D.^a Rosa, there’s a ticket for you. If you go, it’s there for you. If you don’t go, no problem.”

Luis Miguel Cintra: And then maybe she was very embarrassed about not picking up the ticket...

Miguel Abreu: No, they went, because they were very glad that João Brites went there to knock on their doors, that he thought of them.

They went and formed a great bond with O Bando. They rented a coach and went to see the space in Palmela. And you also had full houses at the Faro Municipal Theatre. You were afraid that the audience wouldn't see your plays and then we were sold out for two days. There were huge crowds dying to see Cornucópia in the Algarve. You were afraid people wouldn't go, and I remember you saying, "Do you think we're going to fill this?"

Luis Miguel Cintra: I may have got it wrong. But there's one thing that we've experienced many times: misunderstanding. What was often deemed to be a meeting between Cornucópia and the audience was a meeting of misunderstandings. What the audience was enjoying had absolutely nothing to do with what we had put in the show. Why did they like it? Because they were watching a company that was already well-known, famous. True communication with the show is always what I'm longing for. Never happened? Of course it happened. There was an audience that was faithful to Cornucópia and with whom there was true communication. Another example: in the *Miserere* that we did at the National¹⁶, the most conservative part of the audience were furious. But there was another audience, very young, much more uncultured, who were very curious about that show and had no idea how distant it was from the original Gil Vicente. There was a real meeting with these people. I think it is up to the state to support this dialogue work with the audience.

Miguel Abreu: Cultural rights are those that the State does not develop. It develops political rights, social rights. Everyone's entitled to the National Health Service and complain about it. Everyone's entitled to unemployment benefit and claim it. Everyone knows that they have the right to vote and the State campaigns for people to vote. But no one says, "You have the right to culture." No one campaigns for our cultural rights.

Álvaro Correia: I'm at an art school and we get lots of students who want to be actors, or who have an idea about wanting to be actors. However, we also get groups of people that are very antagonistic to each other. There are people who have no training at all, but who take giant leaps during their time here and others who come with training but who have a hard time assimilating other possibilities, other visions of what the theatre is. But what I feel in general is that we have to be constantly curious: "If you're here and if you want to be artists, then you have to have

concerns; you have to be curious. Because if you're not curious, if nothing moves you, what are you doing here?" This is often linked to certain ideas about what being an actor is.

I also studied at ESTC but I was there during a very different phase. There was, nonetheless, a common characteristic: a kind of legacy gets handed down from generation to generation. That doesn't mean that other people don't come... There are many teachers who didn't go there. But this passing on of the legacy has never stopped. Right now, I have former students who are there to teach as well. ESTC has never cared much about preparing students for the profession perhaps because we don't realise how sometimes the profession changes faster than the school-institution. It is only this year that we've been able, for the first time, to create a third year module in which the objective is to realise what the profession actually is: what's a green receipt; what competitions for subsidies there are; in short, how can you make a connection with the profession in a concrete way. Sometimes these things take time to articulate within the particular dynamics of a school. The students signed up in hordes for these modules. Now we must be aware that not everyone stays in the profession. That's the way things are. If there were 10, 12, 13 or 14 of them, they wouldn't all stay in the profession. It's not just because you have talent that you get work, there are so many factors: personal, family, luck too, sometimes. There are 10.000 factors that lead you to be or not to be in this profession. And I think you really have to love it. If not, it's just not worth it. I've never seen it as a job. I've always regarded it as a way of life. I'm an actor, director and also a teacher. At the moment, I'm also director of the theatre department at ESTC, but that's something that'll end. My life is varied: I like acting and teaching. I like being with the students in that clash of difficulties. Because what we do in class is getting it wrong. You have to be wrong. You have to be always falling, so you can say, "Try it again and see if you don't fall this time." That's what doing theatre is. Even we here, directing or as actors, we're always making mistakes, trying to go beyond ourselves. I don't see any other way. I'm not afraid to tell my students, "Don't be afraid to make a mistake. You have to make a mistake. If not, you don't know what you're doing." But we live in a society where there can't be a mistake. We can't get it wrong. You can't fail. When in art we have to fail. That's what art is: failing, failing, until it fails less, basically.

Luis Miguel Cintra: It's important that we, theatre people, don't think of it as something to pass the time, to entertain. Certain

people's investment in their own shows is an investment that comes from the need to tell others something fundamental. Otherwise, it's just another branded product in a normal market, in competition with others.

Álvaro Correia: The feeling I have nowadays is that it's been a long time since I've seen a show that's marked me.

Miguel Abreu: You've seen a lot... I feel that there are people the theatre doesn't reach. It doesn't even cross their minds. You see a group of young Spaniards, 17, 18 years of age, arguing in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, or Seville... I don't know about other cities, but in these four I've heard teenagers say, "Okay, this weekend, are we going to the theatre or the cinema?" And I seldom hear young Portuguese asking that. And if a group asks each other "Shall we go to the theatre?" It's enough for one of them to say "No, let's go to the cinema" for all the others to go to the cinema. The theatre just isn't part of their free time. Whether it's entertainment or not, doesn't matter. It's a matter of filling free time. My free time is filled with going to the theatre, or going to mass, or to a concert, or to the cinema. The theatre isn't part of everyday life... although in certain areas of Portugal I feel that there is a desire to participate, to do, even more than to see, to do. And the doing brings a lot of people to see.

Levi Martins: There is, of course, the case of Almada...

Miguel Abreu: Almada is different. I've had a lot of interesting exchanges of opinion with Joaquim Benite on this, and I really think he's managed to get a community interested in theatre.

Maria João Brilhante: That community already existed¹⁷. But he knew how to connect with it.

Miguel Abreu: I feel that there are lots of things like those in Almada. What I don't see are many artists available, willing to go and work with these people. That doesn't get you in the papers. Artists are more concerned with fame, be it television, or peer recognition and therefore produce a lot for each other. I get artists turning up every day with the "show" they're going to shine in. It all adds up to that. And when I want artists to work with a number of communities in need of contact with the theatre, they come up with all kinds of reasons not to do it.

Luis Miguel Cintra: Going back a little to what you were saying: imagine you have to choose between going to the theatre and going to the cinema. You're someone, still imagining, who's much more concerned about yourself than what you'll see. I would never say, "Let's go to the theatre." I would suggest going to see this group, or this play; or that film, and say its title.

Isabel Craveiro: There is more audience but it is less and less critical and goes more and more with this perspective when going to the theatre. Everybody's on their feet clapping. Everybody loved it. But they were asleep. It's true.

Luis Miguel Cintra: I think that's because of the formatting.

Isabel Craveiro: It's the way they view the theatrical phenomenon. They see it as if it they were going to watch a soap opera.

Maria João Brilhante: We're going to have to finish. We'd thought we'd be able to neatly sum things up, but that's not going to happen. Let's leave the conversation open and promise that in a while we'll try to broaden this forum and bring more people into the discussion. Maybe they'll bring in other issues. Let's see what we can take away from today. We'll not form any platforms or associations, because I think that's absolutely impossible, because, for me, we're very few. People know each other very well, they've all shared stories with each other.

Unfortunately, what I could foresee happening four or five years ago, is actually happening. I remember chatting with Luis Miguel Cintra and Cristina Reis in 2011 about this, and my feeling came from the role I had at the time¹⁸. I talked to people from the DGArtes, who were actually beginning work on transforming the model for theatre association devised after 25th April between the adoption of a State model, as with the theatres of the Eastern countries and the post-World War II French decentralisation model. These were the two models that they tried to merge to create something apparently new, which would be against entrepreneurial theatre, the commercial theatre, etc. This model began to be dismantled four, five years ago. And, in fact, the truth is that things take time. And I think our politicians, or at least the leaders, the people who are in the places that have decision-making power, have the time. They know they have time and will use this time to conduct all cultural activity, cultural offerings; not cultural or artistic policies, but cultural offerings

– which have to do with the question of the market – in the sense of ending fixed associations. Fixed associations don't count. They can't carry on, except as national or municipal theatres. And why did Álvaro speak of this feeling of vertigo? Because it's like the eye of a hurricane, a centre allowing the permanence of what's going to replace these models we've worked on for more than 40 years: replaced by events, happenings and all the occasional activity. As long as the population is served with something dynamised by national and municipal theatres, throughout the country. Luis Miguel said, quite rightly, that the municipal theatres have money to work. Something will be left to go around, something will go around that eye and continue to spin. "Companies are heavy structures," I've heard people say. "The problem of management, the problem of the producers of the companies is that they don't know how to manage their resources because they spend a lot of money on people." They spend a lot of money on people! "They can't spend so much money on people. They have to make themselves light so they can produce more." This is the logic and, little by little, it will take root; and it has nothing to do with either the left or the right, but with the capitalist economic model in which we live. This is the discussion I think artists should have. It's not about their work, it's not about their companies, it's about the system they're in. To try to identify and understand it, as Luis Miguel said. How can you resist it, or create anything that probably can't be a company or an association, whether heavier or lighter isn't the point? It may not be that, but an alternative has to be created that comes from the artists.

Álvaro Correia: New companies are being created everywhere. They're self-financing and are all finding their own voice. But it makes me think: "How are they going to be able to develop and find greater depth in what they do?"

Maria João Brilhante: They are the ones who are out there. The ones who are out in the eye of the hurricane that will get them from time to time. Pull them in and release them. And then get others and so on and so forth.

Isabel Craveiro: But what I feel is that this discussion about the model we are in and where we are going doesn't get much support in the class. Because people are afraid...

Miguel Abreu: People are also afraid to stand up and be counted.

Isabel Craveiro: I think people are afraid of losing their funding.

Miguel Abreu: The point is that in the French model, which came in with Malraux, the independent theatre companies were accompanied by the local associations, by cultural action. There were a number of dynamics besides the dramatic centres. We only imported part of this network. We created a highly politicised hybrid here that killed concepts such as cultural action, which became extremely politicised. Audiences felt that the theatre was highly politicised on the left and not in the original political sense. Already in the 80s, it was clear that companies naturally age. Companies seen as production associations either have the ability to pass on their resources to successive creators, or they are author companies that tend to end with the author. Companies have always existed. There has always been the company of actor so and so, the company of such and such an actress. And when they finished, the company finished.

I believe in the possibility of creating alternative systems. What we've got to be is discreet. Because if someone really thinks that we can do it, they'll smash us. There is no obvious political strategy. There is a power strategy, but it isn't at all clear where it wants to go: to the right, to the left, to the market... because it's not obvious either if it wants to go to the market. There is no apparent thought other than the protectionism of a number of people. Regardless of what you think, if you are in the "group", you are protected. This group, even while protecting itself, should produce at least a vision of the future – something that it's not doing. Theatre people should also create structured and structuring visions of the future – which has not been possible either. This is the part where we are to blame, because we can't expect others to solve our problems.

Maria João Brilhante: Forms of resistance have to come from within, from those who act.

Álvaro Correia: And the class has never been as static as it has in recent years.

1. The themes proposed for the round table were: "The importance of production conditions for freedom of creation (spaces, financing, management model, bureaucracy and accountability vs.

invention, flexibility and time); New demands placed on producers by different performative forms and by the state of the world; Problems of authorship.”

2. The Biennial of Contemporary Arts website has an editorial related to its first edition, which cites the following excerpt: “Museums, theatres, galleries, discos and public space – the spaces where BoCA takes place are the new temples of a society that today is faced with reformulations of (and threats to) the pillars of democracy, with the emergence of extreme ideologies whose propaganda advocates separation, fear and uncertainty. The contemporary arts, today even more fundamental than yesterday due to the historic moment in which we live, find all their legitimacy, find in this time and in these places of worship the refuge that allows them to fulfil their potential, in freedom, fraternity, critical thinking and in praise of difference.” (Content available at: <http://www.bocabienal.org/a-bienal/editorial/>)

3. “Current Portuguese theatre can no longer do without Os Possessos, Teatro da Cidade, SillySeason, Mascarenhas-Martins and Os Pato Bravo: five companies that bring youth, consistency, faith in collective creation and the inventiveness to take revenge on difficulties”, is the opening of Gonçalo Frota’s article, *A Marcha Imparável das Novas Companhias do Teatro Português*, published in *Ípsilon*, the *Público* cultural supplement, on 10th March 2017. There is a broader set of recently founded groups (less than ten years’ old) that have produced in a relatively regular way: Auééúú, Inquietarte, Terceira Pessoa, UmColectivo, among many others.

4. In 2017, the CIES-ISCTE-IUL team prepared, at the request of the Ministry of Culture, the *Estudo Posicionamentos das Entidades Artísticas no Âmbito da Revisão do Modelo de Apoio às Artes*. An online questionnaire was answered validly by 522 entities. The results of this study are available online: <https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/handle/10071/14962>

5. The GDA Foundation offers, through competition, support for theatre and dance shows and for touring shows, as well as qualification and specialisation scholarships. Information available at: <http://www.fundacaogda.pt/pt/acao-cultural>

6. *Topografia* was presented by Teatro da Cidade in the space formerly belonging to Primeiros Sintomas (Ribeira) in March 2017. It was a collective creation, performed by Bernardo Souto, Guilherme Gomes, João Reixa, Nídia Roque and Rita Cabaço.

7. *GAE – Guia das Artes do Espectáculo*, by Miguel Abreu in collaboration with Catarina Vaz Pinto and Joana Motta, 1995, was published by Cassefaz with the support of the Instituto das Artes. It was the first book published in Portugal exclusively dedicated to the systematisation and study of Theatre and Dance Production. In 2009, *GAE – Guia das Artes do Espectáculo II* was published, dedicated to Theatre, Dance and, now also, Music, written by Miguel Abreu in collaboration with Joana Motta, Rita Sousa Guerreiro, Manuela Duarte Neves, José Manuel Amaral Lopes and Manuela Jorge. It was published by Cassefaz with the support of the Ministério da Cultura and the Instituto Português das Artes do Espectáculo.

8. *Vida de Artista ou a Verdadeira História de Barbi*, by José Pinto Correia, directed by Alexandre de Sousa, performed by F. Pedro Oliveira, Miguel Abreu, Paulo Ferreira and Agnelo Vieira de Andrade, opened on 5th May 1993, at Teatro Maria Matos.

9. Pereira da Silva, Vasco (2017). *A Cultura A Que Tenho Direito – Direitos Fundamentais e Cultura*. Coimbra: Edições Almedina.

10. PSD (the Social Democratic Party), PS (the Socialist Party); CDS (the Central Democratic and Social Party) and the BE (the Left Block).

11. Cassefaz had received regular State support for 15 years.

12. Since its public presentation in January 2016, the Companhia Mascarenhas-Martins has asked Montijo Town Hall to make a space available for them. The use of alternative spaces in

Cinema-Teatro Joaquim d'Almeida has been made possible by its availability and the working hours of the municipal facility. The possibility of Companhia Mascarenhas-Martins becoming a resident company of the municipal cinema-theatre remains out of the question.

13. "With substantial progress having been made in the recuperation, enlargement and renewal of the national cine-theatre network, towards which the programme launched in 1998 by the XIII Constitutional Government contributed decisively, conditions must now be created so it functions effectively in terms of cultural decentralisation, supporting a regular programme quality, which includes educational initiatives and also favours setting up artists or artistic entity residences in the interior." Decree-law n.º 225/2006, replaced by Decree-law n.º 103/2017.

14. "ARTEMREDE is a cultural cooperation project that has been continuously active for 13 years. It is currently made up of 15 municipalities, bringing towns together and having them interact on different scales. Its work focuses on specific aspects of these places through supporting artistic creation, networked cultural programming, qualification and training, as well as cultural mediation strategies." This is the text stating the mission of this non-profit making cultural association. More information available at: www.artemrede.pt

15. Ruben Lopes Jacinto is a professional clarinetist from Montijo, who has worked with, for example, Teatromosca, Inestética and Companhia Mascarenhas-Martins.

16. *Miserere* premiered on 15th April 2010 at the TNDMII. It was based on *Auto da Alma*, the psalm *Miserere Mei* and excerpts from *Auto da Lusitânia*, the *Breve Sumário da História de Deus* and the *Carta a D. João III* on the 1531 earthquake, by Gil Vicente. It was a co-production by Teatro da Cornucópia and TNDM II.

17. The book *A Cidade do Teatro* (Theatre City) (co-ordination and editorial direction by Sarah Adamopoulos, published by Almada City Hall and Ninho de Víboras – Associação Cultural, commemorating 20 years of Mostra de Teatro de Almada, 1996-2016) tells the story of this community's ties with theatre, which go back well before the arrival of the Grupo de Campolide in Almada.

18. Maria João Brilhante was Chair of the Board of Directors of the TNDMII between 2008 and 2011.

SURVIVAL

LEVI MARTINS

On 29th March 2018, the DGArtes sent candidates the provisional results of the competition for sustained support regarding theatre (2018-2019 or 2018-2021, depending on each case). The document was soon shared on social networks by many indignant professionals,

whether they were linked to the companies or not, who suddenly saw themselves threatened with closure. Among those at risk were Teatro Experimental de Cascais, Teatro Experimental do Porto, FITEI, Teatrão, CENDREV, Teatro dos Aloés, Teatro das Beiras, Primeiros Sintomas and many others. I am referring to the list of those eligible for whom the available amount wasn't enough. Casa Conveniente and Cão Solteiro were different cases, whose management component got a negative evaluation and made their applications ineligible. If these results didn't change, we would be facing a significant change in the Portuguese theatre scene. Perhaps not from a quantitative¹ perspective, as the Government quickly asserted, but certainly from a qualitative and historical point of view. It's certain that, given the spreading of the provisional results, the sector (if it's not abusive to call such a limited number of associations a sector) was immediately mobilised and a meeting was convened by the Primeiros Sintomas at Centro de Artes de Lisboa on 31st March. The room was crammed with professionals and representatives of associations that attended, many being those who were at risk and so many others who, out of solidarity (or other basically noble motives), decided to be there.

LEVI MARTINS

LEVI GRADUATED FROM ESTC IN CINEMA. HE ALSO HAS A MASTER'S IN THEATRE STUDIES FROM FLUL. HE IS A CO-FOUNDER OF COMPANHIA MASCARENHAS-MARTINS, A GROUP HE HAS BEEN RUNNING SINCE 2015. IN CINEMA AND AUDIO-VISUALS, HE HAS WORKED AS AN ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, EDITOR, SOUND DIRECTOR AND DIRECTOR. HE DID AN INTERNSHIP AT THE CINEMA-TEATRO JOAQUIM D'ALMEIDA. BETWEEN 2014 AND 2015, LEVI COLLABORATED WITH COMPANHIA DE TEATRO DE ALMADA IN THE AREAS OF COMMUNICATION AND PUBLISHING, INCLUDING THE BOOK, *LUIS MIGUEL CINTRA: CINCO CONVERSAS EM ALMADA*. HE HAS ALSO WRITTEN *FRANCISCO PALHA*, PART OF A COLLECTION OF PORTUGUESE THEATRE BIOGRAPHIES (TNDMII, TNSJ, IN-CM AND CET). HE WAS CINEMA ASSISTANT TO JOÃO BRITES IN THE SHOWS, *ALMENARA* (O BANDO, 2016 AND 2017); DIRECTED THE SHOWS *TODA A GENTE E NINGUÉM* (2014 AND 2016) AND *TENTATIVAS PARA MATAR O AMOR* (2017, CO-DIRECTION WITH MARIA MASCARENHAS). HE ALSO PRODUCED *Um D. João Português* (2017, 2018), WITH DRAMATURGY AND DIRECTION BY LUIS MIGUEL CINTRA AND *O MEDO DE EXISTIR* (2018), WITH TEXT AND DIRECTION BY MARIA MASCARENHAS.

The discussion was heated, among more radical proposals, such as calling for a general strike – quickly questioned and abandoned –, there were indignant outbursts, suggestions of all kinds and, on the spur of the moment, João Mota's idea to form a commission and request a meeting with the Prime Minister to present him with a set of demands. That's what happened. A group volunteered to be part of a *Comissão Informal de Artistas* (an Informal Artists' Commission) that would write the open letter sent to António Costa and the media:

Dear Prime Minister,

Following the large gathering of artistic associations, actors and cultural agents that took place on 31st March 2018 at the CAL in Lisbon, an informal committee was formed which would like to address the following to you.

We are culture professionals – artists, associations, producers, technicians, programmers – and we would like to see the development of the arts in Portugal as an irreplaceable axis of citizenship and qualification of the country. The reformulation of the public support for the arts, announced two years ago, for which the Ministry of Culture decreed a one-year delay in the opening of new competitions culminated in a support process that excludes some of the most striking associations on the artistic scene and national culture. Moreover, it diminishes the action of many others, destroying decades-long paths of artistic creation, public building, labour ties, and public investment in these projects.

The system that this Government has imposed on culture has failed completely and transversally, further weakening the artistic sector. Public investment remains largely inadequate and does not allow minimum targets to be achieved. Policies do not reflect the area they intend to structure or the association they propose to support. The management tools are ineffective and reveal a lack of knowledge about the specifics of artistic activity.

We are certain that this is a historic moment. It remains to be seen whether it will be remembered as the moment when this Government gave up on culture and accepted, as definitive, a model that is destroying much of what has been built, or as the moment when there was willingness and courage to ensure national culture did not suffer this permanent loss; when the reformulation of the arts' support model was started, in genuine dialogue with the different cultural agents.

It is in the hope of the latter situation that we urgently request a meeting with you, Prime Minister, in the hope that this Government still has the willingness and capacity to fulfil the

aims it has announced for culture. We believe that the recently announced additional € 2 million per year was the first recognition of how insufficient the funds made available for this competition were. Despite this, we see it as crucial that the decision is taken, still in 2018, to reinforce the funding that will prevent the destruction of applicant associations unsupported or even excluded under criteria that need to be reviewed. We believe that what is at stake is not only the survival of professional artistic creators, but the possibility of a more developed country, with citizens who possess a greater critical spirit and democratic sense.

3rd April 2018, INFORMAL ARTISTS' COMMISSION

The response also came in an open letter, with the Prime Minister announcing a reinforcement of € 2.2 million for the competition in question and affirming the “commitment to give a central role to culture as the basis for a knowledgeable society as an engine of innovation and our development, [as] a serious, secure and continuing commitment.” In response to this letter, the Informal Artists' Committee repeated the request for a meeting on the grounds that it was not limited to budgetary matters (“We consider [...] that the Prime Minister's reply does not seem to recognise a profound problem that transcends these recent competitions, which reiterates the need for a dialogue that cannot be had through the media alone”²). The representative associations of the sector (Cena-STE, Plateia, Rede, Manifesto em Defesa da Cultura and Performart) had also requested a meeting. António Costa agreed to receive the artists and their representatives. The meetings at Belém Palace took place on 13th and 14th April and resulted in the promise of a reformulation of the arts' support model³ in dialogue with the sector and the revision of the amounts set down in the State Budget for Culture. A demonstration had been called in various parts of the country on 6th April not only to bring a mass of professionals together but also to make the media fully aware of the issue. Support for the arts reached the front pages of newspapers, current affairs TV programmes, the news, columnists and, of course, social networks.

The increases announced by the Government reduced the list of unfinanced associations. However, a number of eligible associations were still excluded and the case of non-eligible associations remained unchanged, despite the fact that they applied to be heard, as foreseen in the regulations. It should be pointed out that all this contestation only affected competition for theatre support, with the Government's justification that the competitions for the other areas

had already been completed. The issue eventually faded once the final decision was announced mid-May, with associations trying to return to normality after a period of terrible instability and uncertainty (note that the competition included January 2018 and the final decision came almost six months later). For 2019, the Government has announced “the largest ever budget for Culture”⁴, which in the case of DGArtes will allow an increase of 29.6%. It remains to be seen to what extent this increase will go towards supporting the arts, since it is also considered urgent to focus on the human resources of this institution, in particular to ensure appropriate monitoring of financed projects. At the time of writing, the question remains open.

Change of Direction

I did the transcription of this session in 2018, after the controversy stirred up by the arts’ support model. It became inevitable to think of the relationship between much of what was said and what appeared to be coming, since almost all the session’s participants referred to somewhat cautionary facts or ideas. Here, for example, is Maria João Brilhante recalling the time when she was the administrator of the Teatro Nacional D. Maria II:

I talked to people from the DGArtes, who were actually beginning work on transforming the model for theatre association devised after 25th April between the adoption of a State model, as with the theatres of the Eastern countries and the post-World War II French decentralisation model. These were the two models that they tried to merge to create something apparently new, which would be against entrepreneurial theatre, the commercial theatre, etc. This model began to be dismantled four, five years ago. And, in fact, the truth is that things take time. And I think our politicians, or at least the leaders, the people who are in the places that have decision-making power, have the time. They know they have time and will use this time to conduct all cultural activity, cultural offerings; not cultural or artistic policies, but cultural offerings – which have to do with the question of the market – in the sense of ending fixed associations.

The most worrying thing about this whole subject seems to me to be the assumption of a logic in the relationship between the State and artistic creation. This logic seems to be that it is more and more

natural for artists not to define the framework of their activity – in clear contrast to what had been built by independent theatre, if we're only thinking about theatre. But any logic that perverts the aims of artistic activity has pernicious effects on art as well as on the public. However, for decision makers, generally more interested in measurable results, the instrumentalisation of all kinds of artistic and cultural activity seems not only to be perfectly natural, but even desirable as a method of work.

The gradual and surreptitious inclusion of artistic creation in the creative industries⁵ makes instrumentalisation a (seemingly) rational option, since it is taken as a way of guaranteeing economic results from the investment of taxpayers' money. In fact, the idea of the State investing in artistic creation seems increasingly associated with its ability to generate economic value. Some examples: internationalisation contributes to the affirmation of Portuguese culture in the world; working with the community creates (a temporary but effective illusion that it exists) a strong relationship between the artistic objects and the public participating in them, which contributes to "social cohesion".

Serving the interests of those who finance – our representatives who, unfortunately, do not always represent us – has become the rule of the game. There is an increasing hierarchy in the relationship between who creates and who allocates funding, with a strong incentive to lose sovereignty over what is produced. But the power exercised over artistic creation ends, to a certain extent, by neutralising it. If creation loses its sovereignty and its purpose, what are we to finance, if we do so? Cultural products to fill schedules? Objects that fit the objectives of public cultural policies? "Working with areas such as education, youth and tourism, in a transversal approach to the arts, articulated between the central, regional and local authorities, promoters and private producers, to deepen the relationship between artistic creation and cultural and creative industries with other domains, in a logic of mutual benefit⁶?"

Production, understood as the ability to find the means to create, thus becomes the centre of the activity. Without means, it is not produced, which means that the order tends to be inverted by the difficulty in continuing to exist: first, guarantee the means, then think about what can be created with what has been obtained. Public access competitions for public funding favour adaptation to a set of criteria that condition the creation from the outset, even if this conditioning is not always evident. A great part of producers and creators' work has been trying to set up touring networks, con-

tacting programmers, local authorities, thinking of appropriate management models for what they already know competitions require (the association not being weighty, touring, much funding from other sources, etc.). All tasks of a very different nature from those associated with creating (interpretation, staging, dramaturgy, scenography, costumes, light, sound, etc.).

If the capacity to create conditions to create is dependent on the rules of access to funding (and the interests of programmers, city councillors, cultural managers), what role does production have? Is it possible to guarantee complete creative freedom with this unavoidable dependence on public support and half a dozen spaces with the capacity to make creation feasible? Will production be able to resist the temptation of overcoming creation by moulding it into projects whose main focus is now on the management model rather than artistic decisions?

From the words of those who we invited to this session, we can see that the centre of activity has deliberately been displaced against the will of the majority of those who dedicate their lives to the theatre. It seems difficult to accept that public funding for the arts will be all the more effective when more freedom is guaranteed to creators to decide on their own forms of action. This does not mean that there should be no scrutiny, monitoring and evaluation. It takes time and space for artists to build their projects. The attempt to minimise the risks of artistic creation suffocates them, taking them hostage to aims that are extrinsic to them.

Perhaps we are, in general, still too offended by what João César Monteiro said at the debut of his controversial *Branca de Neve* (*Snow White*) – “I want the Portuguese public to fuck itself.” Perhaps because of this resentment our (non) representatives have taken the chance to legitimise themselves by ensuring that they continue to defend us (the ‘people’, whatever the word may mean today) from the offences that artists are aiming at us. We forget, however, that César Monteiro said more on that day than what is usually quoted. Part of his response to the provocations of the media at the time was, moreover, a denunciation of what he claimed was the uselessness of the public service in the area of culture. “They wanted soap operas, did they?”, he asked a journalist rhetorically, implicitly addressing the State (and probably also the audience, the ‘people’). But the issue should never have been about how legitimate it was to make a black screen film with public funding – of course it was legitimate, if supporting free artistic creation is the issue here – but only about scrutiny in relation to budgeting and the application for the subsidy.

Paulo Branco, the producer of the film, actually returned the financing not used in the production to the ICA, taking into account the course that the project took. As for the film and its radical nature, I found, slightly by chance, an *El País* online article quoting Manoel de Oliveira on the subject: “Public controversy doesn’t interest me. I’m only interested in the cinematographic and artistic aspect. And on that I can say that it’s João César Monteiro’s best film. It’s an extremely brave work and a real blow to the quagmire of that old mania that the cinema is movement. [...] Through this film, Portuguese cinema has taken a new step forward”⁷.

The Portuguese, in general, aren’t much interested in culture. This is a fact, not an opinion⁸. But instead of asking production to condition creation in the sense of being more “appealing,” in order to validate it through immediate quantitative results, which only something entertaining can guarantee, perhaps one should invest in cultural intermediation which, of course, would have to be done at school. Instead of making sure that *Branca de Neve* is never produced again (it would be harder today, I believe), we should ensure that a significant number of viewers would try to understand the artistic and cultural gesture in question.

The central question, however, seems to me something that neither the State, let alone the municipalities, can resolve. To what extent are we, producers and creators, willing to risk our funding to uphold the principle of freedom that should underlie what we do? And to what extent will we be able to overcome a general climate of mutual distrust (and competition), to continue a struggle that is, above all, political and civic?

The only hope lies, in fact, in what may arise from within the milieu itself. Because it is those who do it that must determine the contours of their own activity. Unfortunately, when it comes to survival, it is difficult for someone to take the risk of opting for a truer life. I am aware of the difficulty that the “sector” has in changing some of the characteristics that make it permeable to instrumentalisation. The permanent precariousness; the enormous desire for recognition by peers and institutions; lack of time for reflection and lack of private funding; these factors are sufficient to make it understandable that associations and artists are more concerned to continue working than to ensure that they retain complete freedom over their actions. The alternative would be to admit the possibility of facing this activity as an amateur pastime, which unfortunately is happening more and more with the necessary accumulation of

simultaneous work (in some cases, this even means balancing work that is unrelated to the arts during the day with rehearsals at night).

Ultimately, this is a reflection of the society in which we live. Dedication to a risky activity, with no guarantee of financial or symbolic return, seems irrational in a world dominated by economics. The defence of free artistic creation then becomes the equivalent of a gesture of political counterpoint to the dominant logic, which tries to place us all at the service of values and practices that are alien to us. Perhaps the most difficult thing is to understand to what extent we are entangled in this logic that corrupts everything, making the real seemingly transparent but, therefore, simultaneously opaque and resistant to any criticism. As long as we are accomplices in what holds us hostage, we will continue to yearn for a freedom we cannot know.

Montijo, 13th November 2018

1. "Let us start with the facts. It is not true that there has been any cut or reduction in support for the arts. On the contrary, from the previous financing cycle to the current one, there has been, since the beginning, an increase of 41%. The numbers are clear. In the four-year period 2013-2016, the allocated amount was € 45.6 million. In the 2018-2021 cycle, with competitions open, the initial allocation was € 64 million." Excerpt from the "Open Answer to Culture" signed by the Prime Minister. (Available at: <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/download-ficheiros/ficheiro.aspx?v=df3433c6-facc-41e0-9594-cb61c64441ec>)

2. See, for example, the *Diário de Notícias* article available at: <https://www.dn.pt/artes/interior/comisao-informal-de-artistas-mantem-pedido-de-encontro-com-antonio-costa-9235747.html>

3. The report by the working group formed in the meantime is available at: <https://www.portugal.gov.pt/download-ficheiros/ficheiro.aspx?v=eb3eca1a-c029-4e36-bc7c-f9565d8f7722>

4. See, as an example, the *TSF/Lusa* report available at: <https://www.tsf.pt/politica/interior/o-maior-orcamento-de-sempre-para-a-cultura-e-outras-promessas-para-o-oe2019-9587787.html>

5. The concept of creative industries usually includes such diverse areas as the arts, advertising, software, fashion, film and television, among others. The inclusion of these areas is justified because they all involve engaging in activities that build on individual creative skills and talents with the potential for creating something of value through the exploitation of intellectual property.

6. Quotation from the GEPAC document “As Grandes Opções do Plano do Governo para o Período de 2016-2019”, available at: <http://www.gepac.gov.pt/gepac-dsepac/estrategia-e-planeamento/gops-2016-2019-cultura-pdf.aspx>

7. Complete article available at: https://elpais.com/diario/2000/11/13/cultura/974070007_850215.html

8. See, for example, the *Público* article “Porque continuamos a não consumir Cultura? Falta de Educação e dinheiro”: <https://www.publico.pt/2013/11/24/culturaipilon/noticia/quando-foi-a-ultima-vez-que-foi-ao-cinema-e-ao-teatro-e-ha-quanto-tempo-nao-visita-um-museu-1613057>

PROGRAMME

2.30pm · Welcoming Session

Maria João Brilhante

Levi Martins

2.45pm · Talks

Anne de Amézaga

Carla Ruiz

Luis Miguel Cintra

3.45pm · Debate with invited speakers and audience

4.30pm · Coffee break

4.45pm · Round table: “Production: an Invisible Activity?”

Álvaro Correia

Célia Caeiro

Isabel Craveiro

Miguel Abreu

Pedro Alves

5.45pm · Debate with invited speakers and audience

6.30pm · Closing comments

27th March 2017, Cinema-Teatro Joaquim d’Almeida, Montijo

Quais são as diferentes práticas e formas de entender em que consiste a produção? Que lugar é que esta ocupa na actividade artística? Quais são os seus contornos no contexto do teatro contemporâneo? Foram estas algumas das questões que motivaram a organização da jornada **Criar e Produzir: Modalidades de Cooperação Criativa nas Artes Cénicas**, que teve lugar a 27 de Março de 2017, Dia Mundial do Teatro, no Cinema-Teatro Joaquim d'Almeida, Montijo. Durante uma tarde, produtores, artistas-produtores que dirigem grupos e artistas que, embora não façam produção, participam nos processos que viabilizam os seus espectáculos, disponibilizaram-se a pensar a relação entre criação e produção a partir das suas diferentes experiências.

What is production? What are its different practices and ways of understanding it? What role does it play in artistic activity? What exactly does 'production' mean in theatre today? These were some of the issues that led to **Creating and Producing: Creative Cooperation in the Performing Arts**, which took place on 27th March 2017, World Theatre Day, at the Cinema-Teatro Joaquim d'Almeida, Montijo. On one afternoon, producers, artist-producers who run groups, as well as artists who don't do production but are involved in the process of making their shows viable gathered to think about the relationship between creation and production based on their different experiences.

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CINEMA-TEATRO

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