



BIRDIE

A project by Agrupación Señor Serrano
Premiered on July 6th 2016 at GREC Festival de Barcelona

Birdie

Running time: 60 minutes

Two mirages. In one: wars, droughts, massive deforestation, polluted coasts, labor exploitation, political instability, poor sanitary conditions, persecution, forced deportation, abuse of natural resources, depleted aquifers, food shortages...

In the other: stocked supermarkets, safe streets, family stability, good health services, freedom, paid work, respect for human rights, welfare, recycling and renewable energies, prosperity, social mobility...

And in between, flocks of birds. Thousands of migrating birds constantly drawing impossible shapes in the sky. Movement. Ceaseless movement. Birds... and beyond, planets, asteroids, raw materials, galaxies, blood, cells, weapons, atoms, electrons, advertising, quarks, ideology, fear, waste, hope. Life. Nothing in the cosmos is quiet. Stillness is a chimera. The only thing there is, is movement.

If it is impossible to stop an electron, what's the point in building fences against flocks of birds?

Birdie is a multimedia performance with live video, objects, Hitchcock's *The Birds* revisited, scale models, 2000 mini animals, wars, smugglers, a massive migration and three performers handling this messy world with wit, criticism and commitment with humankind.



Notes on the show

When we started the project, the refugee and migrant crisis exploded in the face of the 'civilized' Europe and we were sucked by the vortex of the moment, the news, the videos and the feelings of anger and shame for what we were watching. Then we started to consume cultural and journalistic products that seemed to calm the anger and the shame by just adding more anger and more shame, by directly appealing to our sense of guilt (guilt works great, it is so satisfying). And then we collected facts, statistics, speeches, numbers that were making us feel like we were doing the right thing; we were feeling the right thing; we were thinking the right thing. This was quiet comforting from a personal point of view, but artistically, in the end, this direct approach to the subject made us feel very empty. We felt so creatively defenceless in front of this mess, of this huge problem that we arrived to the conclusion that a direct approach to the problem wasn't the right one for us.

This is how we work: through metaphors; doing one step backwards to see the sense in the chaos; stripping the facts until we get their essence; suggesting connections between actual events, history and vintage films or fictions to create a new approach, a very personal, fresh point of view. We flee from the here and now and the rush of the news because you can find that in the TV, the newspapers or in documentaries and because we think that the pornography of the dramatic images and the direct approach to the facts activate only one kind of emotional response: rage mixed with shame and pity (all those feelings you can find in the pit of the stomach). Nevertheless, we appeal to other emotions (like compassion, persistence, hope or determination) and above all to the emotional intelligence and critical sense of the audience. We know that nowadays the situation regarding refugees and migrant people is so desperate that it seems it requires a direct, resolute, assertive or even virile approach. But this is exactly what we want to avoid.

Finally, we stopped watching all those videos and pictures with which media and social networks constantly bombarded us because we couldn't think clearly, we couldn't see what was lying behind, and we started to think on a different approach, something less direct, less filled with anger, shame and fear and more with humanity.

What's Birdie?



Photo: José Palazón

The stage becomes the green of a golf course. On it, two performers handling objects, video cameras and a scale model recreating the picture above. Where was it taken? Who took it? Why is this picture so appealing? Is it just for its content or is there more? Who are the people on the picture? Who are the birds on the fence? Where do they come from? Where do they go? What happens next? Who are we, the ones observing this picture? Birdie is an attempt to give an answer to all these questions by asking more questions and sowing doubts on our certainties.



Photo: Luca d'Agostino / Phocus Agency

The creative process

Birdie has been developed through two workshops and two creative residencies. This method has allowed us to enrich the show with the creativity of more than twenty creators from different countries and disciplines and has brought to the process the feedback and opinions of dozens of spectators in the different steps of the development of Birdie:

Venice Theatre Biennale (Italy)

August 2015. The company held a workshop based on the project Birdie in the frame of the Biennale College 2015, with a final presentation of a showcase.

Centre International de Formation en Arts du Spectacle – CIFAS (Belgium)

November 2015. The company o held a workshop at Kaai Studio's in Brussels based on the project Birdie, with a final presentation of a showcase.

La Fabrique de Théâtre, La Bouverie (Belgium)

March 2016. Residency and presentation of a showcase.

Monty Kulturfaktorij, Antwerpen (Belgium)

May 2016. Residency and presentation of a showcase.



The team

A show by Agrupación Señor Serrano

Creation: Àlex Serrano, Pau Palacios and Ferran Dordal

Performance: Àlex Serrano, Pau Palacios and David Muñiz

Voice: Simone Milsdochter

Project manager: Barbara Bloin

Lighting design and video programming: Alberto Barberá

Sound design and soundtrack: Roger Costa Vendrell

Video creation: Vicenç Viaplana

Scale models: Saray Ledesma and Nuria Manzano

Costumes: Nuria Manzano

Production assistant: Marta Baran

Scientific consultant: Irene Lapuente / La Mandarina de Newton

Project advisor: Víctor Molina

Legal advisor: Cristina Soler

Management: Art Republic

Special thanks to José Palazón for the cession of the picture used in the show.

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A production by Grec 2016 Festival de Barcelona, Agrupación Señor Serrano, Fabrique de Théâtre - Service des Arts de la Scène de la Province de Hainaut, Festival TNT-Terrassa Noves Tendències, Monty Kulturfaktorij and Festival Konfrontacje Teatralne.

With the support of Cultural Office of Spain's Embassy in Brussels, Departament de Cultura de la Generalitat de Catalunya, Centre International de Formation en Arts du Spectacle de Bruxelles, Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y la Música (INAEM), Institut Ramon Llull.

Mini animal toys sponsorship: Safari Ltd.

Producers:



With the support of:



Mini animals sponsorship:



Special effects sponsorship::



The media say...

Masters on the simulation of the simulation, experts on craftworking the newest technology, on recreating the charm of a stop-motion film produced live with just the right audio-visual software, on pampering the willingness of the spectators to the magic by immersing them in a hallucinogenic odyssey -fifteen years after 2001- or directly inviting them to fly. All that at the service of a surprisingly serene discourse and a well-armed denunciation expressed both with the audio and words -which at the same time question the value of the representation itself- and the video camera that walks the audience through a magnified time-line of the eternal pursuit of a favourable environment to live. An impeccable story of humankind told in the three dimensions of a scale model.

Juan Carlos Olivares, El País (Spain)

http://ccaa.elpais.com/ccaa/2016/07/10/catalunya/1468183554_266115.html

The creativity of Agrupación Señor Serrano reminds us how often we see images without looking at them carefully, without making the effort of reading what they are trying to tell us. Señor Serrano does so through an admirable show. Other creators and other shows keep on presenting staging projects dominated by the politically correct discourse, staging projects that let the so-called 'conscious' spectator to go back home convinced of having fulfilled his civic duty. He listened again to what he was supposed to listen to. But in the end, what is the real scope of these kind of projects? And what is the real effect of seeing images, day after day, to which we gradually become emotionally immune? This is when the people from Agrupación Señor Serrano show up. And propose us to look carefully at images. They create connections between the fear provoked by Hitchcock's invading birds and the fear provoked by those human birds on the top of a fence. And they remind us that the world history has always been, is and will be a history of constant migrations; birds migrate seeking for some heat, people migrate looking for some security, some food, some future. And to tell us about this constant movement, Señor Serrano doesn't need to use any sermons or lessons. Capable of provoking storms in a glass of water and building fascinating visual and human landscapes with minimal resources used with a maximum of talent, Agrupación Señor Serrano flies very high together with this 'Birdie', free from rhetorical discourses and full of imagination.

Ramon Oliver, Recomana.cat (Spain)

<http://www.recomana.cat/CRITICA/2931/52/Birdie/Ramon%20Oliver>

Señor Serrano definitely has a personal critical eye about what happens in the world. They seek correspondences that seem impossible and find compelling reasons to build an eminently aesthetic performance. Without raising their voice or untying their neckties, they make it clear what's their opinion on sterile political behaviour. With this piece, they exceed again the expectations and nail a tour of *eagle* (two strokes under par). Their flight is natural and overwhelming: they fly over the truth and drop questions as bombs, targeting the consciousness of each spectator without being doctrinaire.

Jordi Bordes, El Punt Avui (Spain)

<http://www.elpuntavui.cat/ma/article/5-cultura/19-cultura/987139-grec-i-trons.html>

Denunciation, poetry, wit and originality are the weapons of the collective founded by Alex Serrano to conquer the audience. Puppeteers of the digital age, they manipulate on real-time video, scale models, projections, sounds... and some new resources such as some fascinating light beams. It is a complex staging gear that they dominate to perfection.

Imma Fernández, El Periódico de Cataluña (Spain)

<http://www.elperiodico.com/es/noticias/ocio-y-cultura/agrupacion-senor-serrano-grec-birdie-5257310>

The surprising Catalan company is one of those creative phenomena that are changing the face of the contemporary theatre scene. With a brilliant invention, Birdie establishes a parallel between a famous film, Hitchcock's The birds, and the shot of a photographer where some immigrants are bypassing the fence of a golf course, in front of the indifference of the golf players: the migration of peoples and those of birds are moved by the same irrepressible impulse of life, the fear that arouse around them is due to equally obscure and irrational feelings. Rarely - believe me - I've seen the theme of migration addressed in a key so moving.

Renato Palazzi, Il sole 24 ore (Italy)

<http://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/cultura/2016-12-11/migranti-hitchcock-081514.shtml?uuid=ADvdrfBC>



Agrupación Señor Serrano

Founded by Àlex Serrano in Barcelona in 2006, Agrupación Señor Serrano is a theatre company that creates original productions based on stories drawn from contemporary times. The company uses the richness of innovative and vintage tools to extend the boundaries of its theater. Based on creative collaborations, Señor Serrano's productions blend stage performance, text, video, sound, and scale models to stage stories about discordant aspects of today's human experience. The company productions premiere and tour mostly internationally.

Agrupación Señor Serrano gestates and premieres original intermedia productions using the company's three-stage creative model: Devising of Contents, Dispositive Conception, and Editing and Rehearsal. Creators involved in each work share their primary creative skill sets with one another over the course of the process. This exchanging of abilities empowers each member of the group and consequently the company's project.

The company has received support and recognition from several institutions like GREC Festival de Barcelona, Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo, Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts, Departament de Cultura de la Generalitat, Centre d'Arts Escèniques de Terrassa, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication or Hexagone Scène Nationale Arts et Sciences – Meylan among others. Its creative processes include international residency centers like La Chartreuse – Centre National des Écritures du Spectacle, La Fabrique de Théâtre or Monty Kulturfaktorij.

At present, Agrupación Señor Serrano's core is composed by **Àlex Serrano** (artistic director), **Pau Palacios** (content manager) and **Barbara Bloin** (production manager). Besides them, for each production the company has counted on the essential collaboration of a cross-disciplinary and variable creative team. Over the years, many creators have joined the company's projects, leaving a durable mark: Diego Anido, Ferran Dordal, Jordi Soler, Alberto Barberá, Roger Costa Vendrell, Nuria Manzano, Alexandra Laudo, Jofre Carabén, Martí Sánchez-Fibla, Claudia Solano Watson, Gabriel Parés, Maria de la Cámara, Isabel Franco, Ester Forment, Susana Gómez or Josep Maria Marimon among many others.

On August 3, 2015, Agrupación Señor Serrano was awarded the **Silver Lion at the Venice Biennale**. In addition to this recognition, the company has regularly won awards both nationally and internationally and has received rave reviews in media such as The New York Times, Folha de Sao Paulo, Tiempo Argentino or El País among others.

Productions and awards

- 2017 **Ciutat de Barcelona Award** for Theatre (Spain).
- 2016 **Birdie** GREC Festival de Barcelona (Spain).
Barcelona Critics Prize 2016, New Trends. Barcelona (Spain).
- 2015 **Silver Lion** from the Venice Theatre Biennale (Italy).
FAD Sebastià Gasch Award, Barcelona (Spain).
- 2014 **A House in Asia** GREC Festival de Barcelona (Spain).
Barcelona Critics Prize 2014, New Trends. Barcelona (Spain).
Award of the president of the Moravian-Silesian Region Miroslav Novák, Spectaculo Interesse Festival. Ostrava (Czech Republic).
- 2012 **Brickman Brando Bubble Boom** Festival TNT, Terrassa (Spain).
Award for the Most Innovative Show, International Dance and Theatre Fair 2013. Huesca (Spain).
- 2011 **Katastrophe** Festival TILT, Perpignan (France).
Wojciech Olejnik Award and Jury's Special Prize to the Most Creative Show, PIHT Festival. Warsaw (Poland).
Jury's Special Prize of Banialuka Festival 2012. Bielsko Biala (Poland).
- 2010 **Memo** Festival TNT, Terrassa (Spain).
Prize for Best Mise-en-scène project 2010 of Institut del Teatre. Barcelona (Spain).
- 2009 **Immut** Adriantic, Barcelona (Spain).
- 2008 **Contra.Natura** L'Estruch, Sabadell (Spain).
Award for the Best Performing Arts Project 2007. Lleida (Spain).
Artefacto Festival PNRM, Olot (Spain).
- 2007 **Europa** Festival Temporada Alta, Girona (Spain).
- 2006 **Mil Tristes Tigres** Neo Festival, Barcelona (Spain).
Award for the Most Innovative Show, International Dance and Theatre Fair 2007. Huesca (Spain).

Company members CV

Àlex Serrano Tarragó has got a degree in Industrial Design, an MBA, a master on Interactive Communication and also a degree in Stage Direction. In 1998 he establishes Tangent Audiovisual, a supplier company of audiovisual and multimedia contents. In 2002 he creates Areatangent, a contemporary creation platform. In 2006, he quits the company and founds the Agrupación Señor Serrano. Àlex Serrano holds workshops and seminars regularly. In 2011 he has been invited to hold the workshop Live video for stage directors in the Biennale di Venezia.

Pau Palacios Pozuelo (Barcelona, 1977) began studying Political Science at a university, but ended up graduating in Sociology in another. After finishing his studies he worked as executive producer and road manager at the Teatre Lliure in Barcelona until 2005. That same year he moved to Lisbon, where he flirted with video-art. Since 2006, he is a dramatist and a performer of Agrupación Señor Serrano. He currently lives in the Alps, in the Italian Tyrol. He is the author of the novel *Furioso reloj* (Editorial Tria, 2012).

Barbara Bloin has a DEA in Performing Arts with a distinction on Theatre from the University of Besançon (2005) and another in Performing Arts at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (2008). In 2003 he moved to Barcelona where she is currently studying a PhD in Performing Arts. In September 2005 she joined the Institut del Teatre (Barcelona's Theatre Academy). In 2007, after collaborating with Ricard Salvat at the AIET, she began working with the Agrupación Señor Serrano as executive producer and assistant director.

Last shows

A House in Asia



Premiere 10.07.2014 at GREC Festival de Barcelona

The house where Geronimo is hiding in Pakistan. An exact copy of that house in a military base in North Carolina. A third twin house in Jordan, where a film is shot. The largest manhunt in history. A Sheriff obsessed with a white whale. The boy band Take That drilling for a historic mission. Cowboys and Indians. Airplanes and beers. Copies, reflections, imitations and cheeseburgers.

Through its trademark language (scale models, video projections, video editing in real time and willing performers) Agrupación Señor Serrano presents a scenic western where reality and its copies are mixed, drawing a merciless pop portrait of the decade following 9/11 that gave way to the XXI century. Come and see.

BBBB



Premiere 05.10.2012 at Festival TNT in Terrassa

England. Nests, burrows, caves and mansions. 42,879 foreclosures in Spain in 2011. Brickland. The horror. A banker smiling. A builder smiling. Homesickness. Much video. Much more live video. Tahitian paradises. The right to housing. The right to have air conditioning. The right to have a plasma TV. Spain va bien. And Marlon Brando performing John Brickman. Neither more nor less.

Agrupación Señor Serrano presents **Brickman Brando Bubble Boom**, a stage biopic on the life of Sir John Brickman, the largest builder of nineteenth-century England, and a visionary man who inspired the first mortgage system in history. But also a stage biopic on Marlon Brando's life, the savage actor in a quest for a home. And more: a vindication of homes against market rules.

Katastrophe



Premiere TILT Festival (Perpignan) March 2011

Four performers, eleven scaled models and hundreds of gummy bears create the world of Katastrophe: a stupid fable about human civilization, focused on disasters. In this context, the gummy bears suffer earthquakes, oil spills, wars and extermination. Everything is performed live through chemical experiments and subversive actions. Around the stage, three large screens immerse the audience in this pop world of chaos, game and destruction. Katastrophe questions the difference between a natural catastrophe, a 'natural' catastrophe caused by man and a human catastrophe. Or to put it simply, if deaths provoked by a tsunami are comparable to those caused by a radioactive leak, or to those produced by an atomic bomb. We have a very clear idea about that.

Katastrophe is nourished by the performing language that defines Agrupación Señor Serrano: performance, dance, physical theater, video in scene and interactive technologies.

Contra.Natura



Premiere Estruch Sabadell November 2008 // Temporada Alta Festival 2009

Performed by an actor and a dancer, *Contra.Natura* is a multidisciplinary play that, taking as a basis the language of the physical and the visual theatre, integrates elements from other art disciplines, such as dance, performance, and art installation.

Nature is imposing, unyielding, changing; it does not act according to any plan, it simply develops as a balance of forces. We have built our identity as species through a constant opposition to these overwhelming forces by means of a resolute creative/cultural action. Thus, we try to overcome our anxiety for the erasing power of Nature through a persistent fight against oblivion, against extinction. But all efforts are pointless, the battle is lost, because one day there will be nothing left of us.

Therefore, let's imagine the end. The last two human beings, a woman and a man. Sterile. Surrounded for all the human creation, our objects, our ideas. And obsessed for one only thing: to pass on to someone all this creation in order to save humanity from Cosmos silent oblivion. Pass it on. Yes. But... to whom?

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