

The Solitude of a Moth

Nico Garrone

There's a name for them – nikikomori – which means Japanese kids who huddle or curl up in their rooms with bed, TV and computer. They often end up committing suicide. Crac – an extract from Motus' project in progress X(Ics)- Cruel tales of youth – is a performance that alludes to a similar solitude. Here too the main character is a girl on rollerblades, the androgynous figure of Silvia Calderoni. We see her skating around a circle of light, like a moth between two flames. And then she drops into an anguishing half-asleep state of falling down and trying to get up. Until her symbolic disappearance beneath the carpet of her dance. A modern tragedy told with impeccable, frigid technological elegance, without a tear.

SHORT TIME * A festival directed by Fabrizio Arcuri at the India theatre

DISORDERS AND BREAK-UPS IN MOTUS' "CRAC"

A performance condensed into a brief 35 minutes
that recounts a falling to pieces even of stage time.

Gianni Manzella, ROME

In the cinema they'd maybe be called shorts. But in the theatre the sense of time, its value we might say, is decidedly different. So Short theatre, the festival directed by Fabrizio Arcuri which is back at the India theatre for the third year, does not appear to be only an ordered succession of pieces that are short to a greater or lesser degree, following one upon the other in the multiplying spaces of the old factory. It is not only a question of the indubitable completeness of Crac, presented here by Motus, a performance that is perfect in its 35 minutes.

It is precisely that the brief format, the compression of the working duration, may radicalise the perception of the times that are interwoven on the stage, as may be seen from Motus' creation. Stepping out of X (ics), the "cruel tales of youth" that constitute the most recent and still in progress adventure of the company headed by Enrico Casagrande and Daniela Nicolò, a slender girl on rollerblades goes swiftly round and round an illuminated circle traced out on the floor and also projected vertically on the background. The virtual boundary of images which are then projected there. An oscillating window on her body, now lying down, noisily asleep. Slashes of light that open out like a wound, plays of pixels that dance and ricochet like early videogames, geometrical figures that multiply in accordance with a taste that would once have been called op(tical). But then voices and sounds from an outside enter into the composition. Imprecations in Roman dialect from some street quarrel, drowned in the basso continuo of traffic noise. Dialect voices from some working class district. Shouts and the "no surrender" chants from some neo-fascist demonstration. Our present, and even more: life that bursts in with its insolent randomness.

Within this visual and sound container the young protagonist lives her daily life: Silvia Calderoni, one of the new generation's most intelligent actresses whom we have also seen with Teatro Valdoca. Amid falls and disorder and with a continual will to get up again, in the end taking refuge beneath the carpet of her dance. Because if the onomatopoeic title speaks of a break-up, something that goes to pieces, what strikes us in Crac is actually a suture between different overlaid temporal planes. The present of the stage action and that of the recorded sounds which tell us about the real place with equal physicality.

There's a rigour in the elaboration of Motus' work which is able to contain the inorganic material from which it sets out.

TheCrac

There's an interesting wave of interest in the adolescent world. Those marginal figurines, often unresolved, thin and hooded, who hang around the circles of hell of outer city lives, have become the main characters in shows that seek to investigate the reasons behind their prolonged silences, simple dreams and unexpected violence.

Following disturbing films like those of Gus van Sant, Moore and Hardwicke, and the latest by Kechiche or Plà, it's now our theatre's turn to cast an eye on this dark age. Adolescence as a season of transformation and disenchantment, of solitude and passion: from Teatro delle Albe's Palottini to the Societas' Hey Girl!, and in the new phases of Motus' work, these ungraspable figures are centre stage, people we might see at the disco or in the street with their skateboards and iPods.

With X(Ics) – cruel tales of youth the Rimini company has decided to proceed step by step with this inquiry into the adolescent body and into its concealment or denial. Attentive as always to the vision and aesthetics of the contemporary, Casagrande and Nicolò could not fail to be fascinated by a world that has precise aesthetic rules, so strong as to become characterising elements of socialisation. Eclecticism and syncretism, music and rollerblades, videos and images are therefore the unstable access keys to the adolescent universe, which of course is increasingly impelled towards confession, to virtual self-exhibition on youtube, to the online diary of myspace, towards programmatic autism, to corporeal affliction from manifest inability to bear pain and towards absolute extraneousness to the things of the world.

Videogames and synthesizers, hypnotic music and synthetic drugs, shyness and obsessions, gymnastic sex and work on the body, this "persistent present" is the subject of Motus' reconnaissance. A new chapter – Crac – was presented at the very lively Short Theatre festival in Rome. Crac is maybe an installation or – as we say with a much abused word – a "performance", a brief visual and virtual game which nonetheless kindles a spark of humanity in the lost and gaunt reflection of a filiform girl who comes onto the stage and skates round and round. A circumference on the floor and a smaller one on the backdrop: here, as screen and world, images come to life, hypnotic evocations, memories of videogames like packman, imaginary electrocardiograms, the grilles and cages of a mind which, centre stage, seated or lying, endures, denies, produces, avoids, stimulates, explains and fights.

A micro-world that could be a bedroom (symbolic place of adolescence) cut by beams of light that burst in from outside, or could be the street – place of extraneousness, of solitude. And it is precisely disruptive solitude that the androgynous and slight Silvia Calderoni brings out with resigned violence, with the ardour of having to survive in an environment that is unknown and not understood, of having to taste and suffer existences that are imposed and drifting. In Crac the background noise consists of various everyday voices, often vulgar, football crowds or little fascist marches, car crashes and café chatter. Around that magical and abstract circle, reality is the same as ever, it's all there: no more utopias or revolutions on the horizon. But inside – or beneath – that magic carpet which is the concrete projection of a mental universe, there is a moving pain in ferment.

by Andrea Porcheddu _ www.delteatro.it
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