



## HELLO STRANGER | 25 years of MOTUS

Bologna, October December 2016  
2016 Special Project promoted by the Municipality of Bologna and  
Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione

with the support of Regione Emilia Romagna Assessorato alla Cultura

“Every looking back of ours is aimed at stocking up energy better and going again at it, to insert ourselves in the folds of the present and try imagining possible futures.”  
Motus

**HELLO STRANGER** is the special project that the city of Bologna dedicates to Motus in celebration of their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A journey across the poetics of the Rimini-based company, with performances, installations, films, gatherings towards unexplored directions, openings towards any possible “other”.

Motus is the nomad and independent theatrical group founded by Enrico Casagrande and Daniela Nicolò in 1991 in Rimini, a group which does not conceive borders between countries, genders and artistic forms. Motus have created theatre shows, performances, installations and workshops featured in the most important and prominent international festivals.

A thread of Motus's constant research is the choice to tackle classics in literature and theatre, from *Orlando Furioso* to *Antigone*, in order to face directly the burning questions of the everyday, catalyzing the explosion of its contradictions and creating moments of study and research beyond the mere outcry or provocation. From their first “pop/postmodern” performances, Motus have distinguished themselves with a strongly socially engaged theatre involving the most heterogenous audiences. In these 25 years, the company has essentially self-produced their work, leaning on certain places or cities, or living there, or invading them. These same places and cities have led to revelatory encounters and exchanges.

**Bologna** has played a central role in Motus's tenacious journey towards their expressive identity. It was the city where were developed important collaborations, and also where the first adventurous artistic forms were showcased. Independent spaces like Link, TPO at Teatro dell'Accademia di Belle Arti di Bologna, Centro Fratelli Rosselli are the contexts in which the first experimentations of the company took shape, coherently with the first experiences in abandoned spaces in the more secluded Rimini inland, in particular Roncofreddo with the founding members of the current Zapruder

filmmakers group.

Motus have never anchored themselves in one single place: this has allowed to weave a network of human/artistic relationships across the world and to maintain an open dialogue especially with those institutions and venues that consider artistic expression not a mean to give answers but a mean to continually ask questions. In the last years, thanks to the success of their work, the company has started to collaborate with the greatest international Festivals and theatrical institutions, while still maintaining a marginal place in the Italian theatrical system.

This special project in Bologna therefore takes a special meaning, a journey that does not attempt to be either retrospective or, even less, nostalgic. Thus Motus, more than celebrating its 25 years of existence, intends to catch the urgency of the present and to provoke new questions.

**HELLO STRANGER** is inspired by the title of a song by Barbara Lewis. It is imagined as a journey that tackles many open questions and presents them under new forms, connecting themes, places and people. The peculiar trait of Motus's adventurous moving forward is indeed to provoke chain reactions towards unexplored and not always reassuring directions, like opening towards the other, the stranger/strange in a geopolitical, but also philosophical sense. The title of the project also quotes a photo by Terry Richardson in which the writing "Hello Stranger" appears on an abandoned billboard near a border fence: the lack of information on the place where the picture was taken and the anonymity of the image itself symbolize Motus's research process, a kind of work always at the edge, focused on the listening of the stranger/unknown. From the very beginning, yet still right now, the theme of limits and identity borders and the challenges connected to their overcoming lead Motus's dramaturgical research.

**HELLO STRANGER** is made possible by the participation of public institutions and numerous cultural professionals, as well as many local partners that have collaborated with the company for years. The partners of this project promoted by the Municipality of Bologna and Emilia Romagna Teatro Fondazione with the support of the Assessorato alla Cultura of Emilia Romagna Region are: the Municipality of Casalecchio di Reno, Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna, Centro La Soffitta-Dipartimento delle Arti Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna, ATER Circuito Regionale Multidisciplinare - Teatro Comunale Laura Betti Casalecchio di Reno, Ateliersi, Gender Bender Festival, Teatri di Vita, Xing.

Motus dedicates **HELLO STRANGER** to the ever present adventure companion and irreplaceable collaborator **Sandra Angelini**, who contributed with immense joy to the birth of this project and who suddenly passed away – leaving the company at immense loss – in January 2016.

### Program

**HELLO STRANGER** will begin with the **opening** of the new and controversial performance **RAF-FICHE – MACHINE (CUNT) FIRE** hosted by the **VIE Festival** (Hotel Carlton, October 18-22), an "outlaw" homage to Jean Genet's *Splendid's*. Motus's *Splendid's*, that opened in 2002, was one of the company's most successful productions, finalist at the Premi Ubu as best performance of the year. At the time were staged the French author's most tragic obsessions: betrayal, transvestism, sexuality, physical and verbal violence, the inexorable necessity of death. But the script also reveals a deep refusal of society's clichés and rules: any state of being can be transformed into its contrary. Thus roles and genders appear continually interchangeable, blending masterfully, in both exterior aspects and characters dynamics.

Following up on the themes recently tackled in *MDLSX*, Magdalena Barile and Luca Scarlini have written an original script that springs from the same narrative situation to tell of subversive and mutant identities, creatures who have suspended for ever their desire to define themselves. It will be a performance for hotel suites, that stages, in close contact with the audience, the smell of the revolution of sexy trans-modern witches, returned among us to counter prejudices, stereotypes and prohibitions.

In parallel to **RAFFICHE – MACHINE (CUNT) FIRE**, the video installation **ROOMS** (from 2002's *Twin Rooms*, the successful performance on hotel rooms, of which *Splendid's* was a derivation), will be revived at **Atelier-Si** (October 20-23). This video installation, produced for the 2004 Festival TTV in Riccione, will be the chance to see and re-see after many years, a piece of work where themes and elements explored by Motus throughout the years come again into the light. *Rooms* is a project that remains current and incisive, especially with regards to the theme of identity (and indignation), that connects the entire special project.

**MDLSX** will be presented for the first time in Bologna after a lengthy and successful tour abroad and in Italy at the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of the **Gender Bender Festival**, on November 3 and 4 at **Teatri di Vita**. The protagonist of this adventure is Silvia Calderoni who – after 10 years with Motus – embarks on this experiment that takes the apparent shape of an eccentric Dj/Vj set. Motus's idea has been to work on the border between feminine and masculine and to connect and co-fuse, in their original script, autobiographical fragments with literary evocations, starting from writer Jeffrey Eugenides, but also quoting philosophical texts and theoretical manifestoes by Judith Butler, Paul B. Preciado and Donna Haraway, as well as some pearls by Pier Paolo Pasolini.

The Gender Bender Festival, in collaboration with Centro la Soffitta – Dipartimento delle Arti – Alma Mater Studiorium – Università di Bologna, will host a round-table discussion **Ghost in the Shell. Gender and Performance** that will take place on Saturday 5 November at the Laboratori della Arti/Auditorium.

The journey will continue with **Come un cane senza padrone** (2003), with two “historical” Motus actors: Emanuela Villagrossi and Dany Greggio. This performance stems from some chapters of *Petrolino* by Pasolini, in particular those regarding the sex transition of engineer Carlo, the novel's main character. This revival will be presented on December 3 at **Teatro Laura Betti in Casalecchio**, space that, starting in 1990s, has hosted several productions of the company.

Another androgynous and controversial figure that has been at the heart of the company's theatrical research for a long time is **Antigone**. Motus has decided to come back on the **Syrma Antigones** project, as it is the red thread that connected them to the **Living Theatre. Too Late! (antigone) contest#2** will be presented at **Laboratori delle Arti/Teatro** on December 7 and 8 in the Centro La Soffitta – Dipartimento delle Arti | Alma Mater Studiorium – Università di Bologna season, as part of the **Antigone rewind** focus curated by Fabio Acca. **Alexis. Una tragedia greca**, that opened at the 2010 VIE Festival, will be presented on December 10 as part of the **Arena del Sole** season.

**Judith Malina** saw both performances at LA MAMA and at the Public Theatre in New York City, and was so enthralled by them that she asked Motus to work together. From this special encounter was born **The Plot is the revolution**, presented in Bologna in 2013 at the Giardino della Memoria across from the Museo per la Memoria di Ustica in the context of *bè bolognaestate*.

A space will be dedicated to this lighting-like encounter: in collaboration with Cristina Valenti, on December 5 will be presented at the Laboratori delle Arti/Auditorium **Your whole life is a rehearsal (The Plot is a revolution\_video doc)**, a documentary by Enrico Casagrande and Daniela Nicolò (with Judith Malina, Silvia Calderoni, Tom Walker and Brad Burgess). This documentary has been created using a series of unreleased video materials from the rehearsals at the Clinton street Theater in New York from the summer of 2011. This behind the scenes film tells the falling in love and the progressive disappearing of barriers between two companies and two actresses who entered a telepathic symbiosis. Everything happened in that room which, unfortunately, does not exist anymore: the Living Theatre was evicted in February 2013, and Judith Malina moved to New Jersey to a home for former actors, where she peacefully passed on April 10<sup>th</sup> 2015.

*scintille* will be the title of the film cycle presented by the **Cineteca di Bologna**: documentaries and films by authors who have influenced the imaginary of the performances featured in the 2016 special project. This series will be inaugurated in October with the projection of *Splendid's* (2004), a film by Daniela Nicolò and Enrico Casagrande, and will be concluded in December with a *focus* on the **Living Theatre's** filmography curated by Cristina Valenti.

**HELLO STRANGER**, that will also present other moments to be defined, will close on December 31 with **THISVERYMOMENT**, an actual happening that celebrates the 20-year long collaboration between Motus and Xing. This unique event will bring together many international and Italian guest artists, who will be inhabit the space and and will be invited to mold a diluted, fluid time dedicated to the sharing of practices and body camouflage.

The project will be accompanied by the release of the **book** by the same name, **HELLO STRANGER**, written and conceived by Enrico Casagrande and Daniela Nicolò, curated by Laura Gemini and Giovanni Boccia Artieri, with graphics by Damir Jellici (who curates the whole project's graphics) and published in both Italian and English by Damiani Editore in Bologna. The book is expected to be released in December 2016.

**HELLO STRANGER** the book will be an “atlas of images” and textual fragments agglomerated around 8 thematic lines/chapters identified as the *topoi*/recurrent obsessions, that have been transformed throughout the years, as they ran into actual facts, the evolution of times and of the bodies that have inhabited Motus's stage. Introduced by Wlodek Goldkorn's words, it thus will not be organized **chronologically or historiographically, but will rather be an exploded and rhizomatic nature**. The red thread is inevitably the body of the actor as a feeling machine, as the permanent cornerstone of the stage, as a sacred-foreign guest with whom Motus have fought, built, destroyed and especially transformed the sign of their artistic doing, without interruptions. The words are a “choral” accompaniment, almost a polyphonic soundtrack composed by short contributions by the company, their fellow artists and critics, by, in short, the companions which have followed their adventure in that “theatre for gangs and solitary predators” - as Antonio Attisani prophetically defined it in the early 1990s – that has fed the crazy, long-winded and wonderful theatrical challenges of the last twenty five years.

## **CALENDAR**

### **RAF-FICHE – MACHINE (CUNT) FIRE**

VIE Festival  
Hotel Carlton  
October 18-22

### **Rooms** video installation

Atelier-Si  
October 20-23

### **MDLSX**

Gender Bender Festival  
Teatri di Vita  
November 3-4

### **Come un cane senza padrone**

Teatro Comunale Laura Betti Casalecchio di Reno  
December 3

### **Your whole life is a rehearsal**

The Plot is the Revolution\_video doc  
Laboratori delle Arti/Auditorium

December 5

**TOO LATE! (antigone) contest #2**

Laboratori delle Arti/Teatro

December 7-8

**Alexis. Una tragedia greca**

Arena del Sole

December 10

**scintille** – film cycle

Cinema Lumière

October-December

**THISVERYMOMENT**

XING happening and guests

December 31

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Ateliersi

Gender Bender Festival

Teatri di Vita

Xing

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