



Tania's
Paradise

How this show came to life :

Now, Gilles says :

I saw Tania for the first time in 2004, without knowing who she was or that one day we would work together.

That was at a course I ran at Lomme circus school.

I had a vague idea contortion is painful, a pain that lasts. But just looking at how she bent, I immediately understood that with her, it was something different.

So when in 2007, I dreamed of a circus show about a fortuitous contortionist (read: who would remain in the shadows with the audience and could, bend slowly close to them without making them cringe, whilst whispering to them in their ear), it's Tania I called.

We repeated this show and I wanted to write some very short texts for each of the tiny acts she would give at the tables, but so real that telling them to people would almost be a desecration, even if they were fictitious.

So to write some lies that could reveal secrets, I first listened to Tania, and I detected within her something strange and made even



more beautiful by the fact it was unexpected. This young woman who, except for her accent, did seem to be similar to us, was sometimes very far away from us.

Without discovering the reasons for this real strangeness, I realized that this was not only the enigma that is unique to each individual, but the peculiarities of the Israeli childhood that Tania was telling me about without any restraint that had created this mystery.

New mystery, watching Tania on stage (it has to be said that I hadn't seen her perform for 3 years and she had meanwhile learned her trade), we could not find in any of what she was doing the usual and almost fantasy-like images of contortion: sensuality, androgyny, the fair ... Not even a desire to impress.

She was just there, whole, watching us in the eyes, whether silent or speaking, bending or sitting.

And the desire for this show came as if this mix of strangeness and obviousness had something essential to tell us about ourselves, and it could tell us very naturally.

Synopsis :

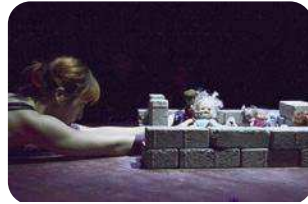
This show won't speak about Israel, an Israeli woman talks. Moreover, she could be anything other than Israeli, but let's say that being born and having grown up in this place of the world where the contradictions converge, this young woman almost becomes a "character", as they say in classical theatre, a clear reflection of the human race.

Tania speaks about herself in a very simple way:

My name is Tania. My name's Tania but I'm not Russian. My mother was born in South Africa, and my grandmother sent her to Israel. She joined her years after. My father was born in Jerusalem, his family comes from somewhere in Europe. From where exactly, I absolutely don't know. I used to. I forgot, but I knew it.

Later in the show:

There's a lot of things that make me angry. When I ask a question



and the answer is not to the point, it makes me angry. When I'm not understood, when people don't understand each other, when I hurt myself, it makes me angry. The French Civil Service makes me angry. Paperwork, people behind their desks saying all the time – I can't do anything, that's just the way it is. Hooting, alarms that ring for nothing, car races, retirement homes.

A little further :

The first time I felt like I was holding a child by the hand it was not a child, it was my first lover, but we hadn't kissed yet. It was his first day in the army and he asked me to go with him. He was taller and older by 30 cm and 2 years. His name was Roy.

And so on...

TANIA'S PARADISE is not about standing up for or blaming something; it's just a young woman who talks about herself while walking on her hands.

The sense of place

This is taking place in a Kyrgyz yurt. One has to mix the references a bit.

In the centre, a tiny arena, people all around.

No more than fifty. Because Tania's alone and she must be able to look at everyone at least once in the eyes.

If we wanted to see an allegory of any kind in this act, we would say that whilst looking at Tania encircled as she is by the audience: she is surrounded!

But beware of allegories, they're as poor as the language of flowers. The theatre and circus want for more obscure and more mysterious languages.

In this very intimate place, the body too confides more than it demonstrates.

Tania doesn't play in front of people, but amongst people. It's precious.



The circle has an advantage, it forces the artist into a perpetual dynamism, she can only rest for a very short while.

And the circle is also a reminder that we're at the circus. With the stands in a circle, there are no best seats, no "prince's eye", this is the place where equality reigns.

It has another advantage; people who are there sitting in a circle aren't only in a relationship with the artist, they're together and their experience is as much about sharing the show as it's about receiving the show. This is not necessarily easy at first, because everyone brings some of his or her own solitude. But there is always a time when a specific emotion, some laughter coming from several sides at once perhaps, brings this fragile community together.

In the end it's almost as if the artist could simply disappear.

Cast

Writing and directing :
Gilles Cailleau.

Actor and author since 1985, he left the theatre in 1996 to create Attention Fragile with Patou Bondaz, a traveling theatre company, of which he is the director. The company has co-produced and toured in Scènes nationales, Pôle-Cirque, Centres Nationaux des Arts de la Rue et des Théâtre de Ville. Cailleau also taught acting at l'école Nationale de Cirque de Châtellerault from 1996 to 2000, ran workshops at the CNAC Chalon-en-Champagne and the EPSAD in Lille, and coaches regularly at the Centre des Arts du Cirque in Lomme and, this year, at Lido-Toulouse.

Co-writing, performing, contortion, harp :
Tania Sheflan.

She was born in Tel Aviv, Israel 34 years ago. She left when she was 21, 3 months after the end of her military service which she did in the clinic of an air base. From 6 to 14, she practiced dance and synchronized swimming in the national team. When she was 11 her parents divorced after 18 years of marriage and one year of fights and conflicts. After the army, she went to India, Nepal and Canada to swim. This is where she met Circus. In 2003, she came to France and became a contortionist.

Sound, lights, stage management :
Julien Michenaud.

General management
and assistant decorator :
Lydie Del Rabal.



Final touch :
Patou Bondaz.

Producer :
Anne Rossignol

Diffusion :
**Anne Laurence
Loubignac.**

Coproducers :

- L'ESTIVE, SCÈNE NATIONALE DE FOIX ET DE L'ARIÈGE
- SCÈNES DU JURA, SCÈNE NATIONALE EN PRÉFIGURATION
- STREET C.A.T BAT YAM FESTIVAL (ISRAËL)
- LA MÉRIDIDIENNE, SCÈNE CONVENTIONNÉE DE LUNÉVILLE
- L'ABATTOIR / CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS DE LA RUE
- L'ARC, SCÈNE NATIONALE DU CREUSOT
- LA VILLE DE LA VALETTE-DU-VAR
- *TANIA'S PARADISE* received grants from the French Institute and the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region as part of their cooperation framework.

Around the show

Let's start with a story

Rehearsals for the show started in April 2009.

This deserves another little story, which takes place in a college in Toulon, where we settled down for three weeks. A month before, Gilles went to present the project to pupils a few days after the end of "Operation Cast Lead." 8 out of 10 children at the college were offspring of second-generation Algerian and Moroccan immigrants. So when Gilles announced a young Israeli woman would come to rehearse a show about her life, he almost got stones thrown at him.

A month later, when a class was brought into the yurt, pupils' faces were grave. Gilles had asked Tania to write her whole life in 10 sentences and 10 contortions and balance movements. At the end of the performance, the most hostile of them who had promised to burn the yurt down told Tania - 'Actually your life is just like mine.'



This show was created with students all around it in France and in front of our neighbourhood when we were in Israel. And now that it is born, it has to live strongly everyday and everywhere.

When ATTENTION FRAGILE settles down somewhere, our first wish is to build relationships. We want to see people as much as they see us. When we set up we want to promote any kind of meetings, as much as we can do with the time given, and we want to set the meetings with those who invited us and who know far better than us the place we're going to invest.

And much more remains to be done as far as possible... We'd like to build projects based on our arrival, where human and artistic meetings would always be reinvented, sometimes with seriousness, other times in crazy circumstances...

Attention fragile

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