

THE MOUNTAIN
Agrupación Señor Serrano



"We wanted people to understand that they shouldn't take any opinion pre-digested, and they shouldn't swallow everything that came through the tap, whether it was radio or Facebook"

Orson Welles on his radio broadcast *The war of the worlds* (1938)

THE MOUNTAIN

There is a widely shared image that runs through the history of ideas: climbing a mountain, overcoming all the difficulties to reach its summit and once there, being able to see the world "as it is". See the truth and not just shadows or reflections. It is a beautiful image indeed. But is it really so? Often, looking from the top down you can see nothing but clouds and fog covering everything or a landscape that changes depending on the time of day or the weather. What is that world like then? How is that truth? Is there the truth? Is it just a peak that must be crowned and that's it, or rather a cold and inhospitable path that must be continually climbed?

The Mountain blends the first expedition to Mount Everest, which success is still today uncertain; Orson Welles sowing panic with his radio show *The War of the Worlds*; badminton players playing baseball; a fake news website; a drone scrutinizing the audience; lots of snow; mobile screens; fragmented images; and Vladimir Putin discoursing delighted on truth and trust.



THE EXPEDITION

A network of ideas, stories, images, actions and concepts underpins The Mountain's dramaturgical framework. With these materials, unfolded in layers that intermingle creating unexpected connections, the piece is presented as an exploration without a map on the myth of truth.

George Mallory and Mount Everest. In 1924, a British expedition tried for the first time to reach the summit of the Everest. It was a fabulous adventure with a tragic ending. Mallory was last seen from Base Camp just 200 meters below the summit when a bank of fog covered him. No one knows if he made it to the top. Why was he trying to climb that mountain? Did he reach the summit? What kind of truth was he looking for up there? What certifies that something has really happened or not? Through the voice of Ruth, Mallory's wife and a philosopher, we will be guided over a reflection on truth based on persistence and honesty, on facing our relationship with facts and stories through love as the axis of action.

The War of the Worlds. It was a radio broadcast made by Orson Welles in 1938 based on the novel by H.G. Wells. The program put in check the credibility of the radio and the trust that the public had placed in it: thousands of people believed that some Martians were attacking the United States. Did the radio broadcast reveal anything about the public's vulnerability to new news media sources? Does this program tell us something about our time? What is trust and how does it work? Does trust have something to do with truth?

Putin, the showman of truth. Vladimir Putin becomes the M.C. of the piece, the master of ceremonies. Using a direct and incisive style, he reflects on the sense of truth and trust, the relationship between facts and stories, the role of the media in telling the story, etc. Putin approaches the truth through seduction and tries to draw us towards the dark side of the truth, towards suspicion, mistrust and deceit. But why Putin and not another face? Perhaps precisely because it is the face we want to see defending this type of thinking, rather than the face of someone we admire or feel closer to.



THE DEVICE

A white and diaphanous stage. Scale miniatures atop platforms, a radio studio, a reproduction of Everest, portable projection screens and tripods make up a space halfway between a recording set, a museum and a badminton court. It is the ideal space to build the various dramaturgical lines of the plot and also to show the mechanism that interconnects them. A space that allows us to play with hindering or fragmenting the vision of what happens on stage, in the same way that the truth is often presented to us, hindered and fragmented.

Three mobile screens distributed throughout the space, between the platforms and the pedestals, function as a projection surface, fragmenting the visual discourse when they are separated or unifying it when they are joined to form a large screen. These canopies also function as reflectors, chroma backgrounds for special effects or space dividers with which to deliberately hide what happens behind them, creating a constant interplay between what is shown and what is hidden from the viewer's eyes.

On the platforms, objects and scale models creating scenes compose the different situations that visually and dramaturgically construct the piece. A model of a Midwest city where an alien ship has just landed; the lifeless body of mountaineer George Mallory among the eternal ices of Everest; a large-scale reproduction of Mount Everest; public and private spaces of a United States captivated by radio; baseball players who claim to be playing badminton with the complicity and consensus of the spectators. All these materials are used to narrate the different stories that make up the plot of *The Mountain* through video cameras and projection screens.



CREDITS

Creation: Agrupación Señor Serrano

Dramaturgy and direction: Àlex Serrano, Pau Palacios, Ferran Dordal

Performance: Anna Pérez Moya, Àlex Serrano, Pau Palacios, David Muñiz

Voice: Amelia Larkins

Music: Nico Roig

Video programming: David Muñiz

Video creation: Jordi Soler Quintana

Set design and scale models: Lola Belles, Àlex Serrano

Set design assistant: Mariona Signes

Costumes: Lola Belles

Light design: Cube.bz

Digital mask: Román Torre

Production director: Barbara Bloin

Producer: Paula Sáenz de Viteri

Technical director: David Muñiz

Management: Art Republic

A production by GREC Festival de Barcelona, Teatre Lliure, Centro de cultura contemporánea Condeduque, CSS Teatro Stabile di Innovazione del Friuli – Venezia Giulia, Teatro Stabile del Veneto – Teatro Nazionale, Zona K, Monty Kulturfaktorij, Grand Theatre, Feikes Huis.

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WE LOVE LOGOS



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 Departament de Cultura de la Generalitat, GREC Festival de Barcelona, Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música, Centre d'Arts Escèniques de Terrassa, Triennale di Milano, Manchester Home Arts Center or Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles among others. Its creative processes include international residency centers like La Chartreuse – Centre National des Écritures du Spectacle, Groningen Grand Theater or Monty Kulturfaktorij

At present, Agrupación Señor Serrano's core is composed by Àlex Serrano, Pau Palacios and Barbara Bloin. Besides them, for each production the company has counted on the essential collaboration of a cross-disciplinary and variable creative team.

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 (Premi Ciutat de Barcelona, Premi FAD Sebastià Gasch, etc.) and has received rave reviews in media such as The New York Times, Folha de Sao Paulo, L'Espresso, Tiempo Argentino or El País among others.

Productions and awards

- 2019 **Garden Center Europa**, L'Auditori de Barcelona (Spain)
- 2018 **Kingdom**, GREC Festival de Barcelona (Spain)
Barcelona Critics Prize 2018, Best Use of Digital Tools (Spain)
- 2017 **Ciutat de Barcelona Award for Theatre** (Spain)
- 2016 **Birdie**, GREC Festival de Barcelona (Spain)
Kazimierz Krzanowski award, Kontrapunkt Festival 2018. Szczecin (Poland)
Butaca Prize, Catalan Theatre Audience Awards 2017 (Spain)
Barcelona Critics Prize 2016, New Trends (Spain)
Barcelona Critics Prize 2016, Best Use of Digital Tools (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 (Spain)
Award of the president of the Moravian-Silesian Region Miroslav Novák, Festival Spectaculo Interesse, 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)
Jury's Special Prize of Banialuka Festival 2012, Bielsko Biala (Poland)
- 2010 **Memo**, Festival TNT, Terrassa (Spain)
- 2009 **Immut**, Adriatic, Barcelona (Spain)
- 2008 **Contra.Natura**, L'Estruch, Sabadell (Spain)
Artefacto, Festival PNRM, Olot (Spain)
- 2007 **Europa** Festival Temporada Alta, Girona (Spain)
- 2006 **Mil Tristos Tigres**, Neo Festival, Barcelona (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 (Auxerre, 1981) 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

Kingdom



Premiere 04.07.2018 at GREC Festival de Barcelona

Kingdom is an irreverent cocktail, mixing bananas, consumerism, virile choreographies, commercials, punk rock, King Kong, supermarkets, growth, confusion, expansion, multinationals, shortages, coups d'état, bestiality, trap music and very macho men in an endless party.

The world is going to shit, let's celebrate. Bananas and King Kong, two totems of the system, two insatiable beasts that need to grow without limits, great devourers of resources, icons of masses but, above all, an inevitable condemnation for a system that cannot stop growing although this pushes us towards extinction. And if this is the destiny of humanity, what are we going to do, crying? No, embracing our bananas and have a party.

Kingdom brings the history of capitalism and bananas as they were never told before. A story with a perfect and unexpected ally: King Kong. Through him and what he represents (virility, overwhelming force, instinct) the mechanisms that act within the economic and social system of the West are shown. A system built on the basis of cycles and crises, consumption and desire, but within which all the "desirable" things of our society have been generated (civil rights, progress, development). A system so complex that it does not accept simplistic interpretations.

Birdie



Premiere 07.07.2016 at GREC Festival de Barcelona

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?

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.

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