

Playing with

Kantor

16—25.11.2023

Spain

Funies phantoms
& infantas

Cricoteka



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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to invite you to join us in playing with Kantor, for the first time in the novel and expanded form of a festival.

I believe that the event's current edition, "Playing with Kantor: Spain – Furies, Phantoms and Infantas", is an important programme for at least two reasons. The project aims to show to the viewers the dynamics of the Spanish reception and artistic interactions with the work of Tadeusz Kantor, providing us with new knowledge about the history of Cricot 2. At the same time, it is an opportunity to host a multifaceted presentation of Spain's contemporary performing arts in Krakow.

It is with great joy that I observed the creation of this project, in particular the work of Magdalena Link-Lenczowska, who devoted to it her whole attention, expanding the already broad scope of her professional activities at Cricoteka. This project took me back to my former adventure, which involved a search for Kantor's traces in Italy. I was therefore extremely glad to be able to give Magdalena Link-Lenczowska a copy of the play *Velázquez's Infanta* by Jerónimo López Mozo, presented to Cricoteka by Julia Nawrot with a beautiful dedication expressing the hope that the work will be available in Polish one day.

Julia Nawrot also brings back my memories of the great conference held in 2015, on the centenary of the artist's birth, at the Polish Institute in Rome. This event – like the conference in 2010 described by Anna Róża Burzyńska – was attended by Kantor researchers, interpreting his work on many levels. And I am certain that just as the 2010 conference in a way gave rise to "Playing

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with Kantor", so the Italian conference helped shape the programme of the festival's first edition, which is dedicated to Spain. And although it is only a metaphor, let me complement it with the information that Director of the Cervantes Institute in Krakow, Beatriz Hernanz Angulo, came to Krakow directly from Palermo, a city whose puppet museum holds a beautiful collection of objects for the performance *Machine of Love and Death*, which Kantor completed in 1986. I truly hope that in the years to come there will be an Italian edition, and the one that is in the works for the next year will show us an equally rich panorama of Kantor's Belgian traces.

This year's "Playing with Kantor" is an event carried out with the specialist support of many partners. My heartfelt thanks go to Ms. Beatriz Hernanz Angulo, Director of the Cervantes Institute in Krakow, for her enthusiastic acceptance of our initiative in the first weeks following her arrival in Poland and assumption of leadership of the facility on Kanonicza Street. That first meeting was only the beginning of a year-long, inter-institutional cooperation, whose results we can now enjoy together.

I also wish to thank Ms. Dorota Segda, Rector of the Academy of Theatre Arts, for her permission for a performative reading of the play *Velázquez's Infanta* by Jerónimo López Mozo to be staged by the fantastic team of the Academy's Drama Laboratory. It added an entirely new dimension to the Polish premiere.

I would like to thank Ms. Ana Fernández Valbuena and Ms. Marina Bollaín, Directors of Spain's Centre for the Documentation of the Performing Arts and Music CDAEM for making available the valuable materials that allowed to us to prepare the festival's programme in its current, diverse form.

Natalia Zarzecka
Director of Cricoteka

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● One of Tadeusz Kantor's most quoted phrases is his statement included in the score of *Dead Class*. Speaking about why he used characters and plot lines from Witkacy's *Tumor Brainiowicz* in his original script (rather than stage the drama the way it was written), the founder of the Cricot 2 Theatre explained that he did not play Witkiewicz but played with Witkiewicz, just as you play cards. Under these circumstances, Witkacy was not a dead author of scripts to be performed – and always performed the same way – but a living partner, difficult, demanding and unpredictable. the course and outcome of the game may be different every time, and there are no winners or losers.

That famous phrase is referenced in the title of a programme of presentations of foreign productions that are in dialogue with the work of the Polish director, launched in 2018 – under my curatorship – at the Centre for the *Documentation* of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor Cricoteka. 'Playing with Kantor' (a series of monthly open screenings of performance recordings preceded by a lecture and sometimes followed by a discussion) aimed to show how widespread and dense the network of relations in which the work of the Krakow artist functions today is. These actions were intended to bring an answer to the question of whether Kantor is now a slightly dusty museum figure or an artist who lives on and continues to inspire, with whom one can enter into play. the first decade of the 21st century was a clearly a time that relegated the creator of Cricot 2 to theatre purgatory. But in the decades that followed, he came back into play – and in a very surprising and spectacular way at that.

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Naprawdę umarła klasa

In 2010 Krakow hosted the international conference *Dziś! Tadeusz Kantor* (Today Tadeusz Kantor!) on the 20th anniversary of the artist's death. Papers by the numerous researchers and curators from all over the world confirmed the importance of studying the oeuvre of the author of *Dead Class*, and conversations with actors of *Cricot 2* and the wartime Independent Theatre gave a very emotional picture of the artistic and political 'half-century of Kantor,' from the 1940s to the end of the 1980s. The conference, coordinated by Katarzyna Fazan, proved a scholarly success, an event of great significance for the further development of research into the artist's theatrical output and paintings.

But there was a particularly bitter spoonful of tar in that barrel of honey. It was the meeting that was intended as the final note of the conference, linking the discussion about Kantor with the future of theatre. The panel discussion was attended by the then youngest generation of people shaping the Polish theatre and dance scene: the directors Michał Borczuch, Krzysztof Garbaczewski, Paweł Passini, Ana Brzezińska, Marcin Wierzychowski and Avishay Hadari and the curator Anna Królca. Most of the guests admitted openly that Kantor is not an important point of reference for them – they did not study his oeuvre at university or explore it on their own, discouraged by the poor quality of performance recordings and the opaque copyright policy which prevented them from using scores by the author of *Wielopole, Wielopole* in their own stage practice (as in the case of Passini). Characteristically, the only dissenting voice in the discussion came from Hadari, born and educated in Israel, who was so enthralled by a production of *Dead Class* he had seen there that he decided to come to Poland.

Kantorian inspirations in Polish theatre have indeed proved irregular, not only because – despite his periodic collaboration with art schools – he did not raise any successors in the strict sense of the word or develop a method in the sense that Konstantin Stanislavski, Bertolt Brecht and Jerzy Grotowski did. As early as the 1980s Kantor worked mostly abroad; his death in 1990 coincided with the abrupt end of an era in the nation's history (and the history of culture). Arguably, if the spirit of the author of *Today Is My Birthday* was alive in the Polish performing arts of the 1990s and 2000s, it was mostly as a kind of afterimage in the work of the older generation of artists who used to be fascinated by him: Andrzej Wajda, Jerzy Grzegorzewski and Krystian Lupa. But Kantor would return to Polish theatre in an unexpected, roundabout way.

New inspirations

Polish theatre at the turn of the millennium was rapidly catching up with the developments in the West broadly conceived. Audiences, curators, critics and artists were delighted by the originality of the vision of such artists as Robert Wilson, Elizabeth LeCompte of the Wooster





Group, Richard Foreman, Jan Fabre and Jan Lauwers of Needcompany. What they had in common was the renunciation of traditional, text-centric 'bourgeois' theatre, focused on telling coherent stories by means of realistic psychological acting, in favour of spectacles that employ rhythm, movement, music and images. When these practitioners came to Poland at the invitation of festivals (such as Kontakt or Dialog), questions about the sources of their unconventional styles and methods of work recurred in post-performance discussions. One name was repeatedly cited as the most important inspiration: Tadeusz Kantor.



Inspirations of Kantor's theatre seem to have had a more continuous character in Western Europe and North America than in Poland – for example, thanks to the presence of his oeuvre and thought in the curricula of art schools. The impact of the Krakow artist on the changes in world theatre was also noted by the influential German researcher Hans-Thies Lehmann. His famous book *Postdramatic Theatre*, published in Poland in 2014, describes how directors liberated themselves from the rule of a 'well-tailored drama' – he names representatives of the two waves of the avant-garde as precursors of this way of thinking, attributing special importance to Kantor. According to Lehmann, it was Kantor who demonstrated to Western artists that the theatre does not have to be a 'machine for staging dramatic texts', that it can be similar to dance theatre, 'living picture', concert and happening, and, finally, that words, dialogue and scenes do not have to be trapped in a rigid cause and effect relationship but can be interconnected as in a dream or memory.

Accordingly, aesthetic and formal inspirations were the first thing that could be seen in the productions of foreign admirers of the Cricot 2 Theatre, but they were not the only or the most important aspect. As themes related to history, trauma, memory and post-memory began to return to European stages, Kantor became a key reference point. Christoph Marthaler, Luk Perceval, Pippo Delbono, Romeo Castellucci, Alvis Hermanis and Nenad Čolić share his belief that theatre is a place where there is room for all Others, where the excluded and the dead have the right to speak and can be heard. And when Polish theatre took up the subject of war and the Holocaust, similarities with Kantor's aesthetics appeared unexpectedly not only in the work of Paweł Passini and Jan Klata who cite him as an influence, but also in that of Krzysztof Warlikowski and Maja Kleczewska.

The same planets, different worlds

'The great individualist' of Polish and world theatre is not as individualist as it might seem – he drew from the tradition of the prewar Polish, Russian and German avant-garde (which was meticulously described by theatre historians Katarzyna Osińska and Małgorzata Leyko), and contributed after the war to the circulation of ideas stimulating artistic life on both sides of the ocean (Kantor's presence in the subversive, queer artistic life of New York was described



Luk Perceval,
Het Toneelhuis,
Uncle Vanya

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in the project *Kantor Downtown* by a team of artists and researchers composed of Jolanta Janiczak, Joanna Krakowska, Magda Mosiewicz and Wiktor Rubin).

The artists whose productions were presented as part of 'Playing with Kantor' can be divided into two groups. On the one hand, there are artists who have had the opportunity to see Kantor's performances (or at least their recordings), who refer to Kantor directly in interviews and often quote entire scenes from his shows (practically all of the people mentioned in the preceding paragraphs). On the other hand, there are people who – as the Cricot 2 actress Ludmiła Ryba put it with reference to the French director François Tanguy – come 'from the same planet' as Kantor. Apart from Tanguy and his Théâtre du Radeau, this group includes such artists as Pina Bausch and the Serbian-French admirer of Bruno Schulz, Josef Nadj.

In the case of a slightly younger generation of artists, born in the 1970s, such as the Frenchmen Philippe Quesne and Gisèle Vienne, the medium of contact with Kantor is not even so much photographs of happenings and performances as the sets, bio-objects and mannequins preserved in museums. For them, the work of the Polish artist is a gateway to an oneiric or even surrealist world. the language of Kantor's theatre helps them talk about fears and longings, but also about searching for identity and discovering traumatic family history (as in the case of Lars Jan, an American director of Polish-Afghan origin).

Perhaps 'Playing with Kantor' produces the most extraordinary results when the Krakow artist's method of working through his seemingly individual, specific and local experience (Polish, Galician and related primarily to World War Two) becomes an inspiration for settling accounts with the politics, history, dominant religiousness and morality of distant cultures.

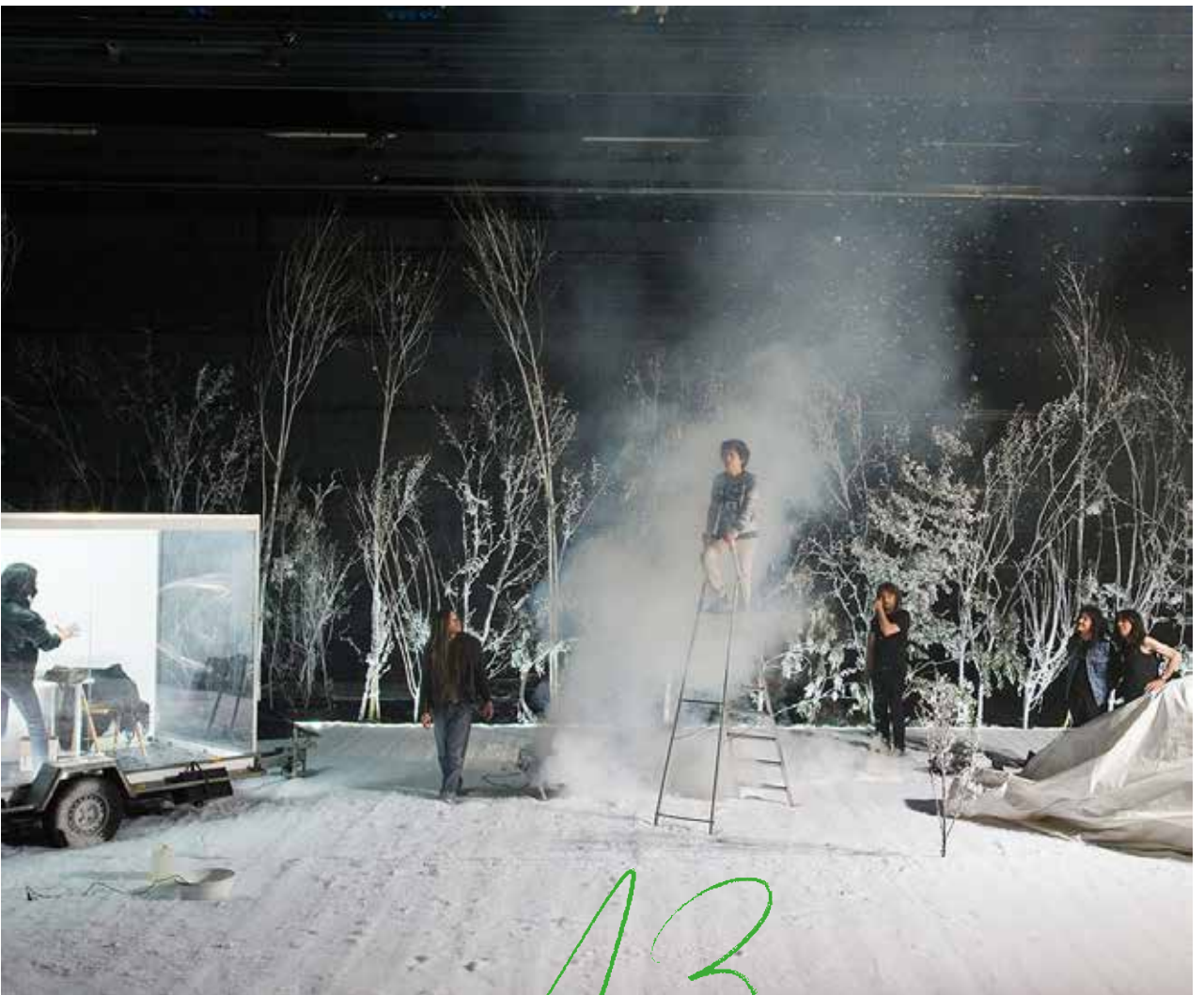
For example, the Brazilian ensemble Teatro Antropofagica, which has attended workshops with both Ludmiła Ryba and Kantor scholar Michał Kobiałka, looks in *Desterrados Ur Ex Des Machine* at the experience of exile from literal and metaphorical home, portraying a simultaneously united and divided community by means of crowd scenes that bring to mind *Let the Artists Die*. the Changpa theatre from Seoul uses the score of *Wielopole, Wielopole* to talk about the Korean War. Kantor has also inspired William Kentridge, an artist with East European Jewish roots, who explores the themes of otherness, alienness, poverty and war in South Africa.

Contemporary artists often use means derived from the Cricot 2 theatre, such as hyperrealistic mannequins, strong mask-like makeup and 'mechanized' group choreographies. They do so to be able to show situations on stage which are regarded as inexpressible and unshowable, thereby reinvesting Kantor's figures and scenes with the power they must have had for his audience watching the spectres of the war they had experienced. For the Dublin group Brokentaklers, the puppets from *Dead Class* proved the only medium capable of showing the nightmare of

Lars Jan, *Early Morning Opera*,
The Institute of
Memory (TImE)

Philippe Quesne,
Vivarium Studio,
*The Melancholy
of Dragons*

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Irish children tortured in convent orphanages. Reza Abdoh, whose performances explore the subjects of alienation (including his own as a queer emigrant from Iran working in America), illness and death, has found in Kantor the means to show the horror of the world in the time of the AIDS pandemic, religious fanaticisms and fratricidal conflicts, such as the Yugoslav Wars. Abdoh's fascination for Cricot 2 productions was discussed in Krakow by his close collaborator, videographer Adam Soch, himself an emigrant from Romania, who also aligns himself with Kantor's experience.

Kantorian inspirations appear in various places and manifest themselves in myriad ways; it is impossible to trace them single-handedly. This is why the project 'Playing with Kantor' was joined in early 2020 by three curators: Małgorzata Jabłońska, Tadeusz Kornaś and Dariusz Kosiński, whose knowledge of East European theatre, the alternative scene and puppet theatre has proved priceless.

As of this year, 'Playing with Kantor' will be an annual festival dedicated to different countries and cultures. What is the reason for the immense popularity and continuing inspirational power of the work of Cricot 2's founder in some areas of the world? Is it the echoes of the Krakow company's tours, the effect of the availability of performance recordings and publications (translations of Kantor's manifestoes and studies about him), or maybe the result of the activities of extremely charismatic 'promoters' (such as the Scottish curator Richard Demarco, involved with the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, the above-mentioned Hans-Thies Lehmann and the brothers Stephen and Timothy Quay, American animation filmmakers fascinated with Polish culture)? Or perhaps it is the consequence of the historical traumas, identity problems, fears and hopes shared with Poland? the motives for drawing on Kantor's work often come out of left field – the Krakow director would certainly be surprised by the fact that his productions influenced the angry rhetoric of such a radically feminist performer as the Spaniard Angélica Liddell. I don't know if Liddell is aware of how much the Krakow artist was inspired by her native culture, from Cervantes through Velázquez to Dali, but it probably does not matter. What matters is the constant circulation of culture, the lively dialogue still going on at the table that Kantor placed in the imaginary Café Europe.

● When looking for the centre of an aesthetic labyrinth of radically different languages such as the programme 'Playing with Kantor: Spain – Furies, Phantoms and Infantas', one cannot help but follow the best-known path of the artist's fascination with the visual arts of Spain. A particular case in point is Spanish baroque painting with its suggestive visual idiom, which inspired the painter by the contrasts of light and dark, of life and death, of mysticism, imperialism and quixotism, of expressionism and the rigid courtly form, and above all, by its reduction of means, a method he tried to implement in his work with actors.¹

These themes were addressed by the exhibition *Tadeusz Kantor. Motywy hiszpańskie* (Tadeusz Kantor: Spanish Motifs) organized in 1999 by the National Museum in Krakow and the Cervantes Institute in Warsaw,² shown in Zaragoza, Cuenca and Torrente-Valencia in 2002 and in Palma in 2003,³ and were also present at the exhibition *Tadeusz Kantor. La escena de la memoria* at the Fundación Arte y Tecnología de Telefónica in Madrid and the Fundació Caixa de Catalunya in Barcelona in 1997.⁴ This fascination can be traced back to the mid-1960s when Kantor reinterprets Velázquez's portraits of the Infantas for the first time.⁵ He sees them as sacred objects with frail bodies bound by the conventions of courtly dress and 'showing well-practiced gestures / and tomb's abyss in the eyes / they are defenceless, / humiliated, / and shamelessly exhibit their complete indifference / to the public. / the facades of death / enclosed in paper boxes...'⁶. In his interventional series 'Persyflaże Muzealne' (Museum Persiflages) the artist decided to strip the princess of palace and museum conventions, by replacing her

- 1 Cf. T. Kantor, *Moja droga do Teatru Śmierci*, in: *Dalej już nic...: teksty z lat 1985–1990*, the series Pisma, vol. II, Wrocław-Krakow, p. 465.
- 2 The exhibition, which also reflected the influence of A. Tapiés and S. Dalí on Kantor, presented paintings, sketches and theatrical objects inspired by the work D. Velázquez and F. Goya, sketches from the Spanish tours from the series 'A diary of Travels' and 'the Cathedrals of Barcelona – Almost Objects', and the sets for *the Mayor of Zalamea* by Calderon de la Barca, dir. W. Krzemiński (Słowacki Theatre, 1951), *the Shoemaker's Wonderful Wife* by F. Garcia Lorca, dir. B. Smela (Śląski Theatre 1955) and the opera *Don Kichot* music by J. Massent, libretto by H. Cain, dir. T. Kantor, J. Biczyski (Opera and Operetta in Krakow, 1962).
- 3 The exhibition was accompanied by the catalogue *Visions espagnoles de Tadeusz Kantor*, ed. M. Ferré, Palma 2003.
- 4 Another two important Spanish shows were *Tadeusz Kantor. La clase muerta* dedicated to *Dead Class* (2002–2003, Museum of the University of Alicante) and the photographic exhibition *El teatro de Tadeusz Kantor. Fotografias de Caroline Rose* (2010, Matadero, Madrid).
- 5 This motif in Kantor's art is analysed by M. Paluch-Cybulska, *Tadeusz Kantor, „...Infantki Velázqueza jak relikwie lub madonny”*, in: *Dziś Tadeusz Kantor! Metamorfozy śmierci, pamięci i obecności*, eds. M. Bryś, A. R. Burzyńska, K. Fazan, Krakow 2014.
- 6 A. Turowski, *Infantas ysoldados*, in: *Tadeusz Kantor. La escena de la memoria*, ed. T. Skipp, Madrid-Barcelona 1997.
- 6 T. Kantor, *Infantki*, in: *Metamorfozy. Teksty o latach 1934–1974*, seria Pisma t. I, Wrocław–Kraków 2005, p. 320

court dresses with wrapping made from the poor matter of battered postbags and placing the figure on a canvas that could be turned into a suitcase. Kantor's *Infantas* would never lose that immanent mobility, the association with the idea of travel. They would return repeatedly in the artist's work, gradually gaining agency and negotiating their roles, as in the series 'Dalej już nic' (Further On, Nothing) created shortly before his death, where Princess Margaret, part apparition from the past, part spectre of death, visits the painter in his room of imagination – as do the soldiers of the firing squad from Goya's *the Third of March 1808*. the Infanta stands before the artist-demiurge, who is nevertheless naked, and his empty canvas to claim her place in art. That same year Kantor would grant it to her in his final production, *Today is My Birthday* (1990), introducing the pictorial motif into theatrical space, granting the status of actors to the paintings, blurring the boundaries between the arts⁷, but also between traditions and countries, which he considered unnecessary in his concept of Europe as a cultural community.

The search for the reasons for Cricot 2's popularity in Spain is also an attempt to find a common European idiom of ideas. the work of the artists who make up this year's programme and opinions of theatre people suggest that it is the problems of memory and its relationship with time, past and present. the problems of both personal and historical memory, with the latter determined by wars and the voiceless spectres of their victims which return like a dybbuk.

Kantor's work began to reach Spain in the 1970s, in the final stage of Francisco Franco's regime – indirectly, through the industry press which covered the international presentations of Cricot 2 productions and reprinted the director's theoretical texts⁸. the country was slowly freeing itself from the four-decade-old straitjacket of the traditionalistic model of culture, political censorship and the inaccessibility of the avant-garde aesthetics of world theatre, which stimulated the stage community's interest in the Polish director, who was placed by critics alongside such artists as Peter Brook, Robert Wilson, Pina Bausch and Odin Teatret, instrumental in the formation of a new generation of theatre. the breakthrough came in 1981 when Cricot 2 showed *Wielopole, Wielopole* at the Caracas International Theatre Festival, attended by a large number of Spanish artists and critics who hailed the performance as a sensation. the encounter resulted in the publication of a monographic issue of the periodical *Primer Acto*, containing theoretical texts, analyses and interviews with the artist by editor-in-chief José Monleon and playwright José Luis Alonso de Santos. the editor-in-chief of Barcelona's *Pipirijaina*, Moises Perez Coterillo, apart from running extensive coverage of Kantor's theatre in two issues of the magazine (1981 and 1983), initiated Cricot 2's first Spanish tours⁹ through his efforts at the Ministry of Culture and the National Drama Centre. the third key figure for the reception of Kantor's art was Joan de Sagarra and

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- 7 Cf. K. Kumor, „Moja Infantka, Velázquez, ale moja!”. O migracji motywu malarskiego i dialogu międzykulturowym: Diego Velázquez, Tadeusz Kantor i Jerónimo López Mozo, in: *W kręgu literatury i kultury iberyjskiej i iberoamerykańskiej. Migracja i transformacja dyskursów – dialog międzykulturowy*, eds. U Aszyk, A. Flisek, Ł. Grutzmacher, K. Kumor, Warsaw 2009, p. 162.
- 8 Texts about Cricot 2's method of work and Kantor's concept of the actor were first reprinted by *Primer Acto*, 1971, no. 132.
- 9 Unpublished interview with J. López Mozo, Cricoteka Archives.

his in-depth analyses published in *El País* throughout the 1980s. Mention should also be made of the Spanish volume of Kantor's theoretical writings on the Theatre of Death edited by Denis Bablet, which came out in 1984.¹⁰

Cricot 2's first tour in 1981 introduced Spanish audiences to *Wielopole, Wielopole*, followed by *Dead Class* in 1983, and from then on the theatre visited the country's major cities almost every year, arriving for the last time after the director's death with a single performance of *Today is My Birthday* in Madrid in October 1991.

Personal exposure to Kantor's work influenced the generation of innovative theatre artists of the transition period who felt compelled to experiment with form but also to depict the recent past, marked by the civil war and erased by the previous regime. The first and one of the most emblematic fruits of that inspiration was *the Family Album* by Alonso de Santos.¹¹ The play is a Proustian narrative experiment which simultaneously enters into dialogue with Kantor's visual imaginary and his idea of memory negatives. But, above all, it is an attempt to recreate the Kantorian painterly gesture of transposing to the stage the vividness of images of the inner world, of visualizing it, which the artist considers to be the director's most important legacy today.¹² The play premiered in 1982, but its sketch had been written in a hotel room during the Caracas festival on an impulse after seeing *Wielopole, Wielopole*. The original manuscript opens with the words: 'In the manner of Proust, Bergman in *Wild Strawberries* or Tadeusz Kantor, to enter or better to leave, opening the door of the nursery, latent images of my past, not as they were (which is impossible!), but as they are stored in different places in my mind. It is not a confession, it is a search for a true foundation (not what I have fabricated with my artificial remembrances).'¹³ The album of family photographs provides a structure for the play and inspires the protagonist to wander back to his childhood through the difficult matter of memory, which leads him to come to terms with his personal past and internal conflicts. The journey by a ghost train in a symbolic, intimate text also serves as an opportunity to create a panoramic portrait of Spanish postwar society, burdened by the past of the fratricidal conflict.

If *the Family Album* is the director's spontaneous response to his contact with Kantor's art, the play *Velázquez's Infanta* – a metatheatrical, postmodernist tapestry in which Cricot 2 actors, directed by Kantor, enact the history of Europe as seen from the perspective of Infanta Margaret – written by Jerónimo López Mozo in 1999, is the result of his long-term exposure to the Polish director's productions and extensive reading on the subject. As the author recalls, they influenced his own strategies of involving memory in the creative process, playing games with time and clashing the orders of life and death on stage.¹⁴ The author also assimilates Kantorian motifs into his 1987 self-referential play *Los personajes del drama*. This index of López Mozo's artistic inspirations features

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- ¹⁰ T. Kantor, *El Teatro de La Muerte*, edited by D. Bablet, transl. from French by G. Isnardi, Buenos Aires 1984. A Spanish translation of the original texts from Polish was published over a quarter-century later; cf. T. Kantor, *Teatro de la muerte y otros ensayos*, selected and translated by K. Olszewska Sonnenberg, Barcelona 2010. Spanish readers had at their disposal a monographic issue of *El Público. Cuadernos*, 1986 no. 11, and the following publications: M. Rosenzvaig *El teatro de Tadeusz Kantor. El uno y el otro*, Buenos Aires 1995; *Tadeusz Kantor. La escena de la memoria*, op. cit.; T. Miklaszewski, *Encuentros con Tadeusz Kantor*, transl. E. Fediuk, Mexico D.F. 2001; *Tadeusz Kantor. La clase muerta*, eds. I. Tejada, G. Musiał, Murcia 2002; M. Rosenzvaig *Tadeusz Kantor o los espejos de la muerte*, Buenos Aires 2008; *Releer a Tadeusz Kantor. 1990–2010*, ed. F. Bravo García, Barcelona 2010, the result of a seminar held by the Institut del Teatre de Barcelona on the 20th anniversary of the artist's death, and a monographic issue of the magazine *Pygmalion* (2015, no. 7) following a seminar organized on the centenary of Kantor's birth by the Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- ¹¹ The play could not be included in the programme of 'Playing with Kantor' due to the poor quality of the archival recording.
- ¹² Cf. unpublished memory of J. L. Alonso de Santos, Cricoteka Archives.
- ¹³ Manuscript from the author's archives, Caracas, July 1981, as quoted in: M. Piñeiro, *La creación teatral en José Luis Alonso de Santos*, Madrid 2005, p. 240.
- ¹⁴ J. López Mozo, *Mi viaje con la Infanta de Velázquez*, Madrid 2006, in: J. López Mozo *La infanta de Velázquez*, A. Álamo, Yo, *Satán*, Madrid 2006, p. 47.

the Woman behind the Window and the Somnambulist Prostitute from *Dead Class*. Velázquez's *Infanta* is preceded by two short texts, sketches of sorts for the drama – the play *Menina Teresa* and the short story *El día en que la infanta de Velázquez conoció a Tadeusz Kantor*.

The short film *Tadeusz Kantor in the Prado Museum*, an audiovisual story about Kantor's fascination with the art of Goya and Velázquez, created by the video artist Tom Skipp as a tribute to the Polish director on the centenary of his birth, engages Mozo's drama in an interesting dialogue, though claimed by the filmmaker as unintentional.

According to critics, Kantor's imaginary, along with the roots of Andalusian culture and esperpento aesthetics, has been a constant reference point for the La Zaranda company for over three decades. Stage movement, use of music and objects from the rubbish bin of history and investing them with agency at the expense of actors, the construction of characters and the use of mannequins, the recurrent motif of death, and, finally, the idea of theatre as a journey, are some of the elements that bear similarities to Kantor's theatre.¹⁵ A theory in the theatre community posits a kind of twinship between the ensembles, each of which developed its aesthetics independently. The company's playwright, Eusebio Colange, points rather to the parallelism of their inspirations of European cultural tradition, regarding La Zaranda and Kantor primarily as heirs to the Spanish Baroque, in particular, Calderon de la Barca and his vision of theatre.¹⁶

The struggle for memory conducted by this year's 'Playing with Kantor' has another dimension apart from the historical one. It is related to the former, marked by the escapes of the *Infantas* and spectres of the past beyond the frame of patriarchal images of symbolic authority, legitimized history and art created by the demiurge. But it is a struggle for a new memory, where the female artists who use radically different idioms regard Kantor as an ally.

On the one hand, there is Marta Carrasco's call for remembrance of women's history and the right to non-normative expression in *White of a Shadow*, using a dance language that is far from literalness. In this moving solo piece with minimalist choreography, she plays Camille Claudel, bound like Velázquez's model by the relationship with her master, but also by social norms which displace her from the world to the limbo of a mental institution.

While Carrasco tries to break free from the cocoon, Angélica Liddell's heroine grabs an axe. The apocalyptic, bravura language, based on a radical aesthetic of disgust – which is intended to cleanse, to move, to awaken us from social stupor – is one of the most resonant voices in contemporary theatre. After years of tackling pathologies inherent in the family, the author has turned to political theatre. Her *Dead Dog at the Dry Cleaners* takes on the maladies of today's Europe, new totalitarianisms of security built on the morass of fear of the other. But Liddell goes even further, hypothesizing a future after the total extermination of the public enemy and, through her

José Luis Alonso
de Santos,
The Family Album

Marta Carrasco,
Nobody's Bitch

15 These parallels are described by Julia Nawrot in her doctoral thesis *La recepción de Tadeusz Kantor en España*, Universidad de Granada 2018.

16 Cf. O. Consentino, *Si la vida no fuese eterna, no valdría la pena vivirla*, Teatro Celcít, no. 9 1999.



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characters who are social outcasts, looks at what happens to the addictive fear. She analyzes how that emotion, reinforced for years by politics, is internalized in the world of perfect social order as fear of oneself and one's desires, and how it provokes an uncontrollable urge for transgression.¹⁷ This moral anti-tale about the confrontation of artificial social constructs with the force of human nature makes for fascinating reading in the context of the clash of discourses that we have experienced in Poland in recent months.

The last of the project's unobvious encounters will be a dialogue woven of silence. An understanding of silence and a play with the idea that the language of art is incommunicable, derived from *the Zero Theatre Manifesto*, gave rise to a performance by the Catalan artist Tres. On Music Day in 2006, he performed the action *Kakua and Kantor* with an orchestra, a conductor of the waves and a soundless choir at a Barcelona beach; the event was inspired by Kantor's *Panoramic Sea Happening* and the silent singing of 'La Marseillaise' in Abel Gance's *Napoleon*.¹⁸

The panorama of the Spanish artistic games played with Kantor is complemented by the Atalaya Theatre, whose manager Ricardo Iniesta cites Tadeusz Kantor as a constant source of inspiration and who includes Cricot 2 productions every year in the programme of the TNT (International Theatre Research Centre) Laboratory, and the projects described in detail by Julia Nawrot in her doctoral thesis: *Lecciones milanesas* (2013), a production of the University of Granada Theatre directed by Sara Molina, *Thursday Today* (2016) directed by Miquel Mateau, a homage to Kantor and his Theatre of Death, and the student performances *Mínima memòria* (2001) directed by Ramon Simó, *La classe morta* (2012) and *Tornant a Wielopole* (2016) directed by Joan Cusó at the Institut del Teatre de Barcelona.

This edition of the festival is the result of more than a year's work by many people. I wish to thank the initiator and long-time curator of 'Playing with Kantor', Anna Róża Burzyńska of the Jagiellonian University, for her contribution to the development of the programme idea and the conceptualization of this year's project. I want to express my deep gratitude to Paco Valcarce, director of La Machina Teatro and the Theatre Hall of the University of Cantabria and the good spirit of the Spanish 'Playing with Kantor' for his support and generosity in sharing information and contacts as well as being a living proof that the experience of Cricot 2 can continue to open up new paths of interpretation. I would like to extend my special thanks to Julia Nawrot of the University of Granada for the vast knowledge base accumulated in the course of her work on her doctoral thesis dedicated to the Spanish reception of Cricot 2, for our work together on the translation of *Velázquez's Infanta*, which we are pleased to present to Polish readers, and for her sober advice during our consultations between Cantabria and Andalusia. I wish to thank all my interlocutors – directors, playwrights, academics

17 Cf. A. Liddell, *Perro muerto en tintorería los fuertes*, text for the play's programme, Madrid 2007, pp. 3–4.

18 Cf. *Kakua i Kantor. Silenci per a cor i mar de mercuri*, performance catalogue, archive of L. Casamitjana Agustí.

Angélica Liddell, *Dead Dog at Dry Cleaners: The Strong*, programme



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Tom Skipp, *Tadeusz Kantor in the Prado Museum*, poster

Tres, Kakua i Kántor, programme



and festival programmers – who agreed to perform the work of memory and share their recollections, which were included in the exhibition accompanying the festival and the Cricoteka Archives. My special gratitude goes to Jerónimo López Mozo, José Luis Alonso de Santos, Carlos Gil Zamora, Ricardo Iniesta and César Oliva. I believe that we will continue the process of collecting the intangible legacy of Cricot 2 in the future.

I owe a separate debt of gratitude to the people whose work and commitment are the building blocks of the festival: Zofia Jakubowska-Pindel of the Cervantes Institute in Krakow for her multifaceted collaboration, Iga Gańczarczyk and a team of students from the Drama Laboratory of the Academy of Theatre Arts in Krakow for preparing a performative reading of *Velázquez's Infanta*, Daniel González Camhi and Berta Muñoz Cáliz of the CDAEM Spanish Centre for the Documentation of the Performing Arts and Music for the archival search and organizational assistance, and Kuba Sowiński, designer of the festival's visual identity, for cutting the Infanta's ruff. Finally and most of all, I want to thank my colleagues from Cricoteka for their commitment and support at different stages of project completion. Special recognition in this regard is due the indefatigable Wiktor Bury, coordinator of 'Playing with Kantor' for his calmness, organizational skills and the days and nights he spent producing the festival.

Programme

**Cervantes Institute
in Krakow
Kanonicza 12
Cracovia**

**The Centre for
Documentation of
the Art of Tadeusz Kantor
CRICOTEKA
Nadwiślańska 2-4
Kraków**

Thursday
16.11.2023 / 18:00

Cervantes Institute in Krakow

Kantor in Spain: the Experience

discussion

Eusebio Calonge, Beatriz Hernanz Angulo,
Ricardo Iniesta, Paco de La Zaranda,
Bogdan Renczyński, Tom Skipp
host: Magdalena Link-Lenczowska

A discussion with Spanish artists and theatre critics around memories of their personal experiences of Cricot 2 productions, the company's Spanish tours and the impact of the artists' encounters with Tadeusz Kantor and his theatre on their artistic stance.

Discussion in Polish and Spanish with simultaneous interpretation.

Admission is free.



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Thursday
16.11.2023 / 19:30

Cervantes Institute in Krakow

Opening of the exhibition

the Reception of Kantor in Spain: Cricot 2 Productions and 40 Years of La Zaranda

The exhibition will run until 15 December.

The exhibition organized by the Cervantes Institute in Krakow and Cricoteka in collaboration with the Spanish Centre for the Documentation of the Performing Arts and Music, presents a collection of materials and photographs from Kantor's performances in Spain and the forty-year existence of La Zaranda, the most Kantorian of Spanish theatres. The work of La Zaranda is informed by Spanish heritage, the legacy of the most tragic Baroque, following the path of the grotesque: Goya of the Caprices, Zuluaga, the theatrical oddities of Valle Inclán and Unamuno. the company also represents a truly European perspective, which draws on the theatre of Beckett and Pirandello, the grotesque and Expressionism, and, above all, on the work of Tadeusz Kantor, the great theatre genius that Poland gave to the world. the exhibition is a tribute to the artists and traces their mutual inspirations.

Admission is free.

Friday
17.11.2023 / 19:00

Saturday
18.11.2023 / 19:00

Cricoteka



The Battle of the Missing

performance by La Zaranda

direction: Paco de La Zaranda

text: Eusebio Calonge

cast: Francisco Sánchez, Gaspar Campuzano
and Enrique Bustos

A play by the company La Zaranda, which, as Cricot 2 did in their day, defines itself as a homeless, travelling theatre. But the 45 years of artistic work and performances on four continents have won it international acclaim. The group draws on the traditional roots of Andalusian culture to create a universal symbolism. La Zaranda is inspired by the everyday, which provides it with stage objects, often of lower rank as in Kantor, but imbued with a certain autonomy and symbolic meanings. The group's poetics is distinctive, original and consistent, using a language that explores the problems of individual and collective memory. La Zaranda's play is

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a metaphor of life as a struggle and features three actors in the roles of history's castaways, remnants of a scattered army that has to fight an anonymous, ruthless war. The play is a reflection on a tragic, doomed struggle and quixotism which seem to be the essence of national identity in Spain as well as Poland. At the same time, the war in Ukraine makes it inevitable to interpret the performance through the prism of this conflict. Lastly, the play is a painful satire on the human desire for power, where dignity and faith constitute an act of resistance.

Performance in Spanish with Polish subtitles.
Tickets at a price of PLN 20 and 30 can be purchased at the box office and online at bilety.cricoteka.pl.

Sunday
19.11.2023 / 18:00

Cricoteka

Dead Dog at Dry Cleaners: the Strong

(2007, 165') – performance screening
text, direction, stage space, costume design:

Angélica Liddell

cast: Nasina Akaloo, Miguel Ángel Altet,
Carlos Bolívar, Violeta Gil, Angélica Liddell,
Vettius Valens

lights: Carlos Marquerie

sculptures: Enrique Marty

production: Centro Dramático Nacional, collabora-
tion: Atra Bilis

introduction: Anna R. Burzyńska

Liddell, a writer of plays, manifestos, poetry and prose, director and actress, is one of the most widely discussed modern artists. Critics have described her theatre as 'avant-garde and political, deeply heartfelt.' the hallmarks of her work are social criticism and the search for meaning through suffering and subversion. She has emphasized the importance of the aesthetics of Tadeusz Kantor's theatre for the development of her theatrical vision in many interviews. *Dead Dog at Dry Cleaners* is a play that the artist describes as apocalyptic political fiction. the work offers a sharp critique of the Enlightenment ideals which give rise to the opposition of state and enemy and then subordinate social life to the elimination of one of them. Violence and war are instruments of a new, totalitarian state of Public Security. the artist is accompanied not only by living performers, but also by Kantorian mannequins which represent the actors' corpses.

Performance in Spanish with Polish subtitles.
Admission is free.



Tuesday
21.11.2023 / 18:00

Cricoteka

Kantor in Spain: the State of Research

discussion

Agnieszka Matyjaszczyk Grenda (Universidad Complutense Madrid), Julia Nawrot (Universidad de Granada), Katarzyna Osińska (PAS Institute of Slavic Studies in Warsaw)

host: Anna R. Burzyńska (Jagiellonian University)

A meeting of Spanish and Polish women academics researching the inspirations of Iberian culture in the work of Tadeusz Kantor and the impact of his aesthetics on contemporary Spanish avant-garde art. The meeting will focus on the phenomenon of the enthusiastic reception of the Kantor's art and Cricot 2 in Spain and its reasons.

Discussion in Polish.

Admission is free.

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Wednesday
22.11.2023 / 18:00

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Cricoteka



Tres – the world's quietest performance

Marcin Barski talks to Michał Libera

The Catalan artist Tres made silence the main subject of his artistic practice. He explored its various aspects in his visual works, performances and sound projects. Tres's *opus magnum* is *Blackout*, a performance in which electrical equipment in the chosen venue is gradually switched off – over the course of 30–40 minutes, the audience is getting accustomed to increasingly deeper layers of silence until, finally, the building turns into a dead, architectural structure. Tres's unfulfilled dream was to 'switch off' the Cricoteka building in Krakow, an idea that stemmed in part from the artist's fascination with Kantor's works. Michał Libera and will talk about how such a performance could be carried out, why the task is so difficult and how Kantor's work

affected Tres. The meeting will include a screening of the Catalan artist's performance *Kakua y Kántor. Concierto silencioso para coro y mar de mercurio*, which involved a recreation of Kantor's *Panoramic Sea Happening* on Music Day, 21 June 2006, at Barcelona's Sant Sebastià beach. the action was performed with the silent choir Euskal Hiria conducted by Pablo Belez, and with the participation of Jakob Draminsky, Aurora Velez, Sergi Verges and David Parras.

Interview in Polish,
translated into Polish Sign Language
Admission is free.

Thursday

23.11.2023 / 18:00

Cricoteka



White of a Shadow

(1997, 57') – performance screening
director: Marta Carrasco, Pep Bou
collaboration: Oscar Molina
choreography and dance: Marta Carrasco
lights: Pep Bou, Jaume Ventura
sculptural forms: Pilar Albaladejo,
Mónica Fernandez, Joaquim Camps, Adolf Vila
costumes: Gabriel Azcoitia
production: Pep Bou Produccions
introduction: Magdalena Link-Lenczowska

A dance solo piece in which the artist explores the space between death and memory, turning the stage into a kind of Kantorian memory machine marked by a strong feminist perspective. She also focuses on the mechanisms of power in the art world through a carnal vivisection of the relationship between Camille Claudel and Auguste Rodin. the stage becomes here a frame that traps the artist, who gradually sheds its conventions, reinforced by a patriarchal emotional relationship, after decades of lethargy in a mental clinic to fight for her own artistic identity. Catalan choreographer, dancer and actress, who describes herself as a performance artist. Founder of the group Companyia Marta Carrasco, she works regularly as a choreographer with the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya. Her dance style between expressionism and the grotesque has led critics to compare her to Pina Bausch.

This is a non-spoken performance.
Admission is free.



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Saturday
25.11.2023 / 18:00

Cricoteka

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Velázquez's Infanta

Performative reading of a play by Jerónimo López Mozo prepared by the Dramaturgy Laboratory of the Academy of Theatre Arts

dramaturgy and direction: Bartłomiej Juszcak, Jacek Niemiec, Piotr Sędkowski, Weronika Zajkowska, Krzysztof Zygucki (Pracownia Dramaturgiczna)

cast: Michał Badeński, Martyna Dyląg, Wiktoria Karbownik, Paweł Kruszelnicki, Michał Meller, Charles Rabenda, Jan Sarata, Wojciech Siwek

music: Michał Smajdor

space: Kuba Kotynia

costumes: Katarzyna Sobolewska

The starting point for the play *Velázquez's Infanta* is Tadeusz Kantor's visit to the Prado Museum, where the artist notices that the Infanta Margaret Theresa depicted in *Las Meninas* wants to get out of the painting. She manages to break free from the canvas, symbolic of oppressive control, and travels across Europe to find herself in Kantor's studio. the artist encourages her to recreate her story with the help of Cricot 2 actors, which opens up a self-referential space in the play. the Infanta's journey unfolds on different time planes: it represents the real passage of the future empress to the Viennese court (where she married Leopold I Habsburg) and her wandering through a Europe torn by military conflicts: the Spanish Civil War, World War Two, the Spanish Transition, the Prague Spring, the Carnation Revolution, May 1968, the fall of the Berlin Wall, up to the present time and the emerging concept of Europe.



Tadeusz Kantor in the Prado Museum

(2015, 29') – film screening

direction: Tom Skipp

cast: Alfonso Fernandez Sola, John Lawrence Zamora, Małgorzata Paluch-Cybulska, Julia Monasterio Fernandez, Monika Kowalska, Bogdan Renczyński, Roxana Nievadis, Tom Skipp
cinematography: Tom Skipp, Irlandia Tambascio and Inquieta Producciones

The film is a homage to the artist on the centenary of his birth. Kantor's ghost visits the Prado. He stops in front of the works of art that inspired his own paintings and theatre *Las Meninas* by Diega Velázquez and *the Third of May 1808* by Francisco Goya. While contemplating them, he encounters characters from his poor room of the imagination: the Eternal Traveller, the Art Student and the Infanta. the past and the present intermingle – the Napoleonic occupation of France and the Nazi and Soviet occupations of Poland.

Performative reading in Polish, translated into Polish Sign Language.

Film in Polish with English subtitles.

Tickets at a price of PLN 15 and 20 can be purchased at the box office and online at bilety.cricoteka.pl.

16.11–23.12.2023

Cricoteka

Playing with Kantor: Spain

exhibition

A presentation of personal memories and testimonies of Spanish playwrights, directors, academics and festival organizers dedicated to their encounters with the work of Tadeusz Kantor. The exhibition includes a collection of performance and publication materials from the Cricoteka Archives related to the tours of Cricot 2 productions in Spain.

Admission is free.



**LA CLASE
MUERTA**

(Texto en polaco)

DIRECCION

TADEUSZ KANTOR

**PATRONATO MUNICIPAL DE TEATROS
AYUNTAMIENTO DE ZARAGOZA**

Tadeusz Kantor,
*The Dead
Class*, poster
for the show in
Zaragoza, 1991

Educational programme

17.11–25.11.2023

Cricoteka

Rebel Princesses and Paper Soldiers

What if the skirts of the infantas in Velázquez's paintings were replaced with old postman's bags? And if the soldiers from Goya's pictures sported colourful paper costumes rather than heavy uniforms and arms? Dressing up games, funhouse mirrors, paper figures and a frantic shadow play. the key theme of the programme will be private revolutions, searching for new adventures of characters from Spanish paintings and unconventional uses of familiar materials.

All workshops are in Polish.

All workshops are ticketed. Tickets are priced at PLN 30 per child, admission for parents is free.

Tickets can be purchased at the box office and online at bilety.cricoteka.pl.

17 November (Friday), 11:30–12:30

All Things Paper

Workshop for children aged 2–3

18 November (Saturday), 11:30–12:30

Dressing Up: Paper Dolls

Workshop for children aged 4–8

24 November (Friday), 11:30–12:30

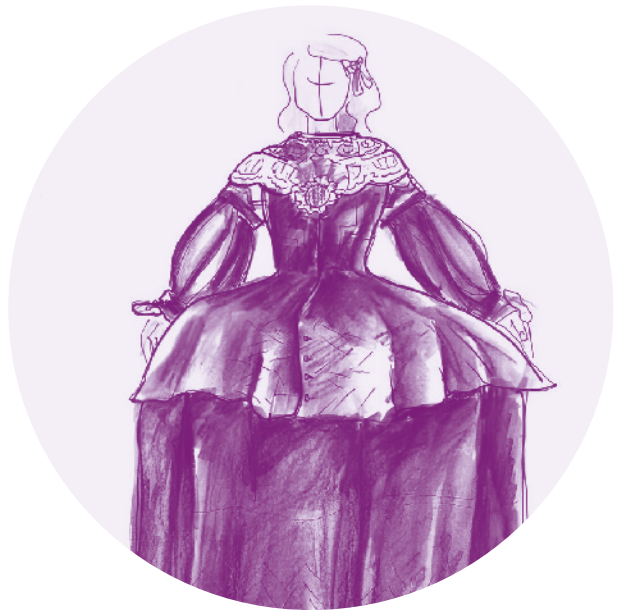
Mirror Reflections

Workshop for children aged 2–3

25 November (Saturday), 11.30–12.30

Escape beyond the Frame of the Painting

Workshop for children aged 4–8



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**Playing with Kantor:
Spain – Furies, Phantoms & Infantas**

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Magdalena Link-Lenczowska

concept of the cycle 'Playing with Kantor'

Anna R. Burzyńska

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www.cricoteka.pl


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cricoteka

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