

and Lin Bo undercuts Wang's play by letting the audience know there is no Wang Min, that her "play" is a play-within-a-play. Then the actors playing Wang and Lin argue about which of them was the lover of Yu Rong, who does not exist, concluding they both were his lover at the same time. Finally, many in the audience realize that Wang and Lin, and everyone else onstage, are "just actors" in *Caught*, but no one can say for sure just what *Caught* is—installation, drama, disquisition? If at any point in the performance you believe what's going on—or, to put it classically, you suspend your disbelief, you are "rong." But to not believe is to stop playing along with the performers. Why should this surprise me? Isn't agreeing to participate in a fiction the core of theatre? Isn't that just as true in a play about the unreliability of truth and the conflation of truth and fiction as it is in a play that is forthrightly invention?

In *Caught*'s final scene, Wang Min and Lin Bo directly address the audience. Even in this ultimate scene, they aver Yu Rong's existence, that he is not a fiction. Lin Bo tells us:

Before he died, he started a new art project that consisted of smuggling words, phrases, and sentences out of prison. They were instructions for works of art that could either be or not be completed.

Wang Min immediately picks up Lin's cue:

We decided to realize as many of his instructions as possible. [...] The instructions for this piece were as follows: "Cast doubt upon me. Negate me." That was his prompt.

As I write these words I wonder if I've been tricked into thinking Yu Rong is unreal. That's how successfully *Caught* wrought its own...unlie.

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## Not Just Adult Entertainment

### Milo Rau and CAMPO's Collaborative Five Easy Pieces

#### Debra Levine

At the opening of "an essay on submission," scene 3 of *Five Easy Pieces* (2016), a disembodied voice describes the dungeon that convicted Belgian pedophile serial killer Marc Dutroux built to imprison and torture his victims. In dim light, several children wheel out a mattress on a platform. They pick up video equipment

and surround the platform. Eight-year-old Rachel Dedain, the youngest and smallest of the child actors, a beautiful girl with porcelain skin, hops onto the mattress. She is illuminated like a Rembrandt painting. Facing her, kneeling, is Peter Seynaeve, the only adult actor onstage. The ensuing scene is enacted in

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Figure 1. "Piece I: Father and Son." Speech at the Ceremony of the Proclamation of the Congo's Independence. From left: Rachel Dedain, Rachel Dedain (onscreen), Pepijn Loobuyck (with video camera), Willem Loobuyck, Elle Liza Tayou in *Five Easy Pieces*. Concept, text, and direction by Milo Rau. Kunstenfestivaldesarts, May 2016. (Photo by Phile Deprez)

profile and projected live onto a large screen hanging at the back of the stage.

We listen to the mournful strains of Erik Satie as Seynaeve assumes the role of Dutroux and tells Rachel, "This is your scene."<sup>1</sup> Then he tenderly asks her to take off her clothes. First she looks away. Then, looking back, she neither resists nor complies. Seynaeve whispers, "Do it like in rehearsals." Rachel removes her shirt, reveals her undershirt. Seynaeve assists her with shrugging off her pants and socks. Seynaeve adjusts Rachel on the bed so the camera better captures her. Then he asks her who she is. Rachel replies "Sabine."

After Rachel's image is projected on the large screen, Seynaeve offhandedly seems to change his mind. He asks Rachel to take off her undershirt too. Onstage, we glimpse Rachel's bare chest for a split second; onscreen how-

ever, the angle of the livestream video image makes her appear completely naked, her bare legs bent to cover her torso. For the remainder of the scene, Rachel holds that pose. Another actor appears with a film clapper and announces "*Five Easy Pieces*, scene 3." This is Rachel's cue to recite the letters Sabine Dardenne wrote to her parents during the 80 days Dutroux kept her hostage, starved her, sexually assaulted, and tortured her before her rescue by the police. Dutroux read but never mailed those letters. Our eyes shift from screen to stage and back again; director Milo Rau does not give the audience any place onstage to look away.

CAMPO, a Belgium-based arts presenter, collaborated with Rau to select seven children, ages 8 to 17, to participate in a theatrical work

about the "Dutroux Affair," a story that "horrified" all of Belgium.<sup>2</sup> The "Five Easy Pieces" alluded to by the title references the musical exercises Stravinsky composed in 1917 to teach his children to play piano as well as Marina Abramović's 2005 reenactment of seven canonical works of performance art (CAMPO 2016). Rau makes each scene into a pedagogical exercise, a Foucauldian *dispositif* that teaches the amateur cast of child actors a lesson about performance. In an interview with Bella Todd, Rau lists each successive scene's learning objective: 1. "how to play sick"; 2. "how to play a character on stage"; 3. "on submission, about the relationship between the actor and director" (what Seynaeve did with Rachel); 4. about "emotion: the children have to play parents who lost their children, they have to cry onstage"; and 5. about "rebellion: how to revolt against every-

1. All quotations from the performance are from the July 2016 video performance of *Five Easy Pieces*, supplied to me by Milo Rau/International Institute of Political Murder & CAMPO Arts Center (Rau 2016).

2. Marc Dutroux was convicted of abducting, raping, and torturing six girls between 1995 and 1996. Two of the six, An Marchal, 17, and Eefje Lambrechts, 19, died after being buried alive. Melissa Russo and Julie Lejune, both 8, died after starving to death in Dutroux's dungeon prison. Sabine Dardenne, 12, and Laetitia Delhez, 14, were rescued. Dutroux had kept Dardenne caged and chained by the neck for 79 days (Evans-Pritchard 2004). Rau was able to obtain access to the letters Dardenne wrote to her parents while in captivity, and were recited by Rachel Dedain in scene 3, because they were read aloud into evidence during Dutroux's 2004 trial. In 2004, Dardenne wrote her own account of the experience, *I Choose to Live*, with Marie-Thérèse Cuny.

thing they have just been asked to do” (Todd 2017).

The Dutch-speaking “real” children serve both as theatrical material and the basis for the work’s politics. Their presence evokes vulnerability, which gives rise to a swell of protective feeling in the viewer. Rau’s dramaturgy demonstrates how easily that affective response can be exploited for political gain and to override consideration of the historical conditions that produced the constellation of political effects that have come to be known as the “Dutroux affair.”

For Rau, the Dutroux affair has become an allegory of postcolonial Belgian politics. In *Five Easy Pieces*, he examines the impact of Belgium’s colonial domination of the Congo and its aftermath, a historical revision that insists on a much longer *durée* to the framing of the Dutroux narrative. Dutroux grew up in the Congo, once a Belgian colony; he committed his crimes near the French-speaking, economically depressed Belgian coal-mining city of Charleroi. In an interview with production dramaturg Stefan Bläske, Rau comments that the Dutroux “trial almost led to the implosion of Belgium and a rebellion of society against its own corrupt elites” (in Bläske 2016:18).<sup>3</sup> While the Dutroux affair had become a nexus for public outrage about the leniency of sex offender laws, the ineptitude of the police, and the glacial progress of Dutroux’s prosecution in the Federal court system, it *did not* precipitate a public reconsideration of how Belgium’s colonial past impacted the conditions that produced Dutroux. That elision, Rau suggests, was in part due to narrative construction. The media portrayed Dutroux as a “monster,” and an “enigma.” In newspaper and television accounts he was unlike the everyday Belgian citizen; he was depicted as an exceptional subject who preyed upon innocent Belgians.



Figure 2. “Piece III: Essay on Submission.” Recitation of Sabine Dardenne’s letters. Rachel Dedain in *Five Easy Pieces*. Concept, text, and direction by Milo Rau. *Kunstenfestivaldesarts*, May 2016. (Photo by Phile Deprez)

And in this public narrative, the abstract figure of the innocent child functioned in the very manner that queer theorist Lee Edelman describes in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*. Edelman observes that the state is more interested in what the signifier of the child can politically accomplish than it is in any “real” child. Edelman writes that the deployment of the child as an abstract figuration “invariabl(y) shapes the logic within which the political itself must be thought” (2004:2). When the Dutroux affair reached the level of a national crisis, most Belgians viewed their politicians as ineffectual and corrupt. By responding to the public’s demand to enact new laws to shore up its control, with the justification of protecting innocent children and children’s innocence, the Belgian Federal government extended the logic of colonialism, successfully reaffirming the same terms of patriarchal political power.

In order to destabilize the myth of the innocent child, Rau transforms the figurative abstraction, noted by Edelman, into the real. Before the five scenes begin, each of the child actors engages with Seynaeve in an audition-like format and is afforded a solo

3. The “rebellion” Rau references is the 1996 “White March,” where over 275,000 people demonstrated in Brussels to protest the judicial system’s mishandling of the Dutroux investigation and trial and demand increased government and judicial oversight of the nation’s children (Reuters 1996).

moment in the spotlight that renders them singular, recounting a quirky moment from her or his life story with enough detail to disarm the audience and gain their affection. Seynaeve, as Rau's proxy, also poses questions to each about the nature of theatre, mimicry, violence, and mortality. The answers show each child's capacity for philosophical and emotional reflection, and how well they absorb, respond to, or deflect the question. Later we understand how the dispositifs Rau has fashioned for each scene inhibit or expand any individual child's capacity for reflexivity that they have demonstrated in the beginning. Clearly the system is not perfect; we also see, so well illustrated in Rachel's "scene," that reflexivity about the coercive quality of performance cannot always overcome the pleasures and rewards of theatrical compliance.

This is also an adult problem, but certainly even more troublesome when posed with and about children. But because *Five Easy Pieces* is an edited repetition of the behaviors that occurred during rehearsals ("do it like in rehearsals"), Rau shows spectators how learning to manipulate theatre and narrative conventions can become a means to resist full cooperation, especially as the child actors become more compliant with performance's rules of engagement. We see children learning about sexual violence, grief, and mortality while being taught to question the intent of the information's communicative structure. By showing the audience the child actors' capacity to assimilate both forms of knowledge through experiences of making, showing, and telling, Rau destabilizes arguments for increasing patriarchal protectionism based on the claims that all exposure to knowledge of human violence automatically traumatizes.

Portions of the text of *Five Easy Pieces* are taken from the child performers' own words, elicited by Rau during rehearsals. Those phrases also make the past and present converge, as they uncannily sound like fragments of overheard, off-hand parental observations. The child actors recount dreams, sing songs, and tell stories, most of which were learned through mediated platforms: film, television, and YouTube. We understand how the media they consume and indiscriminately remix onstage performatively constructs their notion

of theatre's ontology. Occasionally a child shares a complicated notion whose source is unrecognizable or a philosophical observation that goes well beyond her/his years. We experience that expression as "adult." Other times, when a child actor's onstage reasoning is odd, contradictory, and associative, and her performance choices seem random, the resultant theatrical dramaturgy performatively reaffirms the qualities we believe to be "childlike." The adult spectators in the audience admit a small ratio of "adult" logic, which Rau calibrates, while still recognizing the actors onstage as children. But we reaffirm the actors' authenticity as children not only by their appearance, but also because we see a higher ratio of childlike behaviors: unruliness, singularity, obedience, and unpredictability.

Combined with documentary material from the Dutroux case, including trial evidence and television interviews, incorporating many principles of what Carol Martin terms "theatre of the real" (Martin 2013) Rau's use of child actors as both metaphors and metonyms for Belgium's political future transforms theatre of the real into an uncanny *theatre of the even realer*. The children onstage not only represent "the future," they are the subjects who will bear the real life consequences of more stringent protections enacted because of the Dutroux affair. Rau doesn't shy away from asking those performers to reenact portions of very ugly evidence, and we feel two things: asking them to do so is a risk; and that the idea of risk has been produced and naturalized by the protectionist logic. Rau banks on the fear he knows we as adults bring to the theatre: that the children might become "broken," in some manner traumatized, by the show's content. Instead however, we see that participation appears to build resilience and teaches how cultural mechanisms and narrative frameworks are constructed for specific political effects. Those who bear the consequences of those political effects learn how to call those same mechanisms and frameworks into question.

In *Five Easy Pieces*, understanding the "real" Marc Dutroux is never a goal—we only have access to him through memories of stories, documents, and scenes that show us the effects of his acts. The child actors, most of

whom were infants when Dutroux was on trial, when shown his uncaptioned photo, do recognize him, however only as a post-memory—the idea, following Marianne Hirsch (1997), that memory is not created from direct experience, but rather inherited from the previous generation’s retelling of their traumatic experiences. This moment of recognition is also the first time all the children onstage are allowed to erupt collectively and playfully as they retell the learned narrative about brutal violence—with no impact of the violent narrative evident in their behavior. The child actors recount what they heard about Dutroux from various second- and third-hand sources: From 1995 to 1996, after having been convicted and released for the abduction and rape of five girls in the 1980s, Dutroux abducted six girls and murdered four of them. Two victims were rescued. Their fragmented and overlapping phrases reference a conversation Dutroux had with his attorney, explaining that he intended to “carry out mass kidnappings of children and then create, in a mine shaft, a sort of underground city where good, harmony and security would prevail” (in AFP 2016).

As the children’s cacophonous rendition of the Dutroux story reaches a peak, Seynaeve, now acting as the onstage director and “adult,” sternly restores order. The children fall silent. To restore their spirit, he then offers them chances to perform, asking who among them would like to play Dutroux. This pattern, a disciplinary correction followed by an invitation to perform, is an authoritarian technique of governmentality that Rau implies Dutroux also used to his advantage, and it paces the entire production. After the abrupt halt to the heated shouting, three of the children—Polly, Maurice, and Pepijn—raise their hands, volunteering to play Dutroux. Two other children want different roles: Winne asks to be a king, and Willem, who told earlier of his desire to be a policeman, gesticulates wildly and asks to play one. Maurice, whose face is smeared

with makeup from the outset, asks to play “old and ill.”

Later we realize that the earlier information the children confessed to Seynaeve is incorporated in the five ensuing scenes. When Seynaeve tells Rachel it is her scene, the genius of his coercion is that it appears more as a gift than a punishment. Rau demonstrates just how easy it is to exert control by rewarding individual desires. He shows how theatrical direction operates within that logic too. Theatre history is rife with stories of male directors eliciting compelling performances by manipulating actors in much the same way.

When the child performer Maurice is singled out before the beginning of scene 1 (where the dispositif is “how to play sick”) to tell about himself, he recounts how he was born with pneumonia and was “coughing in his mother’s belly.” He demonstrates to Seynaeve his “talent,” which is his ability to cough on cue, imitating his birth trauma. Moments later, as scene 1 begins, Seynaeve has Maurice play Dutroux’s father, Victor, first as a young married Belgian living in the Congo and later as an 81-year-old man with emphysema living alone in Belgium (coincidentally, around the corner from CAMPO). We see Maurice play



Figure 3. Using chiaroscuro lighting reminiscent of a Rembrandt self-portrait, this press still references the optical theatrical effects artists have developed over centuries to construct indelible images of childhood and innocence. From left clockwise: Willem Loobuyck, Pepijn Loobuyck, Elle Liza Tayou, Maurice Leerman, Polly Persyn, Winne Vanacker, and Rachel Dedain in *Five Easy Pieces*. Concept, text, and direction by Milo Rau. *Kunstenfestivaldesarts*, May 2016. (Photo by Phile Deprez)

Marc Dutroux's father as a young man watching the televised transfer of power from the young Belgian King Baudouin to Congo's Patrice Lumumba, the first elected leader of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The child cast acts out the transfer onstage while a prerecorded adult cast acts out the same scene on the large screen behind them.

Elle Liza Tayou, playing Lumumba, is the only clearly identified person of color among the children, her father from Cameroon, her mother from Belgium. When Seynaeve singles her out for a conversation at the beginning of the play, he asks her, "Do you consider yourself more as an African or a European?" We then see her transition into playing Lumumba in the transfer of power ceremony and again later being assassinated by the Congolese accomplices of the American and Belgian governments and a Belgian execution squad.

As a mixed-race Belgian citizen, Elle Liza's participation in the performance is even more over-determined than the other children's, or Seynaeve's, her white, blond, adult questioner. Elle Liza's material presence, and the roles in which she is cast, both signify "race" and postcolonial subjectivity. At 17, on the cusp of adulthood, she is also the eldest of the child actors. Her androgynous onstage presence becomes a dramaturgical asset because when she dons the jacket preset on the chair she is invited to occupy during the prologue, her bearing resembles Lumumba's as he participates in the historic ceremony. And her shared intimacies that Rau includes in the prologue tell of the type of misrecognitions that are particular to race and gender. The ambiguity that is so useful onstage becomes far more of a political complication in real life. Pausing before replying with precision to Seynaeve's question about her own concept of racializa-

tion, she explains, "In Africa I'm white, and in Belgium I'm black." And Elle Liza's exchange with Seynaeve is painfully unlike the questions he poses to the other children. His brief interrogation about racial identity tells more about his inability to comprehend how Africa and Europe have become bound together by European fantasies of dominance; how the state justifies its oppression by imagining an entire colony as a child in need of schooling, civilizing, and protection.<sup>4</sup>

To highlight how new iterations of control and exploitation emerge from the legacy of colonialism, Rau fashions a transmedial theatrics that resists mimesis and singularity of focus because of its aesthetic potential to extend the terms of trauma. Onstage, he entangles live performance, cinematographic projections, and live video feed. When placed in different proximal relationships, the multiple media sometimes amplify and at other times undo one another. The five scenes, all enacted live onstage, are sometimes viewed on the back screen, live streamed. Rau also incorporates a second cast of adults who are only glimpsed as prerecorded cinema projections. The adult performers become the children's doppelgangers; they function as literal as well as psychoanalytic screen memories. They share a remarkable resemblance to the child actors and to the historical figures both casts portray. The adult cast only appears as cinematographic images that look like old newsreels, and sometimes the filmed projections of the adults fade out as the live-stream video of the children, enacting scenes from the Dutroux affair and from Belgium's 1960 handover of power to Patrice Lumumba, takes focus.

This dizzying transmedial mise-en-scène also unnervingly dissolves any possibility of locating a before or after of innocence. The

4. Robin Bernstein's work on the phenomenon of "racial innocence," is brought to bear here. She contends that 19th-century sentimental culture "had woven childhood and innocence together wholly. Childhood was then understood not as innocent but as innocence itself; not as a symbol of innocence but its embodiment. [...] This innocence was raced white" (Bernstein 2011:4). In a recent op-ed in the *New York Times*, Bernstein writes about the expansion of childhood innocence to children of color in the US: "The problem, however, is that every time we insist that the gates of innocence open to children of color, we limit ourselves by language, a 'frame,' as the linguist George Lakoff would say, that is embedded in racism. When we argue that black and brown children are as innocent as white children, and we must, we assume that childhood innocence is purely positive. But the idea of childhood innocence itself is not innocent: It's part of a 200-year-old history of white supremacy" (Bernstein 2017).

combination of live and mediated performance confuses temporal markers of both childhood and maturity. Rau's virtuosic meta-theatrics evoke a "critical censuring of illusionism, identification, empathy, and other sensuous pleasures" (Chow 2012:24). In all this, however, the children keep the emotion present. That contradiction is effective because of the deep entanglement of alienated perspectival vision and amplified affect. Following the reasoning of Rey Chow, this strategy opens "an epistemic space from within an aesthetic spectacle [...] in which reflexivity can be staged—and non-correspondence—between the presence of the work as such and the way 'it' may be activated in reception" (23).

Rau shows two nonconcurrent histories enacted simultaneously—that of the child actors' transformation from amateur to professional via the administrative and pedagogical tools of performance; and that of the Dutroux affair's historical subjects. *Five Easy Pieces* implicates the role of the theatre and performance in the present and past ambitions of the state. The simultaneous collapse and rearrangement of narratives also reveals how historical frameworks and contemporary repeated media accounts are culturally constructed to support Belgium's conjoining of white heteronormativity to the reproduction of its political future.

But the stakes of the production's emotional impact, although amplified and made reflexive by the transmedial, really rest on the Möbius-like tension between the onstage live actors' capacity to understand the implications of what they enact and the preexistent doubt the audience brings to the theatre. At the conclusion of "Scene V What are clouds?" Polly, a serious and small girl with straight brown hair who in scene four embodied Julie Lejeune's mother taping a painfully emotive televised plea for her daughter's safe return, recounts a story about watching a film about puppets. Polly speaks the monologue simply. She has learned well



Figure 4. "Piece I: Father and Son." Victor Dutroux interview. From left: Maurice Leerman (onscreen), Peter Seynaeve, Polly Persyn, Pepijn Loobuyck, Elle Liza Tayou, Winne Vanacker, and Maurice Leerman in *Five Easy Pieces*. Concept, text, and direction by Milo Rau. *Kunstenfestivaldesarts*, May 2016. (Photo by Phile Deprez) *Kunstenfestivaldesarts*, 14 May 2016. (Photo by Phile Deprez)

how to capitalize on the concept of child innocence. The story is dramaturgically structured as an allegorical children's tale. But because allegory, oral storytelling, and puppet theatre are naturalized as properties of childhood, the audience hardly recognizes them as also complexly transmedial.

In the story, the older male puppet mentors the younger female puppet, teaching her all the rules of the theatre, especially how to act, how to signify onstage. The puppets are sentient, but sheltered within the confines of the theatre. But the puppet theatre goes bankrupt, its puppets broken and discarded in the dump after the building is razed. Still, they retain their sentience, and for the first time, they see the sky and the clouds, which until that moment, have only been known in the puppet's minds as representations because they have been sheltered from a direct experience of the outside.

Polly's story, a quiet retelling of a cinematic encounter she had "as a child," shocks on many levels. In part, the audience is startled because of her perceptive brilliance and how she speaks of her own childhood as a past phase of her life. She seems to have also mastered acting; there is a marked difference between her performance as Lejeune's mother and later as



Figure 5. "Piece IV: Alone in the Night." Interview with Julie's parents. Bottom left row: Polly Persyn, Elle Liza Tayou, Pepijn Loobuyck, Willem Loobuyck, and Winne Vanacker. From left onscreen: Pieter-Jan De Wyngaert and Jan Steen in *Five Easy Pieces*. Concept, text, and direction by Milo Rau. *Kunstenfestivaldesarts*, May 2016. (Photo by Phile Deprez)

herself. She projects a luminous stillness when she recounts the puppet allegory. The insight she offers also is not resonant with the perverse narrative that gives the Dutroux story so much media play. Instead, through her puppet story, she tells what a child would find most brutal about imprisonment in Dutroux's dungeon: the deprivation of clouds and sky. Polly's reflection on the logic of "capture" echoes Chow's understanding of the political implications of the aesthetic term through Walter Benjamin. "Capture" has become the "capacity for further partitioning," which we see happening metatheatrically throughout the performance. Capture effectively diminishes the subject's possibility of seeing and thinking beyond the given horizon of her/his current imagination and it also "sets reality into motion" (Chow 2012:4).

Chow warns that hypermediatized "screening and framing possibilities" can cross over into porn, while the point of political reflexivity is to make the drama vulgar (25). And so, as I wrote at the outset, Rau doesn't allow us to

look anywhere that isn't charged with the political stakes of how narratives are staged and framed within particular sociopolitical circumstances. When we look at Rachel's naked body onscreen and onstage as she recites Dardenne's plaintive words to Seynaeve, we have to reflexively consider the scenes from the recent and historical past at which we were not present—scenes that looked much like this one of Dardenne with Dutroux, Rau in rehearsal with Rachel, all eliciting incredibly uncomfortable disruptive feelings. For me, the vulgarity upon which Chow insists in order to politicize reflexivity is most present in the moment when I want to look away both from the film and from the live Rachel, but Rau gives me nowhere else to rest my eyes. I cannot dismiss now what I now know occurred in the past. Still, the scene passes; I watch Rachel recover. I track Polly's transition from embodying Julie Lejune's shattered mother to playing herself in her profound and poetic monologue, which she delivers with extreme composure.



*Five Easy Pieces* produces a haunting and inescapable ambivalence. I saw the production twice; in Belgium in the fall of 2016 and four months later, in Amsterdam. I first saw it in Aalst, a small Flemish-speaking Belgian province, at CC de Werf, and in order to look away momentarily from the stage during Rachel's monologue, I had to look at one of the 200 teenagers all around me. There were only a handful of adults present—the local high schools had purchased blocks of group tickets. Throughout the 90-minute performance, I could hardly hear the teenagers breathing, save for bursts of joyous laughter when Elle Liza sang a few bars of John Lennon's "Imagine" or when Winne Vanacker danced tremulously across the stage to the melancholic strains of Erik Satie's *Gymnopédie No. 1* played on a keyboard by Pepijn Loobuyck.

The teenage audience was captivated by *Five Easy Pieces* precisely because Rau conceived it for them as an inoculation against domination and oppression. But in his use of the "real" and the "realer," he does not underestimate the risk of misunderstandings. The show is always clear about the negative effects of adults projecting and pursuing their own desires on behalf of children. Seeing the teenagers on either side of me was humbling. There was no question of their ability to collectively entertain the consequences of choosing formal storytelling devices to tell difficult and extreme stories of human action. I believe that is where hope resides. Rau's collaboration with CAMPO affirms the creativity and resilience of real children who can entertain, in all senses of the word, the entanglements of the real and the realer. When given full information, some creative control, and knowledge of how the formal parameters of narrative frameworks convey very different stories, children are game to take up the challenge of doing it *differently than* in rehearsal—of engaging the past and then reconfiguring the present's horizon of possibility.

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