

(IN)CORRECT

Performance review: (IN)CORECT, Play and directing by Leta Popescu, stage design by Lucia Mărneanu, with Alexandra Caras, Cătălin Filip, Oana Mardare, Alina Mișoc, Emőke Pál, Paul Sebastian Popa, Lucian Teodor Rus, Doru Talos. A production of Reactor de Creație și Experiment, Cluj-Napoca, România, 2020.

Cluj-Napoca, February 2020. The independent artistic team *Reactor de Creație și Experiment* continue their multiannual programme started in 2019, *Decalaj. Narațiuni intergeneraționale (Gap. Intergenerational Narratives)*. This time, however, the project coincides with the last performance of the trilogy *Colaj (Collage)* by director Leta Popescu. Began at the Hungarian State Theatre Cluj in 2018 with the performance *(In)vizibil (In/visible)*, a collage of texts on loneliness by Romanian and Hungarian contemporary authors, continued at the Timișoara National Theatre with *(In)credibil (In/credible)*, a collage of the director's own texts and writings on failure signed by Mihaela Michailov, Peca Ștefan, and Elise Wilk, Leta Popescu's directing project brings the collage closer to the concept of a "broken mirror" in which the spectator can identify as many perspectives as allowed by imagination. *(In)corect* marks the end of this search and the director's debut as playwright.

The performance aims to bridge the generational gap from the viewpoint of the most intimate nucleus of society: the family. Therefore, Leta Popescu's personal touch on the Reactor stage is easily taken over by all those sitting in the auditorium. A true family journal, including echoes of a question that arises as you are first hit by the transition from childhood to maturity, both for yourself and through the others' eyes: what to do when you're part of a family in which you can no longer find yourself? A mere vision desynchronization and it seems like everything was built on quicksand and all the examples you've had so far no longer apply. Most of

the times, we try to find somebody to blame, establish who bears the responsibility for what happens to us. But how can you reach the “ultimate” truth in a family in which everybody has their own, immovable justice and where certain bad memories turn tradition simply because you are afraid you could hurt the people who have raised you? Are you truly the only one affected by your life choices?

All families may seem dysfunctional, almost always. This defines us, even though we are incessantly running from our roots. Often times, you ask how you can change the way in which others perceive you; how can you start a new life somewhere else, where nobody knows your relatives who, for a while, have also stopped recognizing you? And what to do when you have to face all the prejudice unjustifiably placed upon you? What if you cannot run away, for instance, because you are isolated in the Danube Delta with your family and there’s always something to challenge?



Fig. 1: (IN)CORECT, *Reactor de Creație și Experiment*, photo credits Doru Vatavului.

This performance is a successful overview on a theatre laboratory driven by full transparency itself. The above-mentioned principle, i.e. that it is hard to not be who we are, makes up the basis of this text, and the director's creative method. Actors play characters, yet they never leave their performer status behind. On the contrary, they also take on other scenic roles: stagehands, light and sound operators. These continuously changing personifications are definitory for the director's complex plans. At the same time, we can witness both the events unfolding on stage, and what normally happens behind the curtains. So, the performance relies on the organic evolution of the events, and claims no magic tricks, as theatre shows normally imply. The roles are interpreted by each actor, one by one, so spectators witness as each element is revealed as a machine that serves a visual or sound effect created to enhance the ambiance of the show. Therefore, the dramaturgic coherence of the representation is never mediated by elements from outside the scenic space, but is part of the action itself, coinciding with the scenic time. Everything happens here and now.

The performance is made up of a multitude of images which blend together to create an overview. In fact, the broken mirror effect marks the multiple meaning strata: actors as characters and actors as supporting (so-called) technical staff, the ever-changing, ever-moving set according to the needs on stage, the table where we can watch the sound design be created in real time, and not least, the two screens that visually support the multiple perspectives. In a constant complementarity relation, the TV showing live images created by the actors at the worktable, and the projection screen that coincides with the stage back wall, support this language deconstruction, offering several layers to which the audience can relate simultaneously, so as, by using their imagination and personal viewpoint, to create the complete picture of the family described in through Leta Popescu's specific universe.

Like the course of life, all the elements that make up the performance (*In)corect* are in permanent transformation. The parallel between the fictional play and the cold reality that inspired it fits the director's concept. Throughout our existence, we always change roles, are in a constant state of adaptation, deny our roots only to return to them and reidentify with

what we used to be at the very beginning. Like this continuous return to the origins, the scenic means of expression are resumed and always draw new patterns of meaning.

Watching this family confession, at the end of the show, you can only feel legitimacy. The recognition takes place both during the performance, and in its direct relation with the audience. In the end, the broken mirror is stuck together based on personal experiences, as each spectator takes a private look within. We thus travel the road backwards, from the personal to the general. What may be intimate/subjective to the director becomes an incontestably universal story to the eye of the spectator. Because each narrative specific to one human identity alone bears a grain of common living. How we tell our story is up to us. This is the final impression left by *(In)correct*: trying to erase unpleasant pictures from your past, you rearrange everything as per your present Self, without actually changing the essence of the problem.

ANA MARIA ȚÎRLEA

Faculty of Theatre and Film,
Babeș-Bolyai University
am.tirlea@yahoo.co.uk