

## THE INVENTION OF HYSTERIA

### SYNOPSIS

The *Invention of Hysteria* turns theater into one big therapeutic toy that feeds on the fear and repressed desires of actors. In this play, a group of men, led by a stage director, performs a mysterious therapy session that consists in staging four uncanny dramas. The public will witness this treatment that will end up revealing how the actors' need to get love and approval from their director is, in reality, a direct path to madness.

### ABOUT THE PLAY

The plays represented in *The Invention of Hysteria* were published in *Psychotronic Theater Collection* by Ediciones El Milagro in 2013. These texts play with some aspects of psychotronic cinema, while it reworks in a very particular way the play-writing of the *Théâtre du Grand-Guignol*. This fusion results in a set of stories that take place in a nightmarish universe, populated by human beings who get love mixed up with control, and yearn to be loved with the most abject submission. The consequence of this confusion is the final annihilation of the characters, shown in all its horror, as it would happen in David Cronenberg's more psychotronic films or in André de Lorde's Grand Guignolish dramas.

*The Invention of Hysteria* extends the theme of the plays (confusion between love, control and submission) to the set, creating a story about a therapist-stage director who, in the process of representing the stories in this book, conspires with two of his patient-actors to subdue the youngest member of the group and annihilate his will. To a certain extent, this play ends up being a fun parody that shows the cruelest aspect of good social and political intentions of contemporary theater, whose foundation lies not on a great humanist project, but rather, on the imperious desire to subdue.

The space, props and lighting play around with the idea of theater as a great therapeutic toy that turns out to be—in reality—a lethal machine with its own objectives. In this nightmarish vision, theater is a mechanical vampire that feeds on the pain of actors.

This play resorts to the language of marionettes and the theater of objects. These stage forms evoke rather than represent, and highlight the poetry and sense of humor of the original texts.

### THE LIFE OF THE PLAY

October, 2014

Premiere season at the Salvador Novo Theater of the CENART (National Center for the Arts).

The play was produced as a result of research conducted during the Master's in Stage Direction at the National School of Theater Arts.

November, 2015

Season at the Carlos Lazo Theater of the Faculty of Architecture of the UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico).

April, 2017

Season at Foro Contigo América.

May, 2017

Season at El Milagro Theater.

## **CREDITS**

### Playwright and Director

Luis Alcocer Guerrero

### Assistant Director

Paco Vela

### Cast

Ernesto García, Jorge Chávez Caballero, Héctor Iván González and Luis Alcocer Guerrero

### Set Design, Pathetic Machines and Props

Alejandra Vega, Isabel Becerril, Mariana Rudich, and Jaime Castillo

Lighting

Miguel Moreno

Wardrobe

Alejandra Vega and Teresa Vega

Original Score and Sound Design

Rodrigo Castillo Filomarino

Music Comments and Musical Advice

Fernando Carrasco

Stage Direction Consultant

Martín Acosta

Production Consultant

Gabriel Pascal

Producers

Ministry of Culture, INBA (Fine Arts National Institute), National School of Theater Arts.  
Psychotronic Grand-Guignol Project.

Executive Producer

Diana Ham

Production Assistants

Noel Montes de Oca

Promotion

Rosa María Trujillo

Photography

Gabriel Morales, Photograph Archives INBA (Fine Arts National Institute) / CITRU  
(National Center for Theater Research, Documentation and Information).