

LOUIS (Carola Maternini) / KIDRIČEVA 29C (Martin Mlakar)

Graziano Graziani

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There is a common theme linking some of the performances in the programme: fragility. Figure theatre knows many forms—table puppets, marionettes, animated objects—united by the relationship that the figure has with the animator, who is absent from the narrative but present with the body: a relationship that at times seems almost one of care. In the play *Louis*, by **Carola Maternini**, this relationship becomes a dramaturgical element. Louis wakes up in the middle of the night and realises he is missing an arm; to come to terms with this amputation, he weaves a sometimes melancholic and sometimes comical dialogue with the doctor and his mother, ghostly, perhaps imaginary, figures. A refined metaphor for mourning, the show dissolves the fragility of the puppet-character into comedy and makes the pain of absence more ‘pronounceable’. In *Kidričeva 29c* (one of the most interesting works), Martin Mlakar meets the audience at his grandfather's home, in a flat in Nova Gorica, where he recites a monologue in Slovenian that tells the story of the apartment. Here again, more than the story told, it is the presence-absence that is the protagonist of the tale: every animated object evokes the absent figure, from the books in the living room to the statue of a partisan, until that figure actually materialises thanks to a jacket and a stick, moved and placed between the armchair and the sofa. The young grandson in the flesh, moving through a space of familiar memory, ends up looking after the absent grandfather figure as if it were a child (and after all, this reversal of roles is what time hands us every time a body grows old and its fragility becomes apparent). The socialist-built flat offers the viewer a glimpse of reality and a little journey back in time: the atmosphere among the furnishings and objects ends up being one of the most fascinating and engaging elements of the work and of the entire festival. (*Graziano Graziani*)