

GOETHE MEDAL 2018

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY HEIDI AND ROLF ABDERHALDEN (MAPA TEATRO)

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The beginnings of Mapa Teatro, thirty-four years ago, embraced German thought and the work of its artists, in different disciplines and modalities, as a source of inspiration and an important reference for our own work. Also, since our first appearance in a Berlin theater in 2005, this country's stages were the scenario where our artistic production became more present and where it has had greater resonance in this continent.

In 1995, playwright Heiner Müller echoed our staging of his work, *Der Horatio*, in a prison in Bogota, in one of the last interviews before his death. But it would take, like a message in a bottle, fifteen years to reach our hands. Precisely this controversial and prolific German artist and thinker provided us with the notion of "laboratory of social imagination" (*Sozialer Phantasie*) reintroducing the thought, in turn, from philosopher Wolfgang Heise. Since then, and devouring this enigmatic and suggestive term as anthropophagi worthy of our Amerindian continent, we have re-created and produced our own laboratory of imagination.

This laboratory was initially created by Heidi and Rolf, Colombians born of a Swiss-German father and a Colombian mother, and later educated in different European countries until we decided to return definitively to Colombia. Our work has always been marked by that double physical, historical and political presence, and nourished by its diverse realities and heterogeneous sources of inspiration. In addition to a form of gratification to artistic consistency, ethics and aesthetics built over the years by that collective subject, the Goethe medal is a recognition of the different forms of dialogue we have created in each of our encounters with the world, in the intent to sidestep the "colonial-capitalist unconscious," as proposed by our ally Suely Rolnik: a regime of the unconscious that inhabits us all, inevitably, in all corners of the planet.

On behalf of Mapa Teatro, we, Heidi and Rolf, would like to express our gratitude for this prestigious distinction, a distinction we receive at a time after the human and social catastrophe brought about by the oldest internal conflict in the Americas, a conflict that has left millions of victims in Colombia in its wake. The Goethe medal comes to us amidst the unrest and the difficulty that the real implementation of the Final Peace Agreement—signed between the Colombian State and the FARC guerrilla—means for the Colombian society today. This medal is an inspiration to the work that our "laboratory of social imagination" has developed to resist war and violence in the last thirty two years that Mapa has been working in Colombia to create sensitive scenarios to decrypt and resignify the experience of these catastrophic situations. Mapa has therefore participated in the collective effort to confront them. The medal is a way to appreciate the political power of the imagination that persists, despite our continent's precarious conditions for creation.

In his Nobel Prize in Literature acceptance Lecture, Gabriel García Márquez said, “to oppression, plundering and abandonment, we respond with life. Neither floods nor plagues, famines nor cataclysms, nor even the eternal wars of century upon century have been able to subdue the persistent advantage of life over death.”