



ACTO.Instituto de Arte Dramática intends to be both a theatre company and an academy which vocation is the seeking of artistic languages and the creative development of its members.

Created in 1992, in the city of Aveiro (Portugal) by José Filipe Pereira and Christine de Villepoix, it has been operating since the beginning as a professional structure.

In 1996, invited by the City Hall, Acto settled in Estarreja, a 12.000 inhabitants town, 20 km north from Aveiro (see location map). Here it has developed its activities in the fields of creation, formation, cultural exchanges, programming, cultural dynamics' development and reinforcing the links with the local community.

The fundamental themes of research developed by this Institute embraced the following domains:

- 1) of the objective laws of the performer's craft, exploring areas like physical training, vocal action and psychophony, and the methodology of physical actions;
- 2) of the disciplinary interaction in the construction of poetical speech;
- 3) of the exploration of narratives of behaviour. Not admitting that theatre exhausts the formal possibilities of the performer's fulfilment, the search extends itself to other artistic territories, trying to establish connections with other possible disciplines.

Throughout the years new audiences' creation activities have been held. The continuous researches and studies concerning education for theatre companies, led to the development of specialized workshops, technical demonstrations and conferences, in the ambit of the developed methodologies.

The establishment of the Institute in Estarreja opened new development possibilities, and an intervention in the socio-cultural midst. In this context, and in collaboration with the cultural office of the Town, the program **ESTA** was designed for theatrical animation and to the formation of sensible audiences. This program had an excellent response from the public towards the contemporary artistic languages of the over fifty performances and the numerous workshops and activities presented between April 96 and December 97.

In 1999, **ESTA** assumes the form of a regular, annual **International Festival**, with performances and concerts of both foreign and Portuguese artists, maintaining strong connections with the international artistic panorama.

Other non-regular events were also organized throughout the years, like **aTelier da Juventude** – a festival aiming the young public, and **PARALELO 40°N** - a multi-artistic Festival, organized in a railway station, as a result of an artists-in-residence program.



Since 1998 **ACTO** is a member of **IETM** — Informal European Theatre Meeting, co-ordinating several meetings of the Multiculturalism and Globalization Working Group. This international network permitted a various number of artistic co-operation projects, among others, Comedia Network - an European network concerned with the cultural diversity in the performing Arts.

In 2001 the construction of a new cultural space, the **aTelier**, was concluded. This structure is used for the daily training of the artistic team and it serves the community through the presentation of different events and performances.

Integrating people of various nationalities that studied in different parts of the world, ACTO has maintained tight connections with international personalities and artists and has received some of them in Portugal for practical interchanges and public events. Besides Portugal, numerous performances, workshops and seminars have been presented in Cap Vert, France, Italy, Tunisia, Austria, Norway, The Netherlands...

Creations Performed (1995-2005)

In **1995**, **ACTO** presented to the public its first dramatic creation, **O Pescador e a Alma** based on Oscar Wilde's *The Fisherman and his Soul*. Its premiere happened in the ACARTE / Gulbenkian Foundation auditorium in May 27th, being also presented afterwards at the International Theatre Festival of Almada, Coimbra, Porto and various other towns.

In June **1996** **ACTO** presented at the Estarreja Municipal Theatre two creations which followed as consequence of trans-disciplinary researches in defined artistic areas, referring to the same line of artistic exploration:

- **Composição 522**, resulting from the research on the domains of music and of the performing arts, intending to find the subtlety of a non-subordinated dialogue;
- **Claridade Dada Pelo Tempo**, resulting from a continuous formation action, with the objective of fusing dramatic arts methodologies' with plastic arts.

In June **1997**, **O Corpo (Con)Sentido** was presented. The performance, based on Alberto Estima de Oliveira's poetry, resulted from a long research about the creative phenomenon. Later, in September of the same year, **Nocturno** was created, as a trans-disciplinary reading of Novalis's *The Hymns to the Night*.



As Marionetas, a piece based upon Kleist's *Über das Marionettentheater*, with its premiere in **1998**, was presented with the prize "O TEATRO NA DÉCADA".

In **1999**, **Como uma Formidável Cascata Gelada**, by Christine de Villepoix, based on an adaptation of an old Syrian text "The Hymn of the Pearl", also in a French version created in 2000 - **Comme une Formidable Cascade Gelée**.

O Ramo Dourado, based on Sir James Frazer's anthropological studies found in his "The Golden Bough", a project of research and a practical reflection about the body as a creative support and as a possible vehicle of a trans-cultural genetic memory, in order to verify if besides culture and tradition, the body-memory could be a basis for a contemporary artistic and creative process; also presented in **1999**.

20 Canções de Amor e 1 Poema Desesperado, in **2000**, resulted from the fusion of music, poetry and performing.

In **2002**, two new performances were created: **Granuaile**, written and performed by Helena Botto, and **Um Sorriso/A Smile**, freely inspired by Henry Miller's "A Smile at the Foot of the Ladder", a co-production with Theater Zuidplein (Rotterdam, the Netherlands) and WUK Theater (Vienna, Austria), directed by José Filipe Pereira and financed by the Culture 2000 program of the European Commission.

The years of work in art education activities for children and youth determined the **2003** performance **Era Uma Vez...**, a performance destined for a young public.

Two new performances were created in **2004**: another co-production with Theatre Zuidplein (Rotterdam, the Netherlands) and WUK Theatre (Vienna, Austria), led to the creation of **A Transformação/The Transformation**, freely inspired by Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, crossed by the experiences in nowadays' Cyber World; and **De Amor e de Dor...** a site-specific performance, crossing the physical-actions' methodology with the poetry of Al Berto.

In **2005** a new and more accurate version of **The Smile** was constructed, presented in July.



"... TO WIDEN UP THE SPACE OF FREEDOM THAT WE CARRY WITHIN OURSELVES"