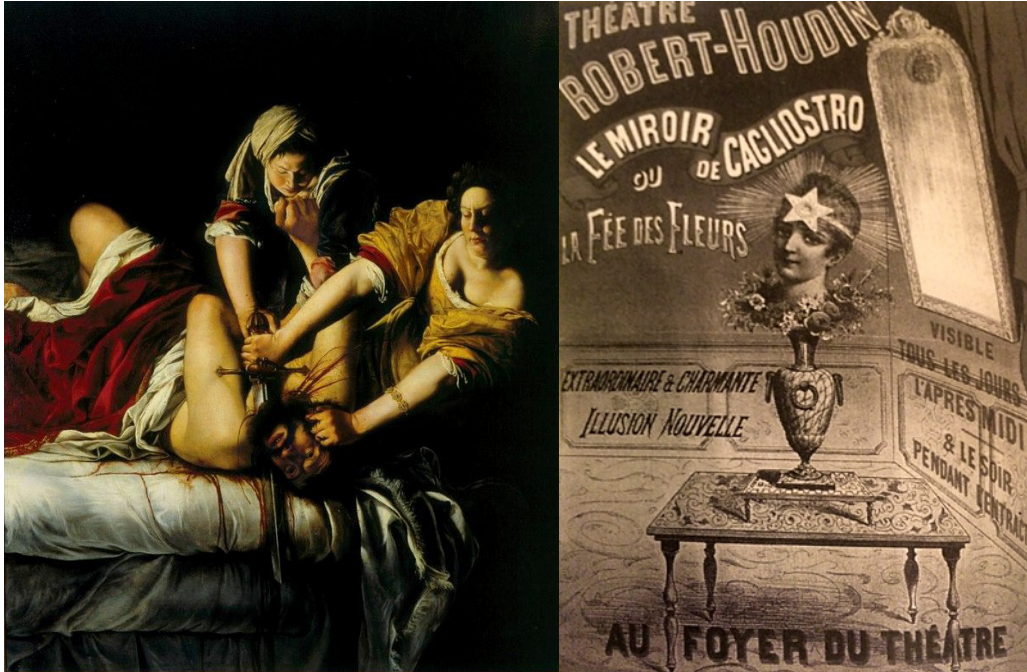


CUTTING EDGE



WHS

CUTTING EDGE



Name: Cutting Edge

Author(s): Kalle Nio & the group

Direction: Kalle Nio

Performers: Inês Campos, Vera Selene Tegelman and Jukka Tarvainen

Lights design: Jere Mönkkönen

Costumes: Mila Moisio & Kaisa Rissanen

Set & props: Taneli Rautiainen

Production: Kalle Nio & Nina Haukkovaara

Main disciplines: Magic, Movement, Projections, Illusions

Venue: theatre stage, frontal, indoor, 200-700 seats

Number of artist on stage: 3

Duration: 1h

Production: WHS / Kalle Nio

Coproduction: Helsinki Festival / Helsingin Juhlaviikot, Helsinki

Les Migrateurs / Associés pour les Arts du Cirque, Strasbourg

La Brèche, Pôle national des arts du cirque de Basse-Normandie, Cherbourg-Octeville

Premiere: August 2016 in Helsinki Festival (www.helsinginjuhlaviikot.fi)



Cutting Edge is stage magic, visual and physical theatre, movement and acrobatics performance for three performers.

The visual inspiration for the show are the historical paintings, images and myths about decapitations, the act of cutting a persons head. The show will take the decapitation classics of magic and will bring them to a new context. We will twist them around and research into the hidden meanings. We create and destroy the illusions and create new ones. We work with mirrors and semi transparent materials and combine them with cutting edge video projections and aggressive body movement.

On the stage there are three performers, two woman and one man. Their strong physical presence, movements and bodies will mix together and will be cut into pieces by the ways of stage illusions.

The predominant style of the show is very dark humor. The performance takes a dark look into these horrible images and makes a twisted combination of magic show, baroque theatre, acrobatics, contemporary dance and punk gig.

The oldest documented magic trick is by the ancient magician Dedi (Djedi) who performed for Pharaoh Khufu. The story tells he could cut a head of an animal and put it back together. The trick of decapitation has been in the repertory of magicians ever since. It's one of the most popular illusions ever performed.

At the same time history tells us that it is within our capacity to commit, to accept, to watch and even to enjoy the spectacle of real beheading. The power of the beheading ritual in our society reverberates today in everyday idioms, gestures and jokes.

People think that large, raucous crowds at executions belong to a distant era in our past, and so they do. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it came to be seen as unnatural to be able to watch someone executed, but that has never stopped some people watching when given the opportunity, and it probably never will. Executions have always attracted people from all backgrounds: men, women and children, rich and poor, academic and illiterate. Individual responses may differ – some will laugh and jeer, others will studiously take notes, some will faint or vomit or cry, and to an extent these responses are culturally determined, but the lesson of history is that it is within our capacity as humans to witness decapitations and other forms of execution, and more than that, to enjoy them as popular public events.

Decapitation is the ultimate tyranny; but it is also an act of creation, because, for all its cruelty, it produces an extraordinarily potent artefact that compels our attention whether we like it or not. There is a skull inside each of us, after all. We are compelled to try and reanimate what remains, because there is an intense incongruity between the way a severed head looks – like a person – and the way it behaves – like an object.



The act of beheading a person is one of the most common subjects that has inspired artists through the times. Medusa in Greek mythology, St. John the Baptist, Goliath, Judith and Holofernes and all the victims of axes and guillotines of various Kings, Queens and revolutions have ended up into the canvases of various artists. The stories and events of beheadings are numerous, and it has always been a subject of art from guillotine portraits to the paintings of Caravaggio and contemporary sculptors.

The visual inspiration for the show are the historical paintings, images and myths about decapitations, for instance the paintings of Artemisia Gentileschi (1593 – 1656). The powerful visuality of the show brings it close to visual arts and tableau vivant. The abundance of baroque images will get contrasting force from minimalistic punk attitude and mixing of different styles and layers ruthlessly together. The soundtrack is combination of baroque opera, punk rock and electronic beats.

In the Cutting Edge, we dig deeply into this most horrific act and ask uncomfortable but essential questions. What is the symbolical meaning of cutting head? Where does the identity of person come from? What is the meaning of gender in the act of beheading? Why is beheading and mutilation of body the most popular act of magicians? What can we learn about our common humanity from this, the ultimate image of inhumanity?

The core group for Cutting Edge is the same that made in a year 2013 a show called *Lähtö / Départ* for Finnish National Theatre. After its premiere, *Lähtö* has toured in the national theatres of Finland, Panama, Costa Rica, Colombia, Portugal, Bosnia and Herzegovina and it has been performed in various festivals in Belgium, France, Italy, Estonia and Czech Republic.