



## **Katastrophe**

Agrupación Señor Serrano

Wojciech Olejnik Award and Jury's Special Prize  
to the Most Creative Show, PIHT Festival 2013,  
Warsaw.

Jury's Special Prize, Banialuka Festival 2012, Bielsko  
Biala

## **Presentation**

Four performers, eleven scale models and hundreds of gummy bears create the world of **Katastrophe**: a stupid fable about human civilization, focused on disasters. In this context, the gummy bears suffer earthquakes, oil spills, wars and extermination. Everything is performed live through chemical experiments and subversive actions. Around the stage, three large screens immerse the audience in this pop world of chaos, game and destruction.

**Katastrophe** questions the difference between a natural catastrophe, a 'natural' catastrophe caused by man and a human catastrophe. Or to put it simply, if deaths provoked by a tsunami are comparable to those caused by a radioactive leak, or to those produced by an atomic bomb. Are Pompeii and Chernobyl the same thing? Are Auschwitz and Pompeii the same? The indifference toward men in the action of nature justifies or explains the indifference toward men in the action of other men?

**Katastrophe** is nourished by the performing language that defines Agrupación Señor Serrano: performance, dance, physical theater, video in scene and interactive technologies.

**Katastrophe's premiere was the 19th of march 2011 at the TILT Festival in Perpignan (France).**

### ¿Are Auschwitz and Pompei the same?

Manipulating the gummy bears in the models, **Katastrophe** follows the impact that disasters have had on human history and the relationship that could have been established over time between violence and the violent nature of man. Thus, **Katastrophe** shows some stages of an invented history of a Valley, from Nature expressing on/against itself (are Cambrian massive eruptions that ended with half of the forests of the Earth a catastrophe?), to man expressing on/against itself (what drives a community to pursue and exterminate another one?)

Along the path from the first glaciation to the concentration camps of the twentieth century **Katastrophe** also shows the faces of men who have suffered from the actions of Nature, shows these same men manipulating Nature and finally shows this manipulated Nature turning against his manipulator.

And all this just to put the main question of the piece: Does the indifference toward men of action of Nature justifies the indifference of some men's actions towards other men?



## Tutorial

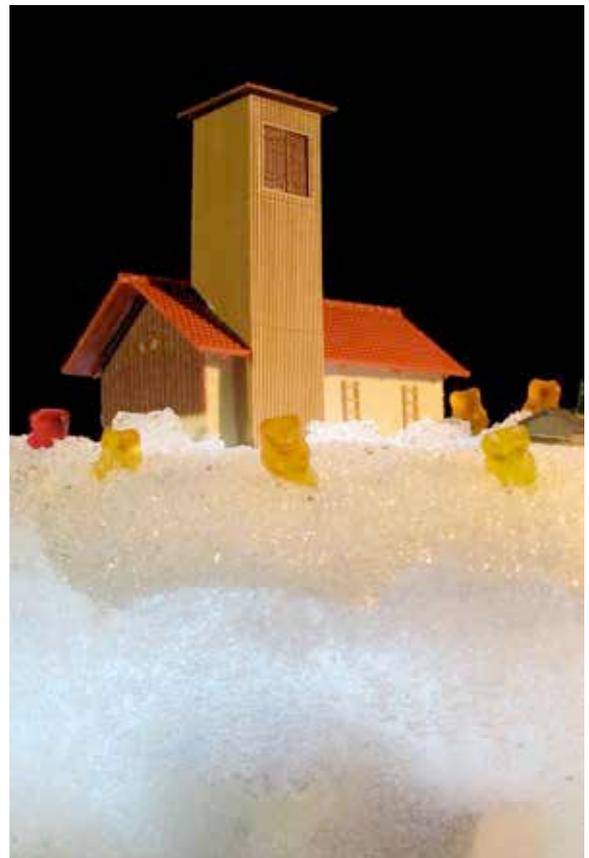
**Katastrophe** is presented as a childish tale that tells the story of a valley and its occupation by some tribes. The plot shows the evolution of these hunter-gatherer tribes to an industrial and complex society and follows the relationship established between them and Nature (in the logic as explained in the previous section). The whole piece takes place in a triple scale: micro, macro and human.

The micro level is materialized through a series of models/miniatures that reproduce the evolution of the valley, where hundreds of Haribo gummy bears represent human beings and a series of effects based on small-scale chemical reactions performed live recreate a series of natural disasters. Through these experiments we will see volcanoes, glaciations, floods and genocides and will watch how gummy bears respond to these disasters.

The human scale is represented by the performers. On the one hand, they take on the role of demiurges, creating and manipulating the reality of the gummy bears and the miniatures. On the other, they transform themselves into avatars of the bears, reflecting, in a human-scale, the experiences of the gummy bears and sometimes being enablers and other victims of the violence that is being generated at the micro level.

The third level is the macro, which is materialized in the three large projection surfaces surrounding the scene and action.

In those screens, we follow the adventures of the valley and the gummy bears, but not like in a plain film. What the cameras are capturing is transformed with a specific software so that the resulting projection takes on new meaning. Similarly, the juxtaposition of different images that offer the three projections help to create new and enlightening meanings.



## Dear audience

The audience is a very important element of **Katastrophe**. What we purpose is a central board in which the micro action happens (the miniatures, the models and the action of the performers) and around it two blocks of audience that follow the performer's actions and the video projections. Each audience block has visual access to two projection surfaces (one front and one central) while the third surface is kept from them (because it is behind them and to see it they should be turned completely).

This setting allows us to submerge the audience in the show.



## The gang

Original idea: Àlex Serrano and Pau Palacios

Creation and performance: Diego Anido, Martí Sánchez-Fibla, Àlex Serrano and Pau Palacios

Assistant director and executive producer: Barbara Bloin

Interactive video: Martí Sánchez-Fibla

Video production: Josep Maria Marimon

Masks: Silvia Delagneau

Lighting consultant: Alex Aviñoa

Scientific consultant: Irene Lapuente (la Mandarina de Newton)

Music: Roger Costa (themes Gummies, Spaces and Metals)

Singer: Susanna Abellán (Gummies)

Project advisor: Víctor Molina

Management: Art Republic

Special thanks to: Erin, Adrià, Martí, Irene Capdevila, Pia Mazuela, Massimo Vesco, Ewa Gleisner, Gigi Piana, Rosa Pozuelo, Marta Galán, Julien Bouffier, Franck Bouchard, Pablo Rega, Raquel Regueira.

An Agrupación Señor Serrano and Festival Hybrides de Montpellier production.

With the collaboration of the Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts de la Generalitat de Catalunya and of the Instituto Nacional para las Artes Escénicas y la Música.

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## **Agrupación Señor Serrano**

Founded by Àlex Serrano in Barcelona in 2006, Agrupación Señor Serrano is a theatre company that creates original productions based on stories drawn from contemporary times. The company uses the richness of innovative and vintage tools to extend the boundaries of its theater. Based on creative collaborations, Señor Serrano's productions blend stage performance, text, video, sound, and scale models to stage stories about discordant aspects of today's human experience. The company productions premiere and tour mostly internationally.

Agrupación Señor Serrano gestates and premieres original intermedia productions using the company's three-stage creative model: Devising of Contents, Dispositive Conception, and Editing and Rehearsal. Creators involved in each work share their primary creative skill sets with one another over the course of the process. This exchanging of abilities empowers each member of the group and consequently the company's project.

The company has received support and recognition from several institutions like GREC Festival de Barcelona, Instituto Nacional de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música, Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo, Consell Nacional de la Cultura i de les Arts, Departament de Cultura de la Generalitat, Centre d'Arts Escèniques de Terrassa, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication or Hexagone Scène Nationale Arts et Sciences – Meylan among others. Its creative processes include international residency centers like La Chartreuse – Centre National des Écritures du Spectacle, La Fabrique de Théâtre or Monty Kulturfaktorij.

At present, Agrupación Señor Serrano's core is composed by **Àlex Serrano** (artistic director), **Pau Palacios** (content manager) and **Barbara Bloin** (production manager). Besides them, for each production the company has counted on the essential collaboration of a cross-disciplinary and variable creative team. Over the years, many creators have joined the company's projects, leaving a durable mark: Diego Anido, Ferran Dordal, Jordi Soler, Alberto Barberá, Roger Costa Vendrell, Nuria Manzano, Alexandra Laudo, Jofre Carabén, Martí Sánchez-Fibla, Claudia Solano Watson, Gabriel Parés, Maria de la Cámara, Isabel Franco, Ester Forment, Susana Gómez or Josep Maria Marimon among many others.

On August 3, 2015, Agrupación Señor Serrano was awarded the **Silver Lion at the Venice Biennale**. In addition to this recognition, the company has regularly won awards both nationally and internationally and has received rave reviews in media such as The New York Times, Folha de Sao Paulo, Tiempo Argentino or El País among others.

## Productions and awards

- 2017 **Ciutat de Barcelona Award** for Theatre (Spain).
- 2016 **Birdie** GREC Festival de Barcelona (Spain).  
Barcelona Critics Prize 2016, New Trends. Barcelona (Spain).
- 2015 **Silver Lion** from the Venice Theatre Biennale (Italy).  
**FAD Sebastià Gasch Award**, Barcelona (Spain).
- 2014 **A House in Asia** GREC Festival de Barcelona (Spain).  
Barcelona Critics Prize 2014, New Trends. Barcelona (Spain).  
Award of the president of the Moravian-Silesian Region Miroslav Novák, Spectaculo Interesse Festival. Ostrava (Czech Republic).
- 2012 **Brickman Brando Bubble Boom** Festival TNT, Terrassa (Spain).  
Award for the Most Innovative Show, International Dance and Theatre Fair 2013.  
Huesca (Spain).
- 2011 **Katastrophe** Festival TILT, Perpignan (France).  
Wojciech Olejnik Award and Jury's Special Prize to the Most Creative Show, PIHT Festival. Warsaw (Poland).  
Jury's Special Prize of Banialuka Festival 2012. Bielsko Biala (Poland).
- 2010 **Memo** Festival TNT, Terrassa (Spain).  
Prize for Best Mise-en-scène project 2010 of Institut del Teatre. Barcelona (Spain).
- 2009 **Immut** Adriantic, Barcelona (Spain).
- 2008 **Contra.Natura** L'Estruch, Sabadell (Spain).  
Award for the Best Performing Arts Project 2007. Lleida (Spain).  
**Artefacto** Festival PNRM, Olot (Spain).
- 2007 **Europa** Festival Temporada Alta, Girona (Spain).
- 2006 **Mil Tristes Tigres** Neo Festival, Barcelona (Spain).  
Award for the Most Innovative Show, International Dance and Theatre Fair 2007.  
Huesca (Spain).

## **Company members CV**

**Àlex Serrano Tarragó** has got a degree in Industrial Design, an MBA, a master on Interactive Communication and also a degree in Stage Direction. In 1998 he establishes Tangent Audiovisual, a supplier company of audiovisual and multimedia contents. In 2002 he creates Areatangent, a contemporary creation platform. In 2006, he quits the company and founds the Agrupación Señor Serrano. Àlex Serrano holds workshops and seminars regularly. In 2011 he has been invited to hold the workshop Live video for stage directors in the Biennale di Venezia.

**Pau Palacios Pozuelo** (Barcelona, 1977) began studying Political Science at a university, but ended up graduating in Sociology in another. After finishing his studies he worked as executive producer and road manager at the Teatre Lliure in Barcelona until 2005. That same year he moved to Lisbon, where he flirted with video-art. Since 2006, he is a dramatist and a performer of Agrupación Señor Serrano. He currently lives in the Alps, in the Italian Tyrol. He is the author of the novel *Furioso reloj* (Editorial Tria, 2012).

**Barbara Bloin** has a DEA in Performing Arts with a distinction on Theatre from the University of Besançon (2005) and another in Performing Arts at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (2008). In 2003 he moved to Barcelona where she is currently studying a PhD in Performing Arts. In September 2005 she joined the Institut del Teatre (Barcelona's Theatre Academy). In 2007, after collaborating with Ricard Salvat at the AIET, she began working with the Agrupación Señor Serrano as executive producer and assistant director.

## Last shows

### A House in Asia



Premiere 10.07.2014 at GREC Festival de Barcelona

The house where Geronimo is hiding in Pakistan. An exact copy of that house in a military base in North Carolina. A third twin house in Jordan, where a film is shot. The largest manhunt in history. A Sheriff obsessed with a white whale. The boy band Take That drilling for a historic mission. Cowboys and Indians. Airplanes and beers. Copies, reflections, imitations and cheeseburgers.

Through its trademark language (scale models, video projections, video editing in real time and willing performers) Agrupación Señor Serrano presents a scenic western where reality and its copies are mixed, drawing a merciless pop portrait of the decade following 9/11 that gave way to the XXI century. Come and see.

### BBBB



Premiere 05.10.2012 at Festival TNT in Terrassa

England. Nests, burrows, caves and mansions. 42,879 foreclosures in Spain in 2011. Brickland. The horror. A banker smiling. A builder smiling. Homesickness. Much video. Much more live video. Tahitian paradises. The right to housing. The right to have air conditioning. The right to have a plasma TV. Spain va bien. And Marlon Brando performing John Brickman. Neither more nor less.

Agrupación Señor Serrano presents **Brickman Brando Bubble Boom**, a stage biopic on the life of Sir John Brickman, the largest builder of nineteenth-century England, and a visionary man who inspired the first mortgage system in history. But also a stage biopic on Marlon Brando's life, the savage actor in a quest for a home. And more: a vindication of homes against market rules.

### Katastrophe



Premiere TILT Festival (Perpignan) March 2011

Four performers, eleven scaled models and hundreds of gummy bears create the world of Katastrophe: a stupid fable about human civilization, focused on disasters. In this context, the gummy bears suffer earthquakes, oil spills, wars and extermination. Everything is performed live through chemical experiments and subversive actions. Around the stage, three large screens immerse the audience in this pop world of chaos, game and destruction. Katastrophe questions the difference between a natural catastrophe, a 'natural' catastrophe caused by man and a human catastrophe. Or to put it simply, if deaths provoked by a tsunami are comparable to those caused by a radioactive leak, or to those produced by an atomic bomb. We have a very clear idea about that.

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### Contra.Natura



Premiere Estruch Sabadell November 2008 // Temporada Alta Festival 2009

Performed by an actor and a dancer, *Contra.Natura* is a multidisciplinary play that, taking as a basis the language of the physical and the visual theatre, integrates elements from other art disciplines, such as dance, performance, and art installation.

Nature is imposing, unyielding, changing; it does not act according to any plan, it simply develops as a balance of forces. We have built our identity as species through a constant opposition to these overwhelming forces by means of a resolute creative/cultural action. Thus, we try to overcome our anxiety for the erasing power of Nature through a persistent fight against oblivion, against extinction. But all efforts are pointless, the battle is lost, because one day there will be nothing left of us.

Therefore, let's imagine the end. The last two human beings, a woman and a man. Sterile. Surrounded for all the human creation, our objects, our ideas. And obsessed for one only thing: to pass on to someone all this creation in order to save humanity from Cosmos silent oblivion. Pass it on. Yes. But... to whom?

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