

Director's Note

Jetse Batelaan

To me *The Story of the Story* feels like a summary of everything I've done so far. I can't think any bigger than that. My aim always is to create something that has never been done before. I can be quite strict about that. But for this large scale performance I enjoyed citing from earlier works. For once everything was allowed. This had to be made. We as human beings appear to have an irresistible need to relevance and meaning. We like to matter. We want to be part of a story. Whereas we used search for that in religions and great ideals, now you notice that people, from sheer poverty, have started to dramatize their own lives. On social media we share our 'story'. Hooray, our life has meaning again! But how about this fear of 'nothing'? *The Story of the Story* is about this fear. Is nothing that bad? Isn't there still more than enough left?

As a student at the theatre school I found myself into serious trouble. I was frantic for drama. I didn't like the conflict. It made me uncomfortable, feeling ashamed on their behalf. I could shout at all those hard having heated characters: "Why not let the other person become King?" "She doesn't love you, go look for some other girl". Dramatic acting came across as ludicrous. That one person that got so excited about his own fate: what self-estimation! The indifferent nothing, floating around all of it, much more fascinated me: the dusts in the air, the lamps, the floor, the technicians around the corner, the spectators moving uncomfortably on the seats etc. Theatre repertoire proved to be useless to

me. Time for me to do my job. For a while I did absurd storytelling about things and people merely agreeing with each other. But what I was after was: contrast. Eventually I found it in confronting performance and the audience. When in front of a young audience I finally found my opponent. Their discomfort, unrest and resistance couldn't have come at a better moment for me. There the game began.

I am convinced this friction between who we are and our young audience has become increasingly important. The theatre work of Artemis is scary and chaotic. We produce interactive and anarchistic theatre. Theatre interacting with its audience and not obeying its own laws. Theatre that disturbs and is being disturbed. Theatre in which audience and performance find each other in a shared state of confusion. Nothing is defined anymore. Everything is in the open. We have only each other. Help! Now what?

That panic is exactly why our work is so meaningful. We are the stranger that you've always been warned for. Yet we want everyone to join in with us. To finally experience that together we dare to do more than we would ever have imagined. I think that's the true value of our work today. We encourage children to meet and encounter the unknown. Amidst the chaos, we teach a very special profession: lessons in confidence to a world in panic.