

An out-of-body performance

A conversation with Martine Beaulne

When you read Larry Tremblay's graphic novel *Même pas vrai*, what was the trigger, what made you want to adapt this text for the stage?

Larry Tremblay has a particular and authentic imaginary world that wins me over with every new work. *Même pas vrai* is about young Marco, who has been having a rough time since the birth of his little sister. The timid and naive side of this character who frees himself from a complex emotional reality through the power of his imagination triggered my desire to transpose the story to the stage. Marco's fantastic inner journey allows him to deal with his new reality, to accept his little sister, to experience freedom of expression through drawing.

Did the illustrations in the graphic novel influence the set design and visual aspect of the show? How did you translate black and white illustrations to a three-dimensional universe in colour?

Out of respect for the illustrator, we created *Marco bleu* as a work in its own right, distinct from the graphic novel. The writing and visual concept were reframed for a puppet play for young audiences. *Marco bleu* is inspired by *Même pas vrai*, but in collaboration with author Larry Tremblay, we created an original work; and stage designer Richard Lacroix created a three-dimensional universe filled with colour and movement.

Given your rich and rigorous approach focused on the actors' performance, how do you direct puppets? What are the similarities and differences?

In puppet theatre, the visual choices we make at the outset determine the main lines of the staging, the dynamics and pacing of the characters' movements. The directing technique will therefore influence those choices. On the other hand, the work of analyzing the text, the search for accuracy of meaning and enunciation will be reflected in the characters' movements and voices. The differences aren't really all that great, except of course that you are performing with/through a body other than your own. The life of the puppet has to link together the meaning of the text, the situation, the relationship between the characters, and the movements and voices. Co-director André Laliberté and I will combine our various talents to infuse this work with all the relevance and imagination it deserves.

Interviewed by Amélie Dumoulin