



PRESS KIT

MILO RAU / IIPM – INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF POLITICAL  
MURDER / CAMPO

## FIVE EASY PIECES

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# CREDITS

## FIVE EASY PIECES

**PRODUCTION OF** IIPM – INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF POLITICAL MURDER AND CAMPO

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*CAMPO is supported by* The Flemish Government, The Province of East Flanders & The City of Ghent

<http://www.campo.nu>  
<http://sophiensaele.com>

<http://international-institute.de>

# 1. FIVE EASY PIECES

How can children perform the life and actions of child-killer Marc Dutroux? Swiss theatre director Milo Rau and his International Institute of Political Murder (IIPM) have conquered the biggest international stages in recent years with their matchless political theatre. Their works are based on testimonies and reconstructions of true stories and mercilessly break through the taboos of our age. Together with the CAMPO arts centre from Ghent, they have set up an ambitious project involving children and teenagers between 8 and 13 years old. Rau uses the biography of the country's most notoriously shameful criminal to sketch a brief history of Belgium and to reflect the (re)presentation of human feelings on stage. "Five Easy Pieces" probes the limits of what children know, feel, and do. Purely aesthetic and theatrical questions blend together with moral issues: How can children understand the real significance of narrative, empathy, loss, subjection, old age, disappointment, or rebellion? How do we react if we see them acting out scenes of violence or love and romance? In particular, what does that say about our own fears and desires? This makes for a confrontational experience.



During a rehearsal in Gent. © Ted Oonk

With "Five Easy Pieces", the IIPM subjects its aesthetic appreciation of realism and brutality to a theatre study. Together with CAMPO, appreciated all over Europe for their children and youth theatre productions such as "That Night Follows Day" (Tim Etchells, 2007) and "Before Your Very Eyes" (Gob Squad, 2011), the production "Five Easy Pieces" focuses on the life and crimes of Marc Dutroux and thereby on the various taboos and sore points of both personal and political life.

In five exercises of utter simplicity, short scenes and monologues for the camera, the young actors sneak into different roles: a police officer, Marc Dutroux's father, one of the victims, or the parents of a dead girl. They adopt their role and fate via the re-enactments which they've rehearsed together with adult actors: a visit to the scene of the crime, a funeral ceremony, an everyday scene from the life of Marc Dutroux's father. On the one hand, this unfolds a historical panorama of Belgian history, from Congo's declaration of independence to the mass demonstration of the 'White March'. On the other hand, the production considers the limits of what children know, feel, and are allowed to do. What does it mean to observe them in these scenes? And what do we then experience as regards our own fears, hopes, and taboos?

One hundred years ago, Igor Strawinsky wrote his "Five Easy Pieces" as an educational tool to teach his children to play the piano. With "Seven Easy Pieces", Marina Abramović played some iconic moments of performance art. In Milo Raus' "Five Easy Pieces" children are initiated in the emotional and political absurdities and bottomless pits of the adult world. What does it mean to involve children in adult theatre? What does that tell us about power and subjection, theatre and performance, and mimicry and humanity? "Five Easy Pieces" is an experiment in narrating pieces of history in five sets.

## 2. INTERVIEW WITH MILO RAU

ABOUT THE BACKGROUND TO "FIVE EASY PIECES"

**CAMPO's theatre productions with children enjoy international renown and they've been going on tour for years. Now, CAMPO has asked you to work with them, after Tim Etchells, Gob Squad, and Philippe Quesne. What persuaded you to work with children?**

**Rau:** CAMPO deliberately approaches artists who don't normally work with children. I must admit that I'm surely the weirdest choice in the series. We've certainly worked in many different countries and fields, with both amateur and famous professional actors, with both mass murderers and highly sensitive performers, both in improvised locations in war zones and in government-subsidised theatres. We've adapted classics, created narrative theatre, and organised popular trials, but we've never worked with children. I think that in the final analysis, as with all our projects, it was the thrill of the challenge which won us over; we wanted to try something completely new.

**With 'children's theatre' you actually think automatically of an idea spread mainly in performance art of simplicity and authenticity, with the motto that children and fools tell the truth.**

**Rau:** That's right. Obviously, we did some preparatory research and noticed that productions with children always follow the same patterns. They cover visions for the future, the absurdity of the adult world, authenticity, fairy tale-style poetry. They tell bizarre life stories, adorned with rehearsed music, a performance of innocence.



Milo Rau (left) rehearses "Five Easy Pieces" in Gent.

© Ted Oonk

For us it was clear: We wanted to try something completely different. We wanted to show something which people don't want to see from children. "Five Easy Pieces" had to be a children's theatre performance which was risky, unprecedented and virtually impossible.

**The work is inspired by the Dutroux affair. Dutroux is seen as the essence of evil, the child molester, probably the most hated figure in Belgium. What else did you learn from your research, how do you want to portray him? And did you consider letting him speak for himself?**

**Rau:** I encountered the figure of Dutroux as a national myth in 2013 during my research for "The Civil Wars" in Brussels. In the rehearsals, I asked the actors what Belgium was for them, and when they really felt Belgian. Because Belgium is a culturally divided and, actually, an impossible nation formed in the nineteenth century as a buffer between France and Germany, and it never really grew together. Those actors replied: during the White March in 1996, the major demonstration against its own government as part of the Dutroux affair.

**Is Dutroux really the only collective myth in Belgium?**

**Rau:** Disturbing, but that's what it looks like. If you look a little deeper, you certainly recognise a lot of parallels: Dutroux, who grew up in the former Belgian colony of Congo, who entered into his crimes in the now waste mining region around Charleroi, whose trial almost led to the implosion of Belgium and a rebellion of society against its own corrupt elites – that's almost an allegory of the decline of the western colonial and industrial powers. With him and through him you could narrate a history of Belgium. Then, obviously, there's the fact that everyone in Belgium has their own opinion about him, even children know something about him. That's why he's not on the stage to speak for 'himself': As in "Breivik's Statement", the fact is that it's not the murderer and his psyche that we're interested in, Dutroux himself is still a void, a field of gravity.

**How can you approach such a theme with children between 8 and 13 years of age? Isn't that too gruesome, too incredible, too shocking for children?**

**Rau:** Our team includes two advisers and also a child psychologist. The parents were also closely involved in the rehearsals. And we contacted those most closely involved in the real Dutroux affair.

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*Milo Rau*

»These "Five Easy Pieces" bear a negative mindset.«

*Milo Rau*



But, actually, this production isn't about the horror in itself. It's about the big issues which lurk behind this very specific and utterly wretched Dutroux affair: the decline of a country, the national paranoia, the mourning, and the anger which followed the crimes. The production begins with Congo's declaration of independence and ends with the funerals of Dutroux's victims; in the background you perceive the disappearance of just about all the illusions which you might have lived under as a Belgian in recent decades: the illusion of safety, trust, freedom, and a future. These "Five Easy Pieces" bear a negative mindset and the titles of the five brief monological re-enactments correspond appropriately. One piece, for instance, covers the doubts of a father, whose adult son becomes a murderer. In another piece, the subject is clearly and directly violence and abuse. And a third one covers the deepest, darkest of all emotions, the grieving of parents for their child. Everything is (freely) based on original documents or interviews which we conducted with those involved in the Dutroux affair.

**As Aristotle wrote, man is a creature of imitation. Children learn by imitation. What does it mean for a child to be confronted with the atrocity of the adult world?**

**Rau:** At the start of rehearsals, we acted out some fragments with the children from "Scenes from a Marriage" by Ingmar Bergman. That was a special experience: The children understood intellectually what was happening in those highly intricate human scenes of Bergman and they acted them out, but without recognising the actual emotions, the underlying existential doubts. There is something quite natural and obvious on the stage, which doesn't exist like this in real life. That was absolutely fascinating for me as director: How does the part designed to portray a person operate with unskilled actors who don't have the daily and professional experience which is the subject of the scenes? How do you create concentration or precision in a group which is interested only in running around and playing games everywhere? Hence the title, the title of a book on learning to play the piano, which indicates a systematic learning process: "Five Easy Pieces". How can children grasp the meaning of narrative, empathy, loss, subjection, disappointment, anger against society, and rebellion? And how do we react when we watch them learning on stage?

»For me as director was absolutely fascinating: How does the part designed to portray a person operate with unskilled actors who don't have the daily and professional experience which is the subject of the scenes?«

*Milo Rau*

**You're well known for your very precise, even perfectionist production. How do children fit in with that method and to what extent do you have to 'drill' and 'train' them?**

**Rau:** There are certainly two contrasting ways of directing, as Bergman says in his autobiography. Either you sketch the scenes very precisely right at the beginning and you give the actors all the freedom in the world. Or you do it the other way round, you improvise until shortly before the first showing and then, in the final week, you set everything in stone. Actually, I like to set out the framework and then let actors accept responsibility. However, for "Five Easy Pieces", I've tried both ways, but I concluded that non of these rehearsing methods works with children. Or, talking about the results, the drill and the trainer are always visible, however the working process passes off. I've never seen a production with children where the actual and tangible subject wasn't right that there was a 'director' who had given the children a framework. And it gets interesting here in terms of both subject and form.



Milo Rau (right) rehearses "Five Easy Pieces" in Gent.

© Stefan Bläske

### How come?

**Rau:** Children's theatre for adults corresponds - on an aesthetic level and of course in a metaphorical sense - to what paedophilia is in a human relationship. It isn't a mutually responsible love relationship, but a one-sided power relationship, where the weaker partner, namely the child, simply has to put up with it. In other words, with children's theatre for adults the postmodern penchant for media criticism returns to its original target. And so, media criticism once again become criticism of reality. Doing productions with children means that you have to question existentially concepts such as 'figure', 'realism', 'illusion', and, obviously, 'power'. We also want to show this process with "Five Easy Pieces", precisely because the 'pieces' get more and more difficult. What starts as a role play (namely the good old Cindy Sherman question as to how we can portray Patrice Lumumba or Dutroux's father on the stage) leads to basic questions about the violence of directing. From a naturalist guise, from a gruesome desire to mimic, slowly but surely, you drift

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into a meta-study on performance art and its practice of change, subjection, and rebellion.

**And so, "Five Easy Pieces" isn't just a production about Marc Dutoix and how you approach the depravities of mankind with children, but also a fundamental reflection on what it means to create theatre.**

**Rau:** We've been making theatre plays and films for 15 years now. We've done everything, from minimalist performance and political action to ironic show, including radio plays, video clips, films, books, and congresses. This spring, we receive the "World Theatre Prize" from the International Theatre Institute, a kind of lifetime achievement award. Then, you sometimes wonder: what next? Just another fifty plays, films, and books? In short, it's the right time for a project covering absolutely basic issues. What does it mean to be 'someone else' on stage? What does it mean to 'mimic', 'empathise', and 'relate'? How do you cope with being looked at? How do you explain it and how do you do it? And, for that matter, this basic questioning of theatre isn't an intellectual decision: Things which are completely obvious for adult performers are morally and technically impossible with children. You can get rid of all those parochial Stanislavski tricks, the entire intensity myth of the performance tradition. And in the end, that's a pretty frightening thought.

*An interview by dramaturg Stefan Bläske.*

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*Milo Rau*

### 3. MILO RAU

Milo Rau was born in Bern in 1977. He studied sociology, German and Romance languages and literature in Paris, Zurich and Berlin under Tzvetan Todorov and Pierre Bourdieu, among others. He embarked on his first reporting trips in 1997, travelling to Chiapas and Cuba. From 2000 he worked as a writer for *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, and from 2003 as a director and writer in Switzerland and abroad. In 2007, Rau founded the theatre and film production company *IIPM – International Institute of Political Murder* for the creation and utilisation of his artistic works. He still heads the company.

His theatre productions and films ("The Last Days of the Ceausescus", "Hate Radio", "City of Change", "Breivik's Statement", "The Moscow Trials", "The Civil Wars", "The Dark Ages", "The Congo Tribunal", "Compassion. The History of the Machine Gun", "Five Easy Pieces" and "Empire", among others) have toured more than 30 countries and appeared at the most important national and international festivals, including the Berlin *Theatertreffen*, the *Festival d'Avignon*, the *Wiener Festwochen*, Montreal's *Festival TransAmériques*, the *Kunstenfestivaldesarts* in Brussels and the *Biennale Teatro* in Venice.

Alongside his work for stage and film, Milo Rau lectures on stage direction, cultural theory and social sculpture at universities and art colleges.

The author and director has received honours including the *Swiss Theatre Award 2014*, the *Hörspielpreis der Kriegsblinden* (War Blinded Audio Play Prize; for "Hate Radio"), the *Special Jury Award* of the *Festival des deutschen Films* (Festival of German Film; for "The Moscow Trials") and the *Jury Award* of the *Festival Politik im Freien Theater* (Festival of Politics in Free Theatre; for "The Civil

»Milo Rau is the most exciting artist in Europe at the moment.«

*De Standaard*



»Theatre innovator«  
*Der Spiegel*

»Milo Rau is one of the smartest and most unrelenting critics of our time – a visionary.«

*Jean Ziegler*

»The most controversial director of his generation.«  
*De Morgen*

Wars"). Additionally, "The Civil Wars" was selected as one of the "best plays of the Netherlands and Flanders in 2014/15," the first foreign-language piece to be given this distinction. The first *Konstanzer Konzilspreis. Preis für Europäische Begegnungen und Dialog* (Council of Constance – Prize for European Encounter and Dialogue) also went to Rau in November 2015. In 2016, he became the youngest winner of the *Preis des Internationalen Theaterinstituts* (International Theatre Institute Prize), following artists such as Pina Bausch and Frank Castorf, and also garnered a special award of the *Berner Literaturpreis*.

Rau's political essay "Was tun? Kritik der postmodernen Vernunft" (What Is to Be Done? A Critique of Postmodern Reason) was a bestseller and was selected "political book of the year 2013" by the German newspaper *taz – die tageszeitung*. The daily *De Standaard* recently called him the "most exciting artist in Europe," the newspaper *Le Soir* described him as one of the "freest and most strident minds of our time," and the broadcaster art.tv called him the "Bertolt Brecht of our era."

For 2017, Rau was appointed to the renowned *Saarbrücker Poetikdozentur für Dramatik* (Saarbrücken Poetry Lectureship for Drama) and, along with Elke Heidenreich, Rüdiger Safranski and Martin Ebel, named to the regular group of experts in the broadcast *Literaturclub*.

»Where understanding ends  
is where Milo Rau's theatre  
work begins.«  
*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

»Milo Rau is a genius«  
*Die Welt*

»Lover of scandals«  
*La Vanguardia*



## 4. CAST AND TEAM

### **ANTON LUKAS** (DECOR AND COSTUME)

Anton Lukas has completed projects for dance, drama, and music theatre productions both with theatre houses and travelling groups. Since 2009, he has worked for Milo Rau as decor designer. In that position he has been responsible for over twenty theatre, television, and film productions, plus expositions by the director.



### **STEFAN BLÄSKE** (DRAMATURGY)

Stefan Bläske is a dramaturg and teacher. Since 2014, he has been working for IIPM. He has studied theatre and media studies, philosophy, political science, and administration in Heidelberg, Erlangen, Rennes, and Speyer. Early in 2011, he acted as temporary press and public relations officer for the *brut Wien* theatre production house. In seasons 2011-12 and 2012-13, he was on the dramaturgy staff at the *Residenztheater* in Munich, whilst from 2014, he has been dramaturgy supervisor at *Otto Falckenberg Schule*, also in



Munich. Since 2015, he has been a member of the jury for *Freie Theaterschaffende* of the city of Munich. At IIPM, amongst other things, he has worked on the productions "The Dark Ages" and "Compassion. The History of the Machine Gun". At present, he is involved in "Empire" and "Five Easy Pieces".

**MIRJAM KNAPP** (DRAMATURGY AND RESEARCH)

Mirjam Knapp studied German literature and philosophy at Trier University. During her studies, she also did work placements at the *Deutsche Theater* in Berlin and the *Neumarkt Theater* in Zurich. She has worked at the *Fruitmarket Kultur und Medien* film company as production assistant and recording manager for the documentary "Beltracchi" by Arne Birkenstock on the art forger Wolfgang Beltracchi. Since "The Civil Wars", she has worked at IIPM as permanent assistant to Milo Rau and as a researcher. In that capacity she has been involved in "Compassion. The History of the Machine Gun", and "The Congo Tribunal", and she is helping at present with "Five Easy Pieces" and "Empire".



**PETER SEYNAEVE** (DIRECTION ASSISTANT & PERFORMANCE COACH)

Peter Seynaeve graduated as an actor from the *Studio Herman Teirlinck* in Antwerp in 1996. He made his debut in Luk Perceval's theatre marathon "Ten Oorlog". As an actor, he has worked for Laika, tg Stan, and *HET PALEIS*. In 2000, he became a member of the permanent actor's ensemble at *Het Toneelhuis*. There, he once again worked with Perceval ("Andromache" and "Death of a Salesman"), but also with Titus Muizelaar ("Strindberg"), Gerardjan Rijnders ("The Life of Tymon of Athens"), Eric Devolder ("In the name of the father"), Inne Goris ("Pride and Prejudice"), Lotte van den Berg ("The blue hour", "Begijnenstraat 42", and "Rumour"), Stefan Perceval ("Sweet Bird"), Tom Dyck ("Kathalzen"), and Guy Cassiers. He made his debut as a director with a production of "As you like it" performed by youngsters. Since then, he has written and directed "Je ne comprends pas", "Thierry", "Cement", "Mondays", and "Betty & Morris" for the *JAN* theatre company. Together with Martens, he has directed "VICTOR" for *CAMPO*. In 2013, Peter Seynaeve once again performed in *NTGent* for the productions "Platonov" and "Front" by Luk Perceval.



**SAM VERHAERT** (VIDEO AND SOUND DESIGN)

Sam Verhaert studied theatre and cabaret at the *Studio Herman Teirlinck* in Antwerp and jazz-piano and composition at *Ghent School of Music*. He established the *Try ouT* film festival and has completed productions with the *deCommerce.eu* collective. He started as a sound producer (for film sets and studio and live concerts) and film producer (video clips and promotion) and does both assembly and station production and 3D composition. In the meantime, he has worked mainly as a director of video clips and documentaries and as a video artist for theatre.



**DRIES DOUBI** (RESEARCH)

Dries Douibi studied philosophy at the *Free University of Brussels* (VUB) and expressive art at *Ghent School of Arts* (KASK). As a dramatist, he has worked alongside people such as Edit Kaldor, Jozef Wouters, Kate McIntosh, and Louis Vanhaverbeke. He is also co-curator of the *Batard Festival* in Brussels and the *NEXT Arts Festival* in Kortrijk. Since 2016, he has been conducting research at the *Royal Music Academy* in Antwerp on the management as curator of various artistic practices and design models.



**MASCHA EUCHNER-MARTINEZ** (PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT)

Mascha Euchner-Martinez has worked since the completion of her studies at the *Institute of European Studies* (*Institut des Etudes Européennes*/IEE) of Paris University as production assistant, festival co-ordinator, and production manager in Berlin. She has worked at *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*, *Junge Akademie der Künste*, *HAU*, and *Heimathafen Neukölln*. Since 2011, she has been working for Milo Rau's IIPM as production manager and tour manager, including for "Hate Radio", "Breivik's Statement", "The Berlin Dialogues", "The Civil Wars", and "The Dark Ages".



**EVA-KAREN TITTMANN** (PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT)

Eva-Karen Tittmann studied German literature and theatre studies at the *Free University*, *Humboldt University*, and the *Art Academy* in Berlin. In 2005-06, she also attained a qualification in management-marketing-communication at an institute of higher education (*Fachhochschule*) in Potsdam. All together, she has worked for some 20 years as a freelance cultural manager for theatre groups from the improvised scene, permanent theatre companies, and for all sorts of various cultural institutions. Since "The Civil Wars", she has also been working for IIPM.





**YVEN AUGUSTIN** (PUBLIC RELATIONS)

Yven Augustin studied German literature and theater at the *Freie Universität Berlin*. After his practical training as a PR editor at *Zoommedienfabrik*, he worked for three years as press relations officer at the *Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz*. From 2006 to 2008 he was the press spokesman for the *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*. In 2009 he founded *AugustinPR*, a public relations agency in Berlin. Since 2009, he has also been working for IIPM.



## 5. ATTACHMENT

*For children, Dutroux is a grizzly fairy tale;* De Standaard, 30 April  
2016 at 3 am | CHARLOTTE DE SOMVIELE