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PRESS KIT

THE REVOLT OF DIGNITY & THE NEW GOSPEL CAMPAIGN, PERFORMANCE AND FILM BY MILO RAU AND PARTNERS

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CREDITS

“THE REVOLT OF DIGNITY” (CAMPAIGN) AND “THE NEW GOSPEL” (PERFORMANCE AND FILM)

A PROJECT BY MILO RAU AND PARTNERS

WITH: YVAN SAGNET, VITO CASTORO, MBAYE NDIAYE, PAPA LATYR FAYE, SAMUEL JACOBS, ANTHONY NWACHUKWU, JEREMIAH AKHER OGBEIDE, MARIE ANTOINETTE EYANGO AND OTHERS **SPECIAL GUESTS:** ENRIQUE IRAZOQUI, MAIA MORGENSTERN, MARCELLO FONTE

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“THE NEW GOSPEL” by Milo Rau is an interdisciplinary production that consists of a campaign, a series of public events and performances and a film.

The series of events and performances are part of the Matera 2019 project “Tòpoi. Theatre and New Myths”. **It is a coproduction of** IIPM - International Institute of Political Murder **with** Fondazione Matera Basilicata 2019, Teatro di Roma und NTGent **in collaboration with** Teatri Uniti di Basilicata, Fruitmarket and Langfilm **in association with** ProLoco Ginosa, Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien.

The campaign is led by IIPM - International Institute of Political Murder **in collaboration with** Associazione No Cap - Contro ogni forma di caporalato, Ghetto Out Casa Sankara, Spin Time Lab Roma, Osservatorio Migranti Basilicata, Agricola Leggera, Campo Liberoaltragricoltura - Confederazione er la Sovranità Alimentare, UILA Taranto – Unione Italiana lavoratori agro alimentari **in association with** European Alternatives, European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights (ECCHR), Medico International, FUTURZWEI – Stiftung Zukunftsfähigkeit, Öko & Fair – Umweltzentrum Gauting, European Democracy Lab, Voix des Migrants, Community Working Group on Health, Institut für Theologie und Politik, Berlin Postkolonial.

The events and performances are a coproduction of IIPM - International Institute of Political Murder with Fondazione Matera Basilicata 2019, Teatro di Roma und NTGent **in collaboration with** Teatri Uniti di Basilicata, Fruitmarket and Langfilm **in association with** ProLoco Ginosa, Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien.

The film project is a production of Fruitmarket and Langfilm **in coproduction with** SRF SSR, ZDF **in collaboration with** Arte, IIPM - International Institute of Political Murder, Fondazione Matera Basilicata 2019, Consorzio Teatri Uniti di Basilicata and Teatro di Roma

The events and the film are funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, European Cultural Foundation, Film- und Medienstiftung NRW, Office of Culture (FOC), Zürcher Filmstiftung, DFFF - Deutscher Filmförderfonds, Kanton St.Gallen Kulturförderung / Swisslos, BKM - Die Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien, GEA – Waldviertler, Stadt Lausanne and Kanton Waadt, Fondo Etico di BCC Basilicata.

1. THE "REVOLT OF DIGNITY" AND "THE NEW GOSPEL"

What would Jesus preach in the 21st century? Who would his disciples be? And how would today's bearers of secular and spiritual power respond to the return and provocations of the most influential prophet and social revolutionary in human history? With "The new Gospel", Milo Rau is staging a "Revolt of Dignity". Led by political activist Yvan Sagnet, the movement is fighting for the rights of migrants who came to Europe across the Mediterranean to be enslaved on the tomato fields in southern Italy and to live in ghettos under inhumane conditions. The director and his team return to the origins of the gospel and stage it as a passion play of an entire civilization. In Matera, in southern Italy, where the great Jesus films from Pasolini to Gibson were shot, an authentically political as well as theatrical and cinematic "New Gospel" emerges for the 21st century. A manifesto of solidarity with the poorest, a revolt for a more just, humane world.



Campaign motif of „Revolt of Dignity“
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Six years ago, Pope Francis denounced the "globalization of indifference" in Lampedusa and said about capitalism that "this system kills." The moment Italy criminalizes the rescue of people who are drowning, the Catholic Church returns to its socio-revolutionary roots: what does the Bible really ask of us? What was meant by the radical "no" by the Christian prophet when confronted with the system of Roman imperialism and exploitation? Who would Jesus fight for today – and who would be fighting at his side?

In Southern Italy, at the southern edge of the EU, where refugees from Africa are forced to work as harvesters and small farmers, who are unemployed due to increasing grain imports and are fighting for survival, Milo Rau will be creating THE NEW GOSPEL – a documentary film dealing with the life and death of who is probably the most influential religious founder in the history of the world. **Who are the displaced people, the outcasts, the humiliated of today's world order? What is left of Jesus' message of salvation in times of global exploitation?**

Political activist and Jesus performer Yvan Sagnet himself worked on a tomato farm when in 2011 he revolted against the system of exploitation and led the first farm workers' strike in southern Italy. Just as Jesus sought his group of apostles as a "fisher of men", he now returns to the largest of the wild refugee camps currently called "ghettos" in Italy.



The "ghetto" of Metaponto is not far from Matera in the middle of the fruit plantations. (©2019 Fruitmarket/Langfilm. Video still by Thomas Eirich-Schneider)

Among the "wretched" of southern Italy, the refugees and migrants stranded in the barren landscape, those who hire themselves out on the tomato and orange plantations, he finds his "disciples", who will lead a "Revolt of Dignity" at his side: a struggle for the rights of the people disenfranchised by the current Italian (government) and EU migration policies – over 500,000 people in Italy alone. They are joined by small farmers and activists driven into bankruptcy by major agricultural corporations, as well as actors from the films of Pasolini and Mel Gibson. Enrique Irazoqui, who played the legendary role of Jesus in the Pasolini film, will take on the role of John the Baptist in Rau's version of the "Gospel"; Maia Morgenstern, Mel Gibson's Saint Mary, will be playing the mother of the black savior Sagnet.

Christians, Muslims, Jews, atheists, refugees and Europeans fight side by side for the right of all people to live in legality, self-determination and freedom of movement. They call on all citizens of Europe to solidarize with them and to express their resent-

ment and resistance against Europe's inhumane refugee policy. What is left of the values of the Enlightenment and Christianity in the realpolitik of the EU? How can contemporary Europe even be reconciled with "occidental" values? Even if or precisely because they are fighting against the Italian government and the large corporations, the followers of the new movement, like Jesus' disciples at the time, "did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfill it." **For where injustice becomes law, resistance becomes duty!**

While the message of the "Rivolta della Dignità", an emancipatory movement of the lawless, spreads, the great performance will be organized: the main venue is the small town of Matera in the middle of the southern Basilicata, where the Jesus films by Pier Paolo Pasolini ("The Gospel according to St. Matthew") and Mel Gibson ("The Passion of the Christ") were filmed. **Right there, in the filmhistorical setting, Jesus will enter the city, he will be tortured, crucified and, once again, will be resurrected.** This will occur under the eyes of thousands of cultural tourists which Matera will attract from all over the world as the European Capital of Culture 2019. The Christian myth and the touristic reality of Europe clash in a mystery play about poverty, faith and dignity.



Yvan Sagnet and his disciples Jeremiah Akhere Ogbeide, Papa Latyr Faye, Mbaye Ndiaye and Anthony Nwachukwu on the beach. (©2019 Fruitmarket/Langfilm. Video still by Thomas Eirich-Schneider)

As the grand finale, Jesus and his disciples will travel to Rome in early October of 2019. Here, Pope Francis will be confronted with the New Gospel. There will be an encounter between the "old" and "new" message of salvation, the official and dissident church: in Rome, the center of the Roman world power at the time of Jesus and today's capital of modern Christianity – and at the same time the capital of one of the most xenophobic and anti-minority governments of the EU.

SEPTEMBER 28, 2019, 3PM, PORTA PISTOLA, MATERA

ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM – PERFORMANCE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC & FILM SHOOTING

As the first highlight of the "Revolt of Dignity", which will begin in late August in the refugee camps, Jesus, his disciples and all of his followers will enter the European Capital of Culture. This scene follows and revises the famous "Entry into Jerusalem", the first confrontation of the Jesus movement with the priestly and secular power of the time. In the main square, the Piazza del Duomo, Jesus and his disciples will throw down the gauntlet to the Italian government and the major food corporations affiliated with the mafia – just as Jesus once did to the tradesmen and the rulers of Rome. Enough of the rightlessness of hundreds of thousands of people, enough of this deadly capitalism! Dignity and justice for all!

OCTOBER 5, 2019, 11AM, PIAZZA SAN PIETRO CAVEOSO, MATERA

CONDEMNATION AND PASSION OF CHRIST – PERFORMANCE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC & FILM SHOOTING

The second major mass filming – as many other film scenes from the "New Gospel" – will follow the biblical text: Jesus is condemned by the Templars, then handed over to the secular powers. Jesus, who refuses to abandon his beliefs, is eventually tortured and led through the city to the cross. Realpolitik and period film mix again: the judgment against Jesus is also a judgment by the current authorities of Italy and the EU against those without rights (Pontius Pilate is played by a representative of the Italian government, a governor of Rome in Matera). Applicable law and a cry for dignity collide in a passion performance.



Yvan Sagnet walks as Jesus over the water.
(©2019 Fruitmarket/Langfilm.
Video still by Thomas Eirich-Schneider)

OCTOBER 6, 2019, 3PM, PARCO MURGIA, MATERA

CRUCIFIXION OF CHRIST – PERFORMANCE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

At the classical location of the crucifixions of Pasolini's "Vangelo" and Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ", the crucifixion of the first black Jesus of cinematic history will take place: symbolically, Yvan Sagnet will be crucified by the EU policy and the governors of the New Rome, at his side two more insurgents will be nailed to the cross. The act of crucifixion is also an act of solidarity.

OCTOBER 10, 2019, 9PM, TEATRO ARGENTINA, ROMA

RESURRECTION – POLITICAL ASSEMBLY

The "Resurrection" will take place in Rome, the center of the Roman world power at the time of Jesus and today's capital of modern Christianity – and the capital of Italy, the country with the EU's most controversial outer border and most xenophobic migration policies of recent years. In an event at the National Theater (Jesus will "resurrect") the "Manifesto of Dignity" will be adopted in the presence of the official church and activists from all over Italy. A global campaign for global civil rights begins.

**NOVEMBER 10, 2019, 3PM, SANTA MARIA DELLO SPASIMO,
TRANSEUROPA FESTIVAL, PALERMO**

FIRST MISSION – CONGRESS

In Palermo – the arrival port of the refugee ships – the "mission" begins symbolically: based on the famous first mission of the Apostle Paul, the message of Jesus is universalized, does no longer only address the "Jews" (or the Italians and Europeans), but citizens of all countries and cultures. Activists from Latin America, Africa and various European regions meet and formulate a policy of dignity for the entire globe – announced in the port of Palermo as part of the Transeuropa Festival.

2. INTERVIEW WITH YVAN SAGNET & MILO RAU

Eva-Maria Bertschy: Milo, when you were asked almost two years ago to create a show in Matera as part of the "European Capital of Culture 2019", you enthusiastically agreed to it. Why?

Milo Rau: First of all, there were artistic reasons: Matera is a film-historical myth. Several years ago, I did a stage adaptation of Pasolini's "120 Days of Sodom" (Schauspielhaus Zürich, 2017), and incorporated some scenes from "Vangelo secondo Matteo" which was filmed in Matera, including the Last Supper and the crucifixion. When the offer came from Matera, the first thing I thought of was a remake of the Gospel of Matthew. What could be more natural than filming a new Jesus movie where Pasolini and Mel Gibson also shot their films – especially since I know some of the actors, for example Mel Gibson's Saint Mary (Maia Morgenstern) from previous projects ("Empire", 2016)?

On a first research trip to southern Italy, I was confronted with the reality in the ghettos: 500,000 people, who are stuck because of the Dublin Regulation, criminalized by the Italian government and then, by order of the major food corporations and supermarkets exploited on the fields by the mafia and farmers. Naturally, the focus of the project shifted radically, we took the idea of a remake of the Gospel of Matthew and turned it on its head. The historical Jesus was a social



Matera, where the famous Jesus films by Pasolini and Gibson were shot.
(©2019 Fruitmarket/Langfilm.
Video still by Thomas Eirich-Schneider)

revolutionary and as a carpenter he even worked on the construction sites of the Roman Empire for a while.

His radical "no" to the global system of exploitation at that time, the combination of revolutionary commitment (back then only revolutionaries were crucified), and the search for a new form of solidarity and a life in dignity: that was incredibly inspirational to me. And then we met Yvan Sagnet and started to look for disciples in the camps. And we asked ourselves: what if a new, a black Jesus would invade the European Capital of Culture? Who would follow him – and what kind of revolt would he unleash?

How did the idea of paralleling a revolt of the displaced and disenfranchised with the biblical plot arise? And how do you connect a political campaign to a film project?

As I said, the connection can be found in the Scripture itself, is actually forces itself on you. The Gospel of Matthew actually works like a performance that spirals out of control. First, Jesus casts the disciples, then there are various symbolic appearances and speeches by the Messiah, which, after the arrival in Jerusalem and the confrontation with the merchants and the Templars, turns into a pragmatic revolt. Similar to today, the system must be provoked in order for it to give up its superficial tolerance and show its true face. Pontius Pilate (– played by a real Italian politician –) tries to "deradicalize" Jesus, to come to terms with him, just like the Pharisees and the Templars. But Jesus refuses to comply, because he is serious about "fulfilling the law" – not just in words, but by actually establishing a humane and just society.

Our "Revolt of Dignity" works the same way: as a performance with real demands that will really be able to change the world. On the one hand, it is a traditional political campaign by refugees, small farmers and normal citizens with a manifesto, demonstrations, lobbying. At the same time, we see these activists in historical costumes reenacting the gospel alongside "real" actors: how seriously they take the Sermon on the Mount, the promises of dignity and justice for the weak, the lonely, the scattered. Because when politics do not act, art has to step in.

Yvan, ever since you organized a strike in Nardo in 2011, you have become a well-known freedom fighter in Italy, you were awarded the Order of Merit by the Italian President for your commitment against modern slavery. You have achieved the implementation of a law that could put an end to the "Caporalato," the system of exploitation arranged by the mafia in the

fields and the ghettos in southern Italy. What has happened since then? Why are you calling for a “Rivolta della Dignità”, encouraging people to rebel against European governments and their laws?

Yvan Sagnet: The criminal system known as “Caporalato” in the fields of southern Italy existed long before our strike in 2011. With our revolt, we put pressure on the government and introduced a law. Now, the authorities are able to monitor the working conditions on the plantations and, when necessary, directly punish those responsible. However, as yet, the law has not been applied very often. And, of course, it is not enough to punish the mafiosi, the caporalis and the farmers involved in this system. In addition to consistent repression, the government must also ensure that the system does not spread any further, meaning they have to take preventive action and promote agriculture that adheres to basic human principles. In order to do this, Italy and the European Union would have to intervene politically in such a way that multinational companies that process tomatoes and fruit and supermarket chains that sell the products can no longer dictate the prices. Because the market is flooded with down-market products and the farmers have to compete with the tomatoes and fruit from Tunisia, Morocco and China, they can only survive by exploiting their workers. We must fight this system by all available means.

In addition, the immigration laws in Italy and, in particular, the intensified immigration policy of the current government promote modern slavery. It has become almost impossible for the people arriving in Italy to obtain a regular residence status. So they end up in the hands of the mafia, are exploited in the fields because they have no rights and cannot sign a contract of employment or a lease. During the last few years, Europe has become inhumane. The notion of solidarity with the poor and marginalized, as stated in the Gospels, has disappeared.



Yvan Sagnet gives a speech in the ghetto of Metaponto, near Matera.
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The situation in the ghettos in southern Italy has escalated in recent years: the police are threatening evictions, the mafia continues to threaten all those who oppose the system, racist attacks are increasing and the helpers are being criminalized. Will this make a revolt in the ghettos and a solidarity movement impossible?

The political climate for migrants, humanitarian organizations and activists committed to them has worsened significantly. Racism and repression are on the rise, a climate of fear and hatred is spreading. Attacks against the people who solidarize and help, against the church and even against Pope Francis happen all the time. Carola Rackete, the captain of Sea-Watch, has become a symbolic figure – if you save lives, you're perceived as a criminal. The migrants are considered dangerous and criminal per se, without having done anything at all. In order to secure more votes, some politicians are willing to divide society, to create enemy camps. This is a very dangerous political strategy. Fascism is spreading in Italy, in Europe and throughout the world. We, and I mean the civil society worldwide, cannot stop fighting and taking action. Because our opponents are just waiting for us to give up.



Yvan Sagnet and his disciples Marie Antoinette Eyango, Vito Castoro, Mbaye Ndiaye, Papa Latyr Faye, Samuel Jacobs, Anthony Nwachukwu, Jeremiah Akhere Ogbeide discuss the campaign and the manifesto. (©2019 Fruitmarket/Langfilm. Video still by Thomas Eirich-Schneider)

“Whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the law and the prophets.” The “Rivolta della Dignità” is a revolt of all people. It is the revolt of the people who do not understand human rights as empty phrases and demand that they be applied. Why should we join the movement? What does human dignity mean?

When man loses his dignity, he becomes an animal, an object. So the “Revolt of Dignity” encompasses all efforts of human beings to remain human. Everyone who stands up for his or her own dignity and well-being fights for the dignity and well-being of all human beings. This is how the sentence in the Gospels can be understood on a religious level. But we can also take it a step further and say: we cannot stop

condemning the injustices of the world. Because if we lose this ability, we descend into barbarism. We are living in times in which we can no longer afford to do nothing. We need to unite in order to stand together against the advance of evil – the demon, using another term from the Bible. That is why I call on all organizations, all people, to join the “Revolt of Dignity”.

Milo, you almost coincidentally are coming to Italy with this project at a time when the political context is drastically changing: the current Italian government introduced a decree that is forcing hundreds of thousands of people in Italy into illegality and is taking action against the Sea Rescue. A cardinal commits an act of civil disobedience by activating the power line of a house occupied by migrants. The Pope expresses his solidarity with the Sea Rescue and the refugees, thereby criticizing the Italian government. In this context, what are your hopes for the “Rivolta della Dignità” and the “New Gospel”?

Milo Rau: From a legal and humane standpoint, the situation in southern Italy is completely out of control. Half a million people are living in huts without permanent work, starving and oppressed by the mafia. Italian agriculture is based on modern slavery, and in many other sectors and European countries the situation is similar. We are seeing the systematic reversal of classical neoliberalism. In the past, the production goods were semi-legally brought to the Third World for cheap labor, today the cheap laborers illegally come to Europe at their own expense. It is nothing less than a diabolical cycle, because the oranges and tomatoes harvested by Cameroonians or Nigerians in southern Italy are then cheaply exported to Africa, destroying the local agriculture there and forcing more people to flee to Europe.

This cycle must be interrupted. We hope that our call for the legalization of refugees, for the EU's return to its liberal founding documents, for dignity and justice for all, and ultimately global citizenship will be heard through the “Revolt of Dignity”. And this is where the church, the New Testament comes into play: in the Gospel of Matthew, everything is already spelled out in plain, direct language! If the church and politics were to reflect on what was outlined and lived by the historical movement of Jesus as a pragmatic or simply humanistic program, all questions would be settled. So, what could make more sense than shooting a modern-day Jesus film in Matera, where Europe celebrates itself as a “Capital of Culture” and where at the same time half a million people live under inhumane conditions? The “New Gospel” is a gospel for the 21st century, a manifesto of the victims of the so-called

"free enterprise" of which Pope Francis himself said in his famous epistle *Evangelii Gaudium* in late 2013: "Such an economy kills."

For almost 15 years, you have been dealing with the contradictions of global economy in your plays, films and books. Why should we perceive the ghettos in southern Italy as a European problem?

Similar to ancient Rome, today's EU is an imperial program with a humanistic touch. The dirty consequences of Europe's inhumane and completely chaotic refugee policy are outsourced to the Mediterranean countries, especially to Italy and Greece (or directly to North Africa). It is perfectly fitting for the European Capital of Culture to be in the middle of wild refugee camps. We are addressing these problems in our project as well as partially trying to solve them – or at least presenting possible solutions.

"The New Gospel" is neither just a documentary nor a fictional film, it is not a campaign nor a performance: it is both. One could perhaps speak of a utopian documentation, meaning a realization and filming of what would be necessary: a revolt of the civil society against the depravity or at least the cynical way the governments turn a blind eye on the issue. Is the "New Gospel" a Jesus movie or a real movement? Is the "Rivolta della Dignità" a theater piece or realpolitik? As with previous projects such as the "Moscow Trials" (2013), the "Congo Tribunal" (2015) or the "General Assembly" (2017), art takes the place of a failing policy. The small real changes that we enforce – we use some of the project money to support the construction of containers for refugees, Yvan Sagnet is moving into a house at the edge of Matera with his disciples – are part of the dream of a humanized economy, a globalization of dignity. This is why we will carry the "Rivolta della Dignità" from Matera to Rome, from Rome to Palermo. And next year from there to Brazil and the Congo, but we can talk about that another time.

Yvan, during our first meeting, you said: "The oppressors, the Roman occupying force, are the supermarkets, the multinational corporations." But they do not accept any responsibility, they react to criticism with libel action. So I have one last very specific question: How can we still put up resistance? How can we organize the resistance? How can the "Rivolta delle Dignità" work?

Yvan Sagnet: Capitalism is the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, capitalism is egoism against solidarity. Capitalists want to

have everything and are often willing to turn to crime in order to achieve this. Only crumbs are left over for everyone else. They are the occupiers, the oppressors of today. The exploitation of workers and farmers in Italian agriculture is just one example. Italian agriculture generates profits of 25 billion euros per year, but only one third of that money goes to the people who actually work in the sector, meaning field workers, farmers, truck drivers, etc. The remaining two-thirds of the profits go to multinational companies, supermarkets and their shareholders, who make up only three percent of the people in the entire system. Because they are inapproachable, they force those who get the smaller part to fight against each other, the farmers enslave the workers, the workers revolt against the farmers or are at war with one other. The capitalist system creates social inequalities, conflicts and wars all around the world. The exploitation of raw materials in the southern countries, the destruction of the environment, climate change: all of this are reasons for the poverty that forces people to flee. Migration is the product of capitalist exploitation. People go where the most prosperity and wealth can be found.

In order to fight the capitalist system, we – a consolidation of consumers and workers who represent the majority – must rebel against the few who currently dictate the rules. Consumers across the globe can make things difficult for the system by starting to boycott products which depend on the exploitation of human beings and allow human rights abuses. Because the system can only function when there is a mass consumption of cheap products, something we are all responsible for. The workers, for their part, can organize strikes against exploitation and modern slavery by disrupting the production and thus creating problems for the producers. Using these two political means, we can fight for a more just world and for human dignity, battling egoism, profit maximization, exploitation, the concentration of wealth and poverty worldwide. And we call for this with the "Rivolta della Dignità".

3. MILO RAU

Critics called him "the most influential" (DIE ZEIT), "most awarded" (Le Soir), "most interesting" (De Standaard) or "most ambitious" (The Guardian) artist of our time: the Swiss director, author and artistic director of the NTGent Milo Rau (born 1977). Rau studied sociology, German and Romance philology in Paris, Berlin and Zurich under Pierre Bourdieu and Tzvetan Todorov, among others. Since 2002, he has created over 50 plays, films, books and actions. His productions have been invited to all of the major international festivals, including the Berlin Theatertreffen, the Festival d'Avignon, the Venice Biennale Teatro, the Wiener Festwochen and the Brussels Kunstenfestivaldesarts, and have toured more than 30 countries worldwide. Rau has received numerous awards, including the Peter-Weiss-Prize 2017, the 3sat-Prize 2017, the 2017 Saarbrücken Poetry Lectureship for Drama and, in 2016, the prestigious World Theatre Day ITI Prize. In 2017, Milo Rau was voted "Acting Director of the Year" in the critics' survey conducted by the Deutsche Bühne. In 2018 he received the European Theatre Prize, and in 2019 he was awarded the first honorary doctorate by the Theatre Department of Lunds Universitet (Sweden). Rau is also a television critic, lecturer and a very productive author.



»Milo Rau is currently the most influential director on the continent.«
Die Zeit

»Milo Rau is currently the most interesting artist in Europe.«
De Standaard

»Scandal lover«
La Vanguardia

»Theatre innovator«
Der Spiegel

»Milo Rau is one of the most ruthless and intelligent critics of our time: a visionary.«
Jean Ziegler

»Where understanding ends, Milo Raus' work begins.«
Neue Zürcher Zeitung

4. YVAN SAGNET

Yvan Sagnet, born 1985 in Douala (Cameroon), moved to Italy with a scholarship in 2007, to study engineering in Turin. After failing an exam and losing his scholarship in late July of 2011, he travelled to Salento, Nardò in southern Italy and began working as a tomato picker for the Masseria Boncuri, a local farm.

While working at Masseria Boncuri, Sagnet came into contact with the Caporalato, a system that revolves around the Caporali, who illegally recruit tomato workers in a way that Sagnet calls the "modern slavery" of the Italian agricultural industry. The laborers work 16 hours a day for 20-25 euros a day, while the Corporali keep most of their wages.

Sagnet organized a strike in the Nardò farm against the inhumane working conditions, which successfully led to the reform of the working conditions in Italian agriculture.

After the strike, Sagnet continued his activism by working as a lawyer for the CGIL and completing his engineering studies.

In February 2017, Sagnet was appointed Cavaliere dei Cavalieri dell'Ordine al Merito della Repubblica Italiana by the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella for his efforts toward ending "modern slavery" in the Italian agricultural sector.



With the activist and former plantation worker Yvan Sagnet, a black Jesus will be in front of the camera for the first time in film history.
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