



W H I T E O U T  
C O N Q U E R I N G T H E U S E L E S S  
P i e r g i o r g i o M i l a n o



*Concept, direction and choreography:* Piergiorgio Milano

*Performers:* Javier Varela Carrera, Luca Torrenzieri, Piergiorgio Milano,

*Lights:* Bruno Teusch

*Sound design:* Federico Dal Pozzo

*Soundtrack:* Piergiorgio Milano

*Costumes:* Raphaël Lamy, Simona Randazzo, Piergiorgio Milano

*Scenography:* Piergiorgio Milano

*The scripts are freely inspired by:* "Mal di montagna" by Enrico Camanni, "China Jam" by Evrard Wendenbaum, "Confessioni di un serial climber" by Mark Twight, "La conquista dell'inutile" Lionell Terray.

*With the great support of:* Florent Hamon, Claudio Stellato

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Duration: 55' | Children: +7 years

VIDEO

PHOTOS

"The highest ambition of this show is to transform mountaineering into an artistic language. To create a choreographic experience and a visual syntesis in such a strong way, that the vastity of the mountain could be transported inside of a theatre, so the audience could really feel the cold, the snow, the storms, on a rocky vertical cliffs."

*Piergiorgio Milano*




*White out* means the complete loss of space-time references and the consequent impossibility to advance or retreat. A stall condition that can lead to extreme consequences. A gentle boundary between life and death, soft as the clouds and the snow. Alpinism belongs to all nations and has a deeply human history; *White Out* is a tribute to all the climbers who have disappeared, or embrace that kind of risk, in the endless white of heights. The conquerors of the useless.

*White Out* is an ironic and dramatic journey, fun, engaging, not only through the natural landscape evoked on stage, but through human interiority, opening up glimpses for other looks. It is a big challenge to translate into choreography, into an emotional place, the Alpin landscape. To bring the verticality of the mountain into the horizontality of the stage; To give rhythm to something immobile, that doesn't have it. To express vastness in a closed theater. And not only that. To convey the sense of fatigue, of challenge, of courage; and the feelings, the fears, the loneliness, the attraction to risk, the desire to reach the summit, the ambitions and contradictions that follow those. The mountain like a mirror that reflect the man. Dramaturgy uses cinematographic editing with a broken down chronology. The show comes to life with an alternation of images going back and forth between reality and imagination, developing through the principle of fragmentation and flashbacks. An external narrative voice guides the audience during transition moments, so that each spectator can enrich the show experience tapping into their own imaginary.

## THE CONSTRUCTION OF A UNIVERSE

*White Out* White tells the story of a small community that faces an initiatory journey. It speaks of human nature by addressing the themes of death, separation, personal ambition, relationships within a group. The mountain is a metaphor, the magnifying glass that allows us to take a closer look to human nature. Making decisions, facing difficulties, relying on others, are initiatory steps in the life of each one of us, and of each audience member. The show deals with these matters directly, keeping a straight language, associated with strong visionary charge images, with a touch of humor. For these reasons, *White Out* has received positive feedbacks from all kinds of audiences, regardless of previous interest in mountain stories. Dramaturgy uses cinematographic editing with a broken down chronology. The show comes to life with an alternation of images going back and forth between reality and imagination, developing through the principle of fragmentation and flashback. An external narrative voice guides the audience during transition moments, so that each spectator can enrich the show experience tapping into their own imaginary.



“Come back alive,  
come back friends,  
reach the summit.  
In this precise order”

*Roger Baxter Jones*



# CIRCUS, DANCE, ALPINISM: A MULTIDISCIPLINARY CREATION

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*White Out* offers a specific choreographic vocabulary, the result of a fusion between dance and contemporary circus, succeeding in fully expressing the spectacularity of an extreme sport like mountaineering. Climbing technical materials are re-invented to create evocative and powerful images. Carabiners, ropes and harnesses are eradicated from their customary use to seek new choreographic and expressive possibilities. Skis become an object characterized by unstable balance, producing a form of movement located between contemporary dance and circus art, which offers the viewer an intense and original visual experience. The corde-lisse, the only tool on the scene reminding the circus world, is a symbol of verticality, vertigo and void. Its straight line, connecting sky and earth, becomes a reference point for the routes opened by climbers. On stage it's used together with some mountaineering protection devices, allowing the creation of otherwise impossible dynamics and images. In representing the extreme mountain universe, physicality is pushed to its limits. There is no representation or pantomime. The weights in the backpacks are true, as much as the difficulties in anchoring, the struggle to support the weight in suspension, the weight of the other bodies, and, for those reasons, the fatigue and the authenticity of the presence on stage.



## FOTOGRAFHY

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To represent the mountain, *White Out* renounces on any didactic form. On the other hand, it invests in all the necessary sound and visual elements for the viewer to reconstruct a clear and realistic image of the mountain. *White out* is the result of radical and precise scenographic choices, based on elements subtraction, so that the presence of what is absent can establish itself in a powerful way. The show takes place in a black box covered with a big layer of snow. A natural environment that represents at the same time the mental space of the characters. A place that contains present reality and memory, dream and distortion. Thus, the snow is charged with different meanings, from the relentless freezing of ice at 8000 meters, to the whiteness of a snowfall in early winter, to the material of which the clouds of paradise could be made. The impalpable and rarefied scenography is contrasted by very precise and characteristic objects. The length of the ropes, the weight of the backpacks, the amount of materials anchored to the harnesses, contribute to form an ultra-realistically image of a high-altitude climb. Besides, no object has a single meaning: even costumes play a key role in transitions between the different temporalities of the show, to highlight the connections between reality and the dream world.





“When game's hard, the hard one's raise the volume”

(Mark Twight)

## THE SOUND LANDSCAPE. HIDE THE MUSIC IN THE WIND.

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Mark Twight, one of the most controversial American climbers, wrote: “if a man has not heard the sound of the wind at 8000 meters in winter, he doesn't know the true meaning of fear”.

The sounds perceived during ascension are a recurring theme in mountain literature. To say that there's silence in the mountains is often a real contradiction. If you focus on that silence you discover an infinity of distinct noises. Therefore, to reproduce mountain “silence”, and to create that feeling that is actually an accumulation of different sounds, has been done a very precise work of sound creation.

On parallel has been designed a three-dimensional spatialization of all the loudest sounds, such as wind, avalanches, landslides and waterfalls. These two sound universes together, guide the audience into an immersive and total auditory experience in the mountain universe. Also, the addition of LIVE sound manipulation, helps exert a strong impact on the audience's imagination: every breath of wind, every crackling of the ice, is calibrated on the actual movements of the performers.

The sound environment makes tangible the forms and places that come to life on stage.



## THE SOUNDTRACK. A “POP” NUANCE.

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Stories of mountaineers who have tackled some of the most dangerous northern walls in the world by including walkman and batteries in their equipment are not rare. The show is crossed by some of the great musical successes of the 90s, from Dire Straits to Whitney Houston, which accompany the unfolding story. This choice helps to link what happens to a precise historical period, acting as a unifying element for the public, which can recognize the dynamics and atmospheres on stage. A "pop" nuance that enriches an otherwise cold and hostile environment with tenderness and irony, metaphorically acting as a source of warmth and protection for the characters on stage.

*"Piergiorgio Milano, choreographer and performer with an admirable mixture between dance, theatre and circus arts, walk us, with the poetry of the movement, with the strength and aesthetics of the gesture, with the charm of imagination, inside a world not only evoked but marked by life stories. And we were fully fascinated by it."*

**Giuseppe Di Stefano/Artribune.com**

*"Poetic in all that whiteness, amusing in the light moments, realistically dramatic in the clash with anguish, wisely ironic in the closing, White out manages to surprise and create something truly new in a world, like that of performance, that in almost everything seems to have already been explored. And its message is more universal than it seems: those who deal with theatre know the necessary utility of the useless very well"*

**Nicoletta Severino/Madeinpompei.it**

*"If dance shares with theatre the "magic" in the construction of an environment truer than the real, where to drag the credulous, surrendered gaze of the spectator, then in "White Out" we can only find full justification for the full house of the Palladium Theatre."*

**Carlo Lei/Klpteatro.it**

*"We fell in love with White Out.. A truly out-of-the-ordinary creative and choreographic challenge..."*

**Culture Cirque**

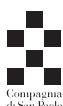
***Mountaineering is a sport  
from history profoundly  
human that belongs  
to all nations;  
White out is the homage  
to all mountaineers  
that have disappeared,  
or who they choose  
the risk of disappearing,  
in the endless white  
of heights.  
The conquerors of the useless.***





**Piergiorgio Milano**, is a cross-curricular artist trained between Italy and France. After a reputed career as an international per-former (collaborating with artists like James Thiérée, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Rodrigo Pardo, David Zambra-no, Roberto Olivan, Raffaella Giordano) , he founded in Bruxelles his own collective of artists in 2015 and started producing interdisciplinary performances and projects between Italy and Belgium. Among the creations produced and signed during the last nine years, the most important ones marking the initial years surely are “Denti”, which won MASDANZA competition (2009), Baltic Dance Competition (2011), Factory dance prize (2012), and “Pesadilla”, which won Equilibrio Prize (2015) and was nominated for the Critics Prize at Festival d'Avignon and as Best Belgian Circus Show in 2017. Through this work, Milano intensifies the authorial strong feature that will mark most of his works, and it's dramaturgically aligned with the idea of "funny tragedy". He talks about it this way: “Tragicomedy has always been the fundamental driving force behind my creations... being able to play down even the most difficult situations and deal with the most awful things, finding the strength to be ironic even during a tragedy”.

A crucial turning point in his production sphere is the creation of 'White Out', produced in two versions; the second one, staged in July 2021, has successfully being performed on the most important stages, touring across Europe and beyond. Milano's artistic study has always been strongly linked to human sphere and with this project he places the relationship with landscape at the heart of his research, since mankind often relates, clashes and merges with nature and its sometimes opposite forces. This dialogue between man and nature underlies a successful production of artistic identity that runs through a series of important recent creations made in situ, like “Au Bout Des Doigts”, “Vague” and the recent project (still in the process of being created) “Fortuna”, composed in harmony with both mountain environments and coastal landscapes.







[piergiorgiomilano.com](http://piergiorgiomilano.com)  

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[orbitaspellbound.com](http://orbitaspellbound.com)

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Centro Nazionale di Produzione della Danza