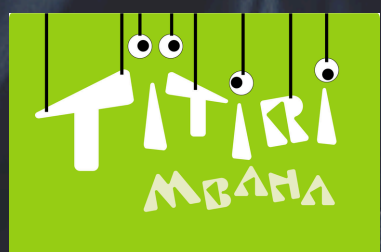


Rakugo olé

Festivals

Artist residency



THE SHOW



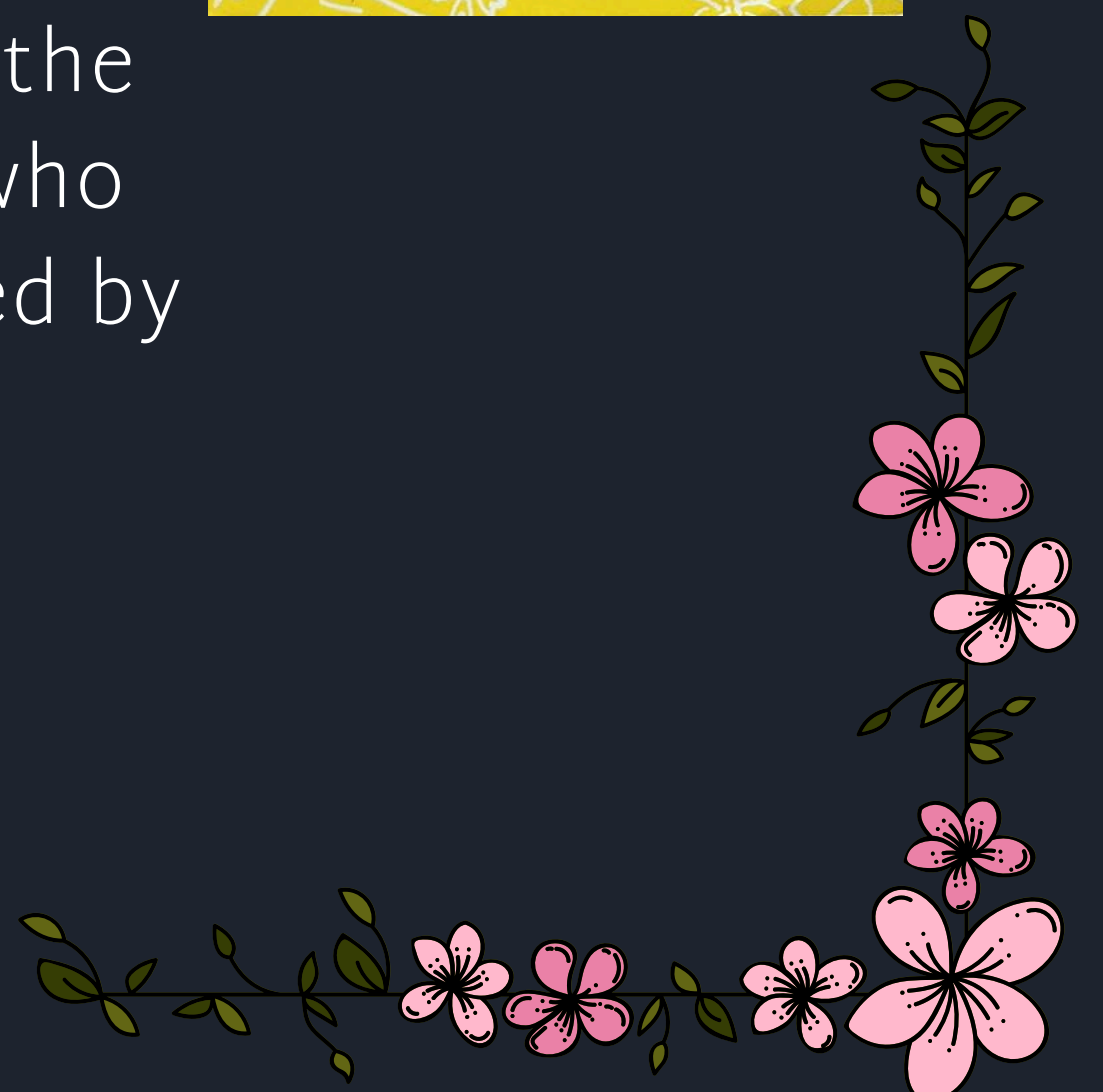
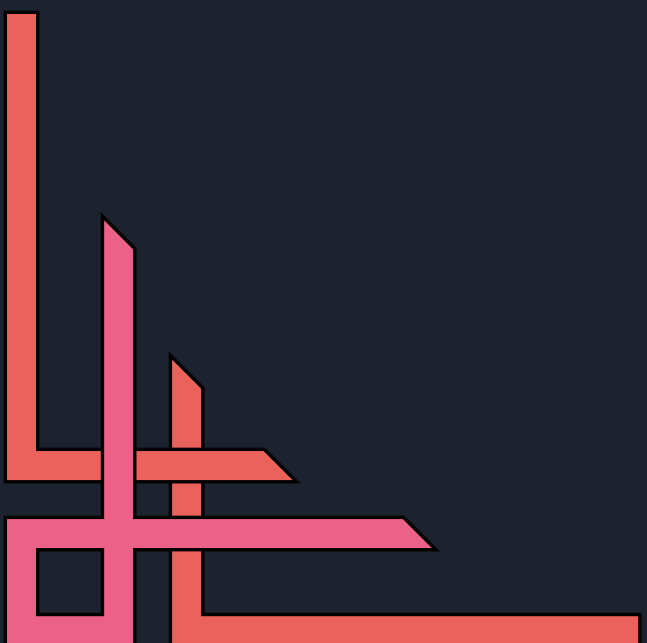
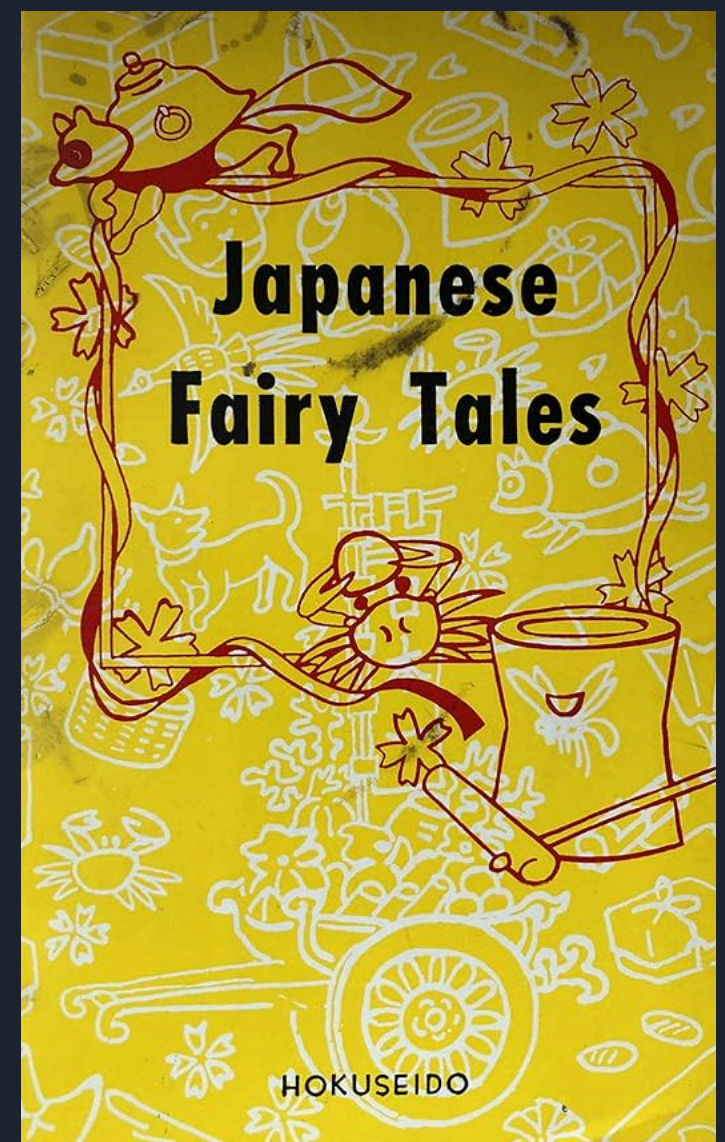
She travels — as we all do — carrying her own story.
From Andalusia to Japan, her path is both outward and inward.
Along the way, she discovers another language: the language of
objects that speak without words.
Through Rakugo —where fans become voices and scarves become
memories— she learns that every journey, like every tale, begins with
courage.

TAWARA TODA HIDESATO

This story forms part of a broader
exploration of how tales journey across
cultures, changing voice, rhythm, and
gesture as they move.

Among the early pioneers of modern
Japanese children's literature is Iwaya
Sazanami (1870–1933), whose fairy tales
helped shape national identity during the
Meiji era.

Our adaptation of Tawara Tōda Hidesato
revisits one of his most iconic legends: the
heroic deeds of Fujiwara no Hidesato, who
aids a dragon whose family is threatened by
a monstrous centipede.



RAKUGO OBJECT THEATRE



Explore world
cultures and
celebrate the
journey that
fiction can
bring to us.

The show is inspired by the Japanese theatrical tradition of Rakugo, which dates back to the Edo period (1603–1868). Traditionally, Rakugo featured humorous monologues performed by a solo storyteller, using only a fan and a handkerchief.

Here, our rakugoka brings to life the characters from a tale collected by Japan's own "Grimm brother", Iwaya Sazanami, through the playful manipulation of fans and the flowing fabrics of her flamenco dress.

With a touch of poetic clowning, the story's elements intertwine. We explore world cultures and celebrate solo journeys, both real and the ones we undertake when we enter the world of fiction.

FORMAT

Duration: 40 min.

Show for theater venues.

Existing versions for the street and libraries.

LINKS


Promotional video:

<https://youtu.be/Bn3QenWXv7A>

Complete show:

<https://youtu.be/i-KnmlArsH8>





"RAKUGO OLÉ" CELEBRATES AND REVITALIZES ORAL TRADITION THROUGH NEW THEATRICAL LANGUAGES




Oral tradition stories, found across diverse cultures, offer social cohesion without resorting to moralism. These tales create meaningful spaces for reflection, both for children and adults.

By addressing themes such as resilience and the pursuit of justice, this show reminds us that we are all part of the same story.

Through this project, we seek to rediscover oral traditions and contribute to a renewed multicultural narrative.

To do this, we aim to rediscover and give visibility to theatrical traditions from across the globe, not only those rooted in the West. In this show, we revisit the Rakugo tradition through a multicultural and global lens, reflective of our time.

In doing so, we move beyond the more familiar traditions, such as Commedia dell'Arte or Greek Theatre, to honour and celebrate other centuries-old legacies. Here, we explore fiction as a personal journey, one each person undertakes alone, drawing meaning from lived experience.



The work centres on a protagonist (a woman...or perhaps a story?) who accompanies us on this journey called life. Through her, we explore our own identity and, by extension, that of others, in a shared search for meaning and direction.

Finally, a shared goal across all our projects is to forge new connections between academic research in children's literature and its artistic expression.

We aim to use this knowledge as a foundation for cultural productions that resonate with diverse audiences.

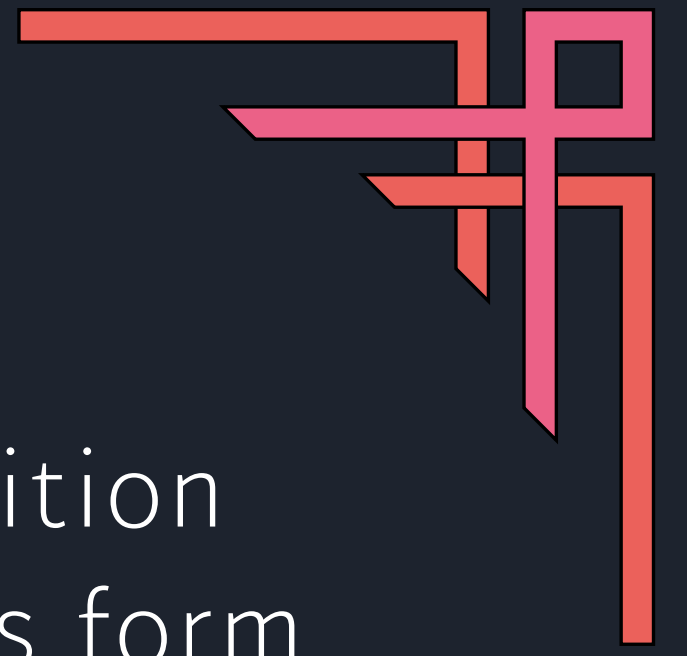


RESEARCH

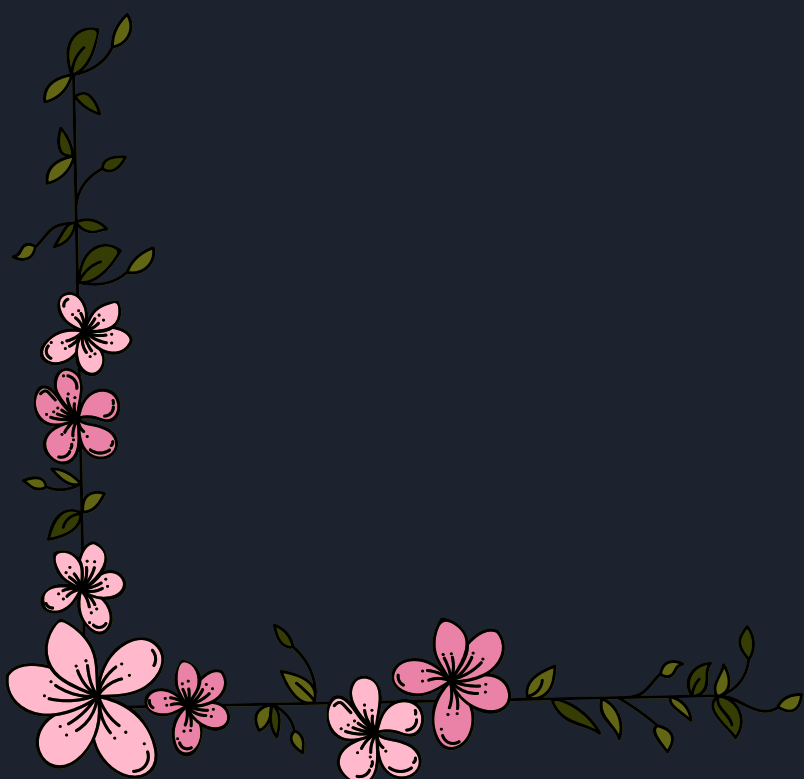
The creative process behind “Rakugo Olé” began with the reading of several tales by Iwaya Sazanami. From these, we selected the one that best lent itself to theatrical adaptation and contemporary themes. This choice allowed us to centre the work on a narrative that speaks to the spirit of oral tradition while resonating with a broad, intergenerational audience.



Source. <https://www.tumblr.com/mitosjpenespanol/181430590490/tawara-t%C5%8Dda-%E4%BF%B5%E8%97%A4%E5%A4%AA-mi-se%C3%B1or-de-la-bolsa-de>



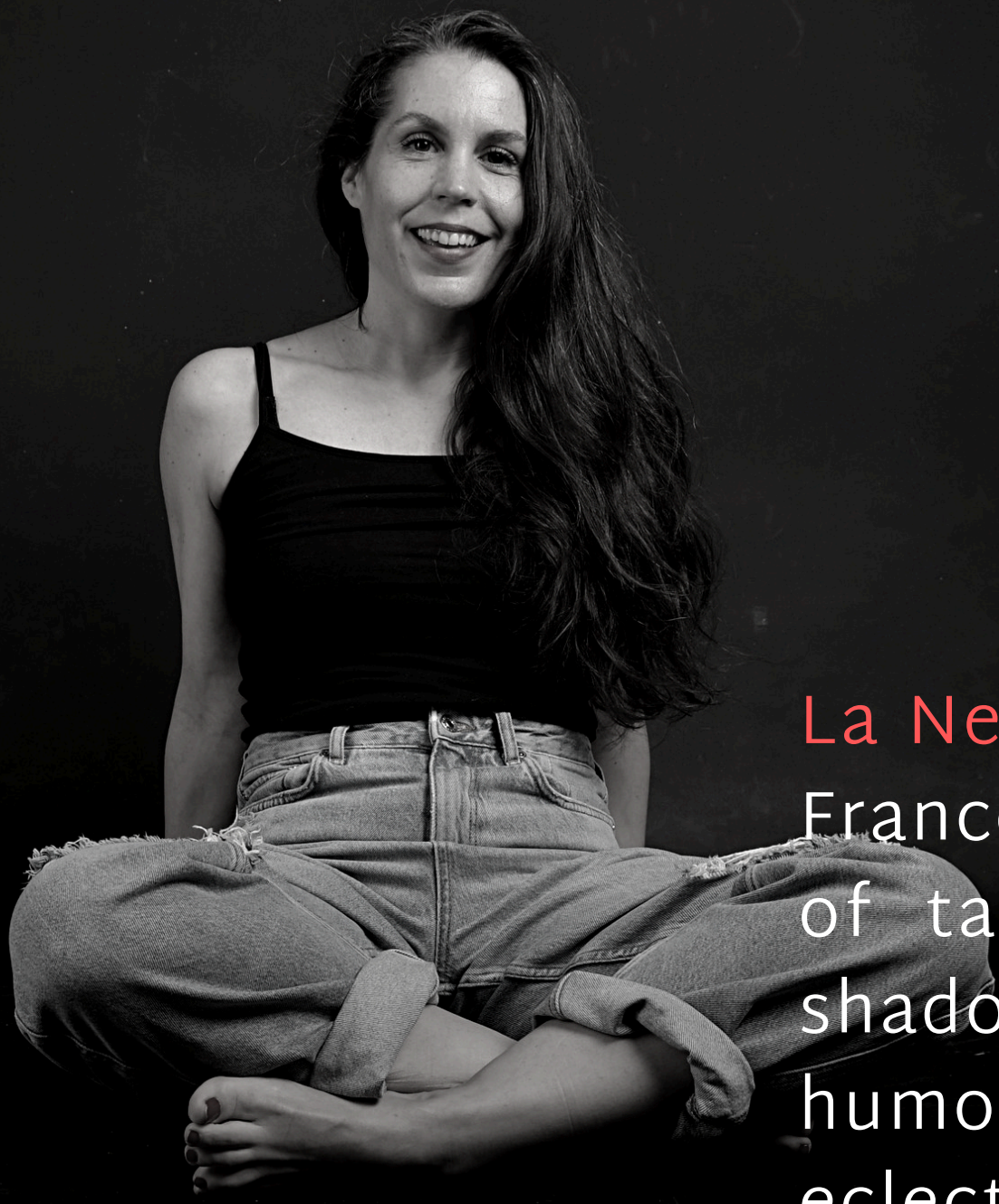
We then delved into research on the tradition and codified staging rules of Rakugo. This form of Japanese theatre is characterised by its simplicity and depth. We explored common elements, such as the use of a fan and handkerchief, alongside the tradition of flamenco, creating a dialogue between these two cultures.



Finally, we conducted research on the fans, colours, and aesthetics typical of both Japan and flamenco, which guided the creation of the final costume. Through the choice of fabrics, designs, and colours, the costume in our performance becomes a visual language: it communicates the essence of both traditions, establishing an intercultural dialogue.



The Company



La Nena Teatro is a company founded by Ada Francoy in 2021, focusing on the dramaturgy of tales through the language of objects, shadows and puppets. Its principles include: humour, the pursuit of aesthetic beauty, the eclecticism of classical, modern, and/or multicultural theatrical traditions, and exploring the boundaries of equality in proposals, without compromising artistic quality.

Ada Francoy is an actress, writer, and holds a PhD in children's literature and gender equality. After 20 years as a storyteller, she founded her own company in 2021 to develop more collaborative and interdisciplinary projects. She has published several children's stories, a comic book, and a creative language book designed to encourage playful and imaginative use of words.

With experience working with children in the UK, the UAE, Myanmar, and Spain, she brings a deep understanding of young audiences. She also teaches at university level. Her recent research on gender in theatre for young audiences has been published by a leading academic publisher.

OUR MULTICULTURAL TEAM



DIRECTION OF OBJECT THEATRE

Roberto White: Trained with Hugo Suárez and Inés Passic from Cia. Gaia Teatro, he created the acclaimed show Magnolias, which enjoyed great success in Latin America. He founded the company Teatro dos Mundos with Malgosia Szkandera and currently tours solo with “Criaturas Particulares”, awarded at several international puppet festivals, including the Drac d'Or in 2012.



CLOWN AND DIRECTION

Alberto Quirós: Trained with renowned artists such as Michel Dallaire and Daniele Finzi Pasca. In 2009, he founded his own company and has since collaborated on various theatre productions — as a performer in Desmontando a Shakespeare by Hernán Gené, and as a creator in Iceberg by Leandre Ribera. He now combines directing with creative development.



COSTUME AND OBJECT DESIGN

Fanny Gautreau: worked as a set designer at Théâtre du Soleil and has since collaborated as a scenographer and costume designer with L'Aurore Company, as well as designing costumes for Antoine Rigot at CNAC.



LIGHTING DESIGN

Javier Otero: earned a PhD (Cum Laude) in Performing Arts with the STOOMP project. He is currently Academic Director of Culture at Rey Juan Carlos University. He served as technical director and lighting designer for the Madrid Chamber Ballet for over ten years, and was co-artistic director of the Diversity Gala at the Segovia en Danza Festival in 2018 and 2019.



MUSIC

Enrique Velasco: Professor and PhD specialising in musicals at the Alicia Alonso Dance Institute, he has designed sound for ballets such as The Nutcracker and Carmen, as well as for musicals including West Side Story. He also worked on the musical production of the original piece Hoist Point and is an expert in show control and performance technology systems.



SET DESIGN

Ana María Serpa: A multidisciplinary Colombian artist based in Madrid, trained in Visual Arts and Fine Arts. She has worked as a set designer and participated in opera productions at Teatros del Canal in Madrid, in addition to collaborating with Juan Ugalde and puppet artist Gisela López (Cía. El Retal).

Educational activities

Activity 1

After the performance of Rakugo Olé, we aim to offer the audience the chance to engage in a dialogue over Japanese tea. This will provide an opportunity to discuss the show and share their impressions, much like the exchanges that take place in communities where oral tradition has its roots. Additionally, we will introduce a few Japanese terms that are untranslatable into other languages, encouraging reflection (e.g., *Iyasareru* (いやすれる, which means to relax through the effect of simple things like curling up on the couch or listening to music with your eyes closed).

Activity 2

At the end of the show, attendees will be able to download a specially curated literary guide for children and young people. Featuring works by renowned authors and illustrators, this guide offers a carefully selected collection of stories that ignite the imagination and celebrate cultural diversity related to Japan.

Combining expertise in children's literature with practice as research, this approach to reading promotion is conceived as a creative and embodied experience. Literature thus becomes a means to broaden readers' horizons — inviting the exploration of new voices and the discovery of diverse cultural perspectives.



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