



## **Association QU.EM. quintelemento - Progetto Next Theatre - Centro Culturale Next**

The theatre company «*QU.EM. quintelemento*» is a non-profit association, founded in Cremona (northern Italy) in September 2010. It is duly registered in the official *National Register of Associations*, according to Italian laws.

The association was formed by a group of people who shared a previous experience of theatrical work in Milan, and later it expanded to other members. The various and previous activities “mark” in an original way the research perspectives and the aims of the association. The main objective, in fact, is to create a stimulating amalgam between theatrical language and cinematographic techniques (but always with the focus on theatre); this experience of «video-theatre» wants to propose a different way of living and understanding the evocative intensity of experimentation and artistic creation.

The central element, however, the ‘heart’ of the company, is the theater workshop, conceived and practiced as a deep human experience, in the wake of the lesson of the great masters of twentieth century and contemporary theatre.

The association «QU.EM. quintelemento», over time, has expanded its activities, beyond the strictly theatrical sector. In fact, it has also specialized in other operational areas: the production of short films and medium-length films; the realization of videos about artistic, cultural, social and educational events; the management of social media. Our video production is available on our YouTube channel: over 500, as of October 2024.

Since 2011, «QU.EM. quintelemento» is associated with U.I.L.T., the «*Unione Italiana Libero Teatro*» (Italian Union of Free Theatre), a national federation of amateur theatre companies (over 800 for about 16.000 members). Since 2014 one of the founding members of «QU.EM.», Paolo Ascagni, is the national vice-president of UILT, and he became president in September 2019. In September 2023 he was also elected to the Executive Board of CIFTA, the *International Committee of Amateur Theatre Federations* of Neo-Latin tradition and culture (Europe, Francophone Africa and Quebec), founded in Brussels, with its legal seat in Paris.

### **THE «NEXT» CULTURAL CENTRE AND THE PROJECT «NEXT THEATRE»**

Since November 2017, the association has a new seat in Cremona: the «Next» Cultural Centre, managed by the president, Francesca Rizzi, and the operating manager, Danio Belloni. This Centre is particularly suitable for workshops, meetings and theatrical performances, always in the sign of a constant search for new artistic modalities. These activities of experimentation and study are part of a program that we have called Project «Next Theatre». The activities are also open to those who have no acting experience, for a path of personal growth, not necessarily with strictly theatrical purposes.

Since 2018, our Center is part of the national circuit of the «*Creative Residences*» of the UILT, a network of artistic and theatrical spaces for exchanges, collaborations and relationships between companies and associations. In this sense, the consolidated

relation with the UILT has assumed an increasingly important role, through a close cooperation with its national and regional structures, in particular the *National Centre for Studies*, who collaborates with high-level personalities: playwrights, directors, actors, experts, universities and cultural associations.

The association has had and still has strong links with some historical reference points, and great innovators, of the twentieth century theater and subsequent artistic developments. From the collaboration with Cathy Marchand, a great performer of the *Living Theatre*, several workshops were organized in the Center, which in 2023 was officially recognized as one of the eighteen so-called «Itinerant Centers» in the world of the *Barba-Varley Foundation*, presided over by Eugenio Barba, founder of the legendary *Odin Teatret*. In the month of November 2024 we organized a workshop by Jordi Forcadas, the current main exponent of the *Theatre of the Oppressed*, another great theatre movement, elaborated by Augusto Boal in the 1970s.

## ACTIVITIES

The company is run by three people: Francesca Rizzi, president, actress, director of plays and videos, artistic director of workshops; Danio Belloni, actor, technical director, operating manager of the Centre; Paolo Ascagni, writer and playwright, actor, administrative secretary of the company.

Each year the company organizes two annual workshops, one for theatre and one for dance-theatre, from which two performances are produced. The working method involves the creative collaboration of the participants, whose contributions flow into the final script, elaborated by the artistic director. The subjects and texts, therefore, are largely created by the company; in some cases, famous scripts and novels of the traditional repertoire are used as a basis for work, but with the intention of modernizing them and to allow participants to reflect on the themes of those texts according to today's sensibility (always, however, with the utmost respect for these great authors).

The company, however, has also presented several works of the repertoire both theater and literature, always maintaining a balance between the respect for tradition and a vision open to modernity: texts of Euripides, Ovid, William Shakespeare, Mary Shelley, Fëdor Dostoevskij, Robert Louis Stevenson, Oscar Wilde, Henrik Ibsen, Bram Stoker, Frida Kahlo and Italo Calvino (in theatrical performances); Homer, Georg Büchner, Edgar Allan Poe, Nicolaj Gogol, Emily Dickinson, Florbela Espanca, Fernando Pessoa and Thomas Mann (in short and medium-length films).

The shows are staged both in the Centre and in other locations; from October 2010 to October 2024, the company produced over 30 original plays for over 130 shows, in Italy and abroad (Belgium, Spain and Morocco); 65 short and medium-length films; over 60 workshops and courses of theatre, personal development, communication, social media and «TeknoTeatro» (theatre and music).

The company received several recognitions for his work and was selected or invited to national and international festivals. The most important prize was in 2023: best international show at "Gli altri" (the others), a video-theatre drama, in the context of the 10th *Escenamateur Prize «Juan Mayorga»*. This is an event involving the Spanish amateur theatre federation *Escenamateur*, professional playwright Juan Mayorga and the University of La Rioja, in the person of Ignacio Amestoy, teacher and playwright.

## **SOCIAL QUEM**

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## STAFF



**FRANCESCA RIZZI**, president, has a degree in *Literature and Philosophy* and she works in the sector of training, communication and use of new social languages, for enterprises and associations. She has also specialized in training activities through the use of the theatre, with hundreds of courses; for many years she works in theatrical and video-theatrical sector, and she made hundreds of short films, medium films and videos for cultural and social purposes.

Inside the «Next Cultural Centre», she is mainly responsible for the direction of theatrical workshops and *personal development*. As regards artistic activities, she directs and dramatizes all the productions of the «Next Theatre Project», for both theatrical and video-theatrical works.

**DANIO BELLONI** is the operating manager of «Next Cultural Centre»; actor with a long experience, he worked with many groups and supervised the preparation and direction of plays of different types. Expert in photography and video, he has projected, and manages, several websites and socialmedia; for QU.EM. he is responsible for digital communication and post-production video. As regards «Next Cultural Centre», in addition to the activity of actor, he collaborates in the management of the workshops, as an expert in scenic reading and physical training for actors.

**PAOLO ASCAGNI**, actor, is the administrative officer of QU.EM.; playwright and writer (not only for theatre), is the main author of the texts for the company's own productions, as well as translator and script adapter in foreign language. Expert in theatre history, creative writing and dramaturgy, in «Next Cultural Centre» organizes the historical and theoretical courses dedicated to the great personalities and currents of theatre; also he works with communication and socialmedia. In the stages of making videos, he mainly works for post-production activities.



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