

El mensaje / THE MESSAGE

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GRUPO MAREA



During the Argentine military dictatorship, some political prisoners in clandestine centers were forced into slave labor. In some cases - and this is very little known up until today - this involved intellectual or artistic work in favor of the regime, such as writing articles for foreign newspapers praising the government or organizing creative campaigns of support.

The Message focuses on the story of María Laura Villa, a leftist actress who was kidnapped, brutally tortured, and forced to star in a musical film supporting the dictatorship. This film, despite its plot of love and action intended for the whole family, openly defended the values imposed by the military. Every day, she was taken from the concentration camp where she was being held to the film shooting.

The film was a huge success. And its cheerful, lighthearted songs became the soundtrack of the dictatorship. Many people even remember them now, forty years later, without knowing their origins. It is noteworthy that a large number of musical films were produced during those dark years.

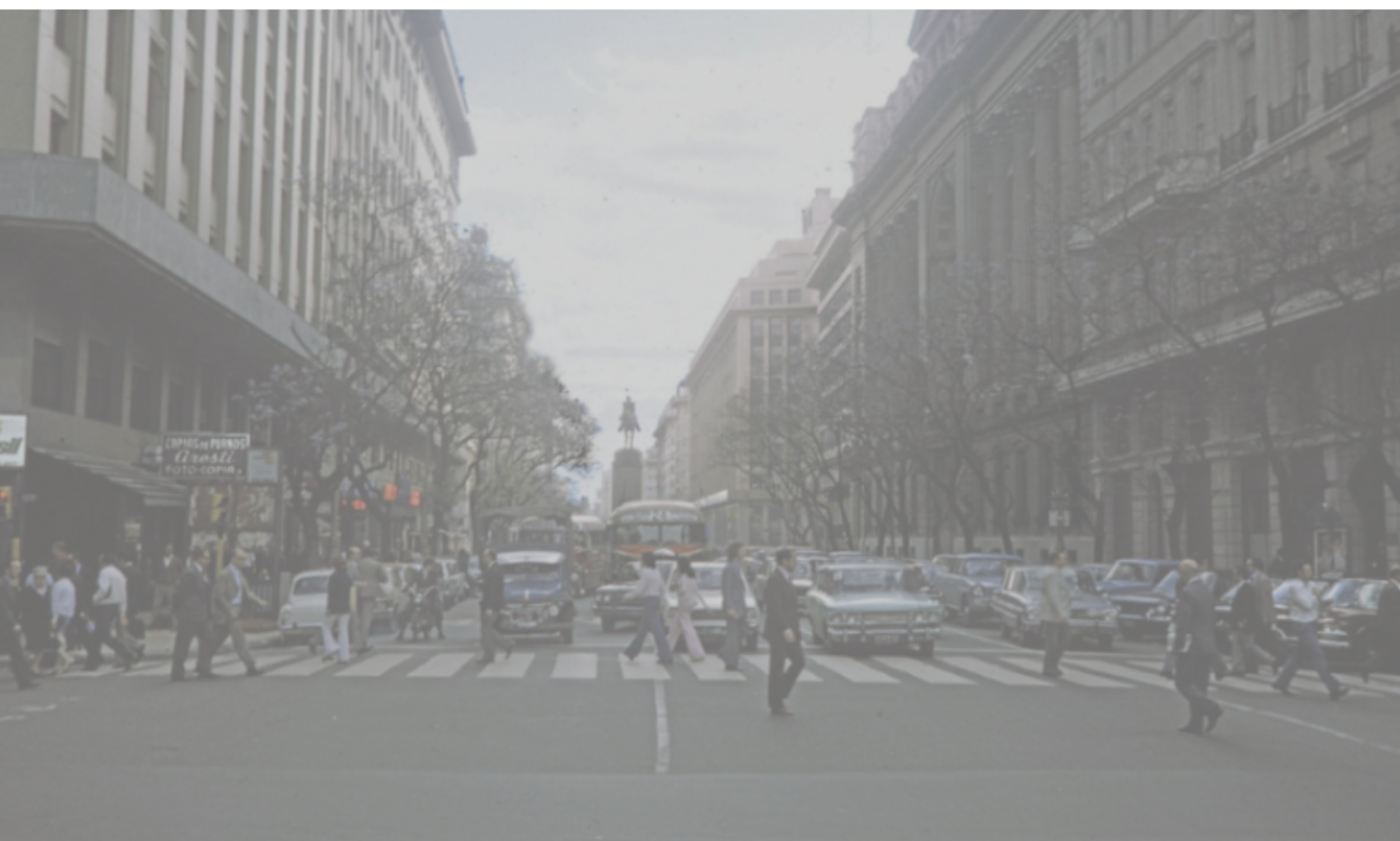
María Laura Villa survived the dictatorship, but because of her participation in the film, she had to bear the stigma of having been a collaborationist for many years. She went into exile in Italy.

In 2026, Julia Petri, the daughter of María Laura Villar, also an actress herself, decides to do something she's been putting off for a long time: create a play about her mother's story. At first, she feels insecure, soon realizes she doesn't know much about her mother, with whom she always had a complex relationship. But she becomes obsessed, which leads her to reconnect with María Laura after almost twenty years of not seeing each other. The bond is re-established, not without difficulty.

Julia begins to discover that not everything was exactly as everyone believed. Among other things, María Laura had managed to insert hidden messages into the songs she was forced to sing in the film. Messages that possibly helped save many people in the resistance, and others whose meaning are still unclear.

In the present, which at times also seems to have become a grand musical comedy set against a backdrop of horror, to Julia the question of what to do in an impossible situation seems more relevant than ever. Is it the only option to be a collaborationist? to resist? She begins to wonder how much of what her mother did could be applied in today's world.

Note: This is a work in progress; like almost all of Grupo Marea's works, the story and its staging can change during the creative process.



Text & Direction: Mariano Pensotti

Set & costume: Mariana Tirantte

Music: Diego Vainer

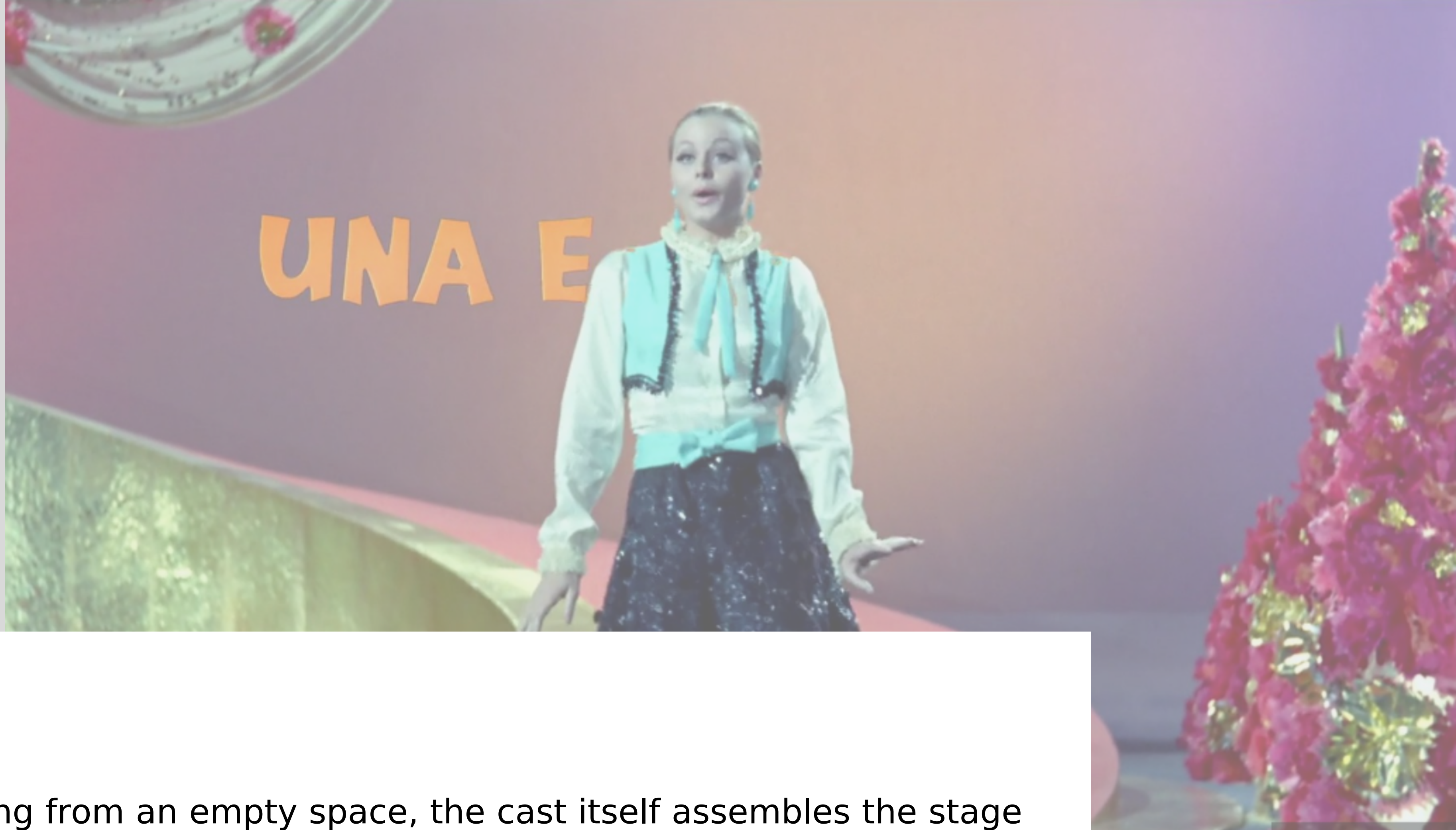
Artistic production: Florencia Wasser

Dramaturgy: Aljoscha Begrich

Lights: Matias Sendon

Direction Assistance: Juan Reato

Cast: 5 performers

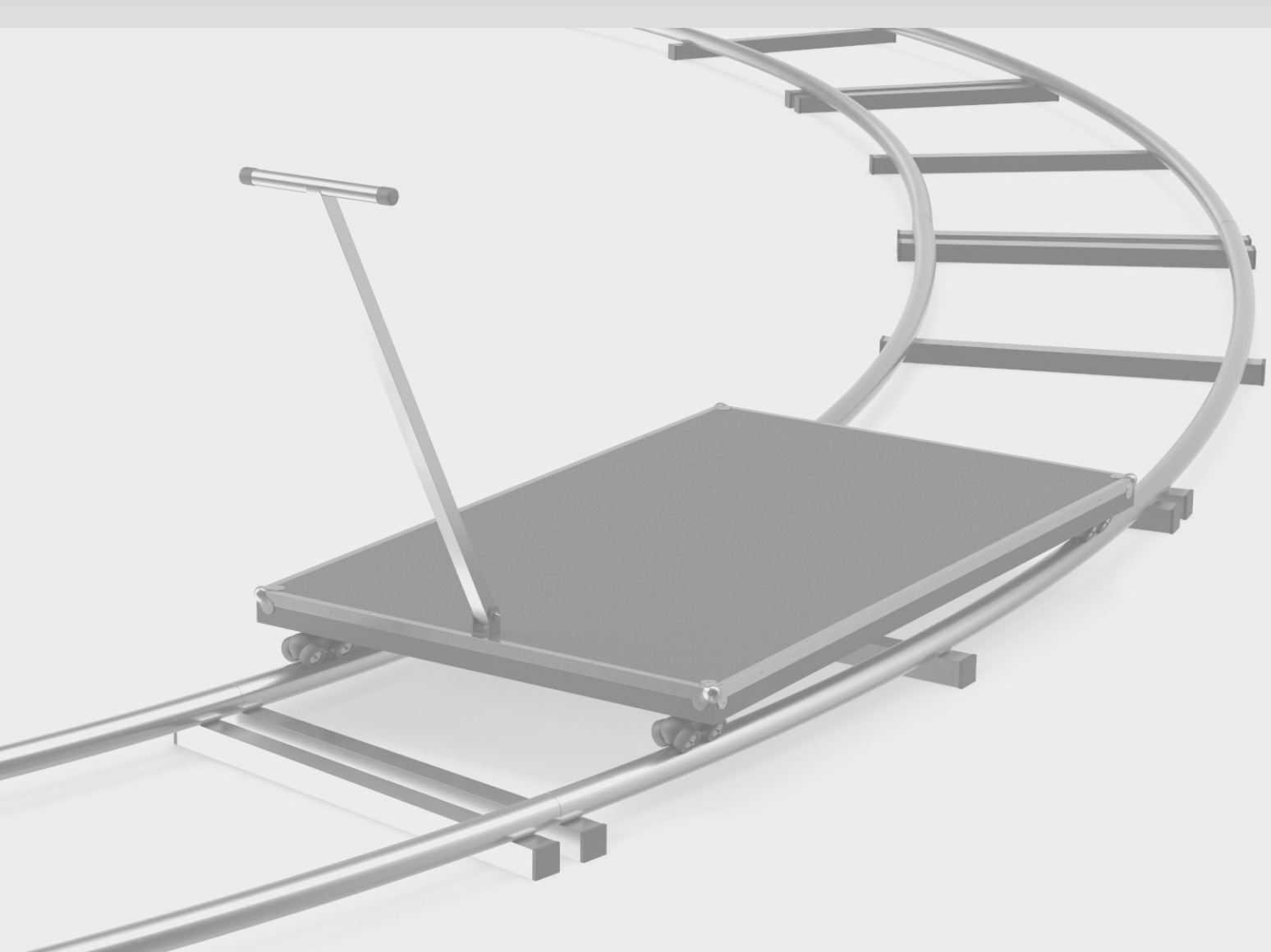
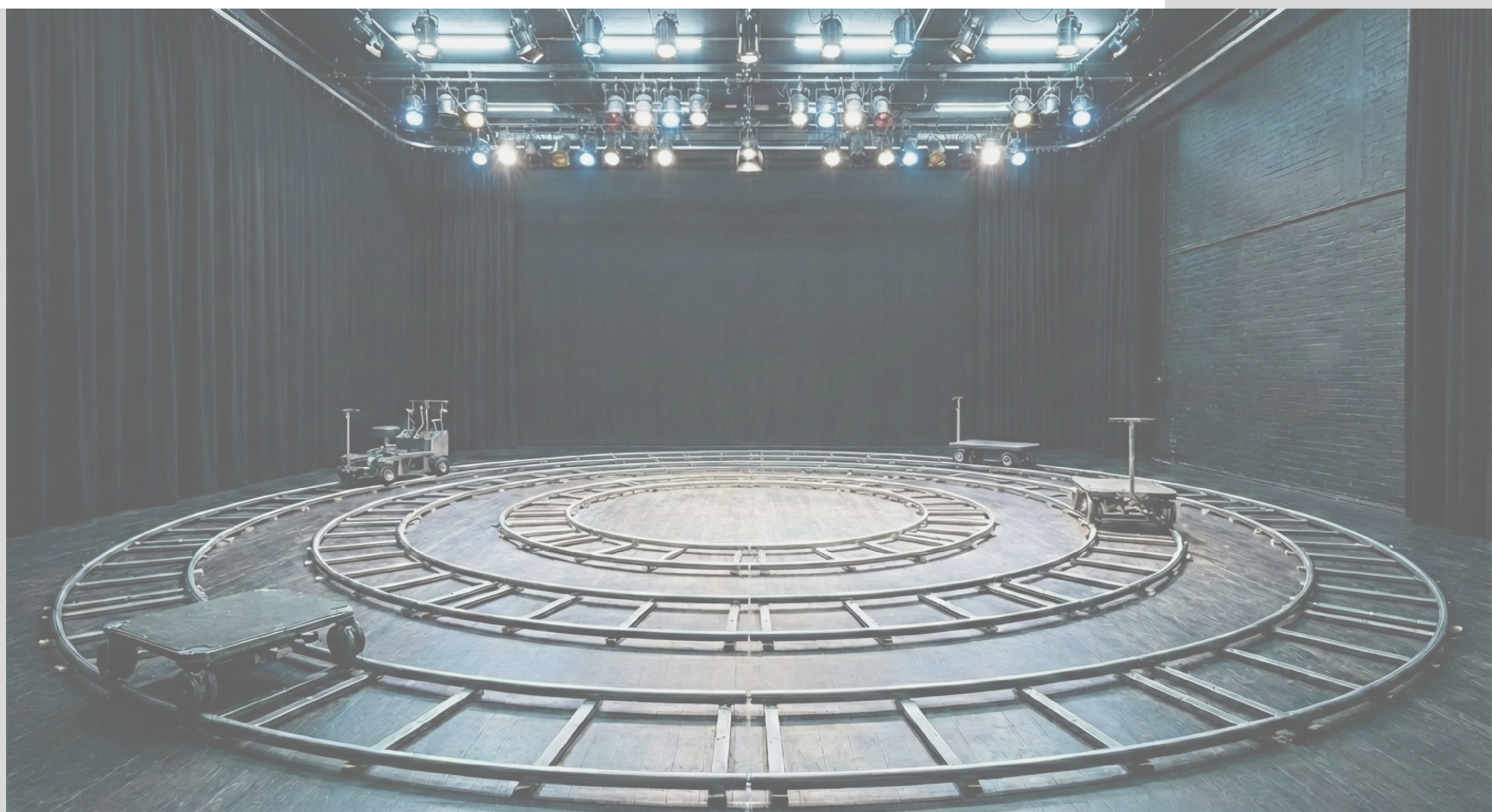


About Staging

Throughout the play, starting from an empty space, the cast itself assembles the stage setup. It consists of five concentric circles of film Dolly tracks. Sometimes the scenes are performed on the dolly, with the actors being moved on them by the rest of the cast. Other times the scenes take place next to it, and the dolly tracks are used to move objects that contribute to the spatial construction of the situations.

The setup is also used as a large musical device, generating a continuous sound installation by incorporating musical sources into each of the five dolly tracks which are combined in diverse ways, as in a big music pentagram.

Because the stage setup is continuously assembled and disassembled by the cast itself, it alludes to the slave labor to which one of the central characters of the play was subjected. And it clearly recalls the context of the film she was forced to make.



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