

## **Dimitris Papaioannou**

Born in Athens in 1964, **Dimitris Papaioannou** gained early recognition as a painter and comics artist, before his focus shifted to the performing arts, as director, choreographer, performer, and designer of sets, costumes, make up, and lighting.

He was a student of the iconic Greek painter Yannis Tsarouchis before studying at the Athens School of Fine Arts.

He formed Edafos Dance Theatre, in 1986 as an initial vehicle for his original stage productions, hybrids of physical theatre, experimental dance, and performance art.

Originating in the underground scene, the company challenged perceptions and gained an expanding number of dedicated followers. MEDEA (1993) marked the company's transition to big theatres and is considered its iconic work. The Edafos company spanned 17 years, to 2002, and set its indelible stamp on the arts scene in Greece.

Papaioannou became widely known in 2004, as the creator of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of the ATHENS 2004 Olympic Games.

Restarting in 2006, with his production '2', he found himself in the odd position of creating avant-garde works in major theatres in Athens that enjoyed record-breaking long runs, with over 100.000 tickets sold.

In 2009, he began using this platform to create theatrical experiments on a large scale: NOWHERE (2009) for the inauguration of the renovated Greek National Theatre and INSIDE (2011) for the Pallas Theater.

In 2012, stripping down his work to bare essentials, he created PRIMAL MATTER for the Athens Festival, with him back on stage after a ten-year absence.

On the same quest for simplicity, he created STILL LIFE (2014), the first work that toured extensively in Europe, South America, Asia, and Australia.

In 2015, he created the Opening Ceremony for the Baku 2015 First European Games.

Papaioannou's 25 productions range from mass spectacles with thousands of performers, to intimate pieces, and have appeared in a wide variety of venues, from his famous underground squat theater in Athens, to the ancient theatre in Epidaurus, and from Olympic stadiums to Théâtre de la Ville – Paris, and Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza.

In 2017, he created THE GREAT TAMER, his first international co-commissioned work with ten co-producers, including the Festival d'Avignon. THE GREAT TAMER toured for two and half years, through 4 continents, 23 countries and 38 cities. It was presented a total of 112 times, before over 90.000 spectators. The work was bestowed with the special award *Europe Theatre Prize* in Rome in 2017, and Papaioannou was nominated in 2019 for the Olivier award for "outstanding achievement in dance".

In 2018, Dimitris has become the first artist to create a new, full-length work for Tanztheater Wuppertal Pina Bausch. SINCE SHE premiered in May 2018 in Wuppertal (Germany) and was presented in Amsterdam, London, Athens, Paris, and Catanzaro.