

*Carlos Martínez Books without Words*

A visit to the library. The actor pokes around between book covers that get his attention, here and there he thumbs through a book, and slowly he gets lost among endless bookshelves. Suddenly the imaginative scripts and letters change into movements and action. The body and hands of the mime speak volumes. Known and unknown heroes conquer the stage. Episodes of stories appeal to the viewer's capacity to remember and recall long-forgotten moments of famous literary works. How did Sherlock Holmes solve his most intricate case? And what was the name of Don Quixote's helper? Sometimes a sequence resembles a riddle wrapped up in an enigma. And we feel the urge to rush over and have a look at the huge tome on the shelf.

Based on the scene in the library, Carlos Martínez offers his audience a mesh of narrative yarns that intertwine his own with well-known stories. The driving force of the show is the joy of discovering and experimenting. It's not always clear if the actor is just spinning a tale or diving into the story himself like in the piece "Aquarium". From the high spheres of literature, the mime takes us down to the more mundane occurrences of daily life. He clearly shows us the culinary morsels you find between the covers of a recipe book and the exquisite delights hidden inside a box of chocolates. And then he allures us into the lowlands of human nature where the bittersweet lurks as others stumble over a stone that we put in their way.

Finally he lets us participate in a very intimate discovery in front of a mirror. He lets us see that behind all the masks that we have put on during our lifetime a unique individual is concealed. As we leave the hall at the end of the show, after we have broken free from the spell of the enchanting mime, we feel like an open book ourselves from which the actor has just read.

Between the covers of a book endless treasures are hidden. So much knowledge and wisdom, and more than a few deep secrets can be revealed. However, books are made for people who can read. According to UNESCO estimates, on a global scale one in five adults cannot read nor write and 776 million people are illiterate, two-thirds of these being women. That is why the UN declared 2003 until 2012 as the Literacy Decade. The goal of this decade is to increase the literacy rate 50% by 2015 with a focus on the 35 countries with the lowest literacy rate in the world.

The show "Books without Words" links very directly with another mime show of Carlos Martínez: "Human Rights". Literacy is a Human Right, as it is a basic prerequisite for any kind of education. Educational opportunities depend on literacy. And literacy is a tool of personal empowerment and a means for social and human development.

This is the secret power and fascination of mime. When it comes to reading body language and broadening our minds through the art of mime, no one in the world is illiterate.