



# Swiss Theatre Awards 2014

## Award winners

### Index

Swiss Grand Award for Theatre/Hans Reinhart Ring 2014: Omar Porras	2
Outstanding Female Actor 2014: Nikola Weisse	3
Outstanding Female Actor 2014: Fabienne Hadorn	4
Swiss Theatre Award 2014: junges theater basel	5
Swiss Theatre Award 2014: Cristina Castrillo	6
Swiss Theatre Award 2014: Milo Rau	7
Swiss Theatre Award 2014: Beatrix Bühler/auawirleben	8
Swiss Theatre Award 2014: Massimo Furlan	9

## Swiss Grand Award for Theatre/Hans Reinhart Ring 2014: Omar Porras

Omar Porras was born in Colombia in 1963. He studied modern dance in Bogotá in 1983/84 before relocating to Paris in 1985, where he continued his studies at the Sorbonne. During this time he also attended the Jacques Lecoq international theatre school and worked with Ariane Mnouchkine. He appeared in two productions at *La Cartoucherie de Vincennes* and was very active in the street theatre scene in both France and Switzerland. In 1990, he founded the *Teatro Malandro* in Geneva “out of necessity”. After 25 years in Switzerland, Porras declared that “I am Swiss, very Swiss”. Today, the *Teatro Malandro* is one of the most prolific international touring companies in Switzerland. Its first production, “Ubu Roi” by Alfred Jarry was staged in *Théâtre du Garage*, Geneva. So too was its second production, “Der Besuch der alten Dame” (The Visit), by Friedrich Dürrenmatt, which earned Porras a *Prix romand du spectacle indépendant* in 1994 in recognition of his groundbreaking approach to theatre.

Dubbed the “conjurer of the stage”, Porras takes classic works and transforms them into a joyous, grotesque, yet harmonious fusion of masks, figures, movement, music and acting. “When it comes to my stage work, I always strive to speak a universal language”, Porras explains. To hone these language skills and to vary the use of this language in each production, the director works closely with his company, which includes his brother and head set designer, Fredy Porras. Improvisation is a key element in the development of *Teatro Malandro* productions, particularly in terms of characterisation and the use of masks. In recent times, Omar Porras has also staged productions at prestigious theatres such as the Comédie Française and has directed a number of operas, including “The Magic Flute” in 2007 at the *Grand Théâtre* in Geneva. His most recent work “The Lady from the Sea” by Henrik Ibsen was performed at the 1<sup>st</sup> Swiss Theatre Encounter in May 2014.

*Gianfranco Helbling, president of the jury*

“Omar Porras is a traveller. And like all travellers, he realises that boundaries are there to be crossed. Leaving behind the poverty of his native Columbia, Omar Porras explored the worlds of theatre and the arts, evolving from self-taught street performer to acclaimed director whose talent is regularly sought out by prestigious theatres and festivals. Yet, he has always remained true to himself and to his idea of theatre as a synthesis of multiple artistic disciplines and a truly popular form of culture. Through gestures and words he has re-written the classics, stripping away the intellectual veneer to transform theatre into a baroque and opulent feast of colours, sounds and cultures. Omar has worked in Switzerland for close to a quarter of a century and never ceases to remind us that theatre is not a luxury but a necessity. For that we shall always owe him an enormous debt of gratitude.”

## Outstanding Female Actor 2014: Nikola Weisse

Born at Belgard in present-day Poland in 1941, Nikola Weisse completed her theatrical training at the *Schauspielschule Bochum* and made her debut playing Eve in Kleist's "The Broken Jug" at the *Theater in der Josefstadt* in Vienna in 1963. She joined the *Theater Neumarkt* in Zurich in 1971, moving to Basel five years later to take up a position with the city's theatres. From 1978 onwards there followed appointments at various institutions, including the *Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz* in Berlin, the *Staatstheater Stuttgart* and the *Schauspielhaus Bochum*. Between 1994 and 2000 she worked as a freelancer, before joining the ensemble of the *Schauspielhaus Zürich* under Christoph Marthaler in 2001. Since 2006 Nikola Weisse has been back at the *Theater Basel*, also performing in Marthaler's production "Das Weisse vom Ei/Une île flottante" at the first Swiss Theatre Encounter.

Nikola Weisse's roll call of performances is as diverse as it is comprehensive. She has played Hermia in Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream", the servant Dorine in Molière's "Tartuffe", Queen Gertrude in "Hamlet", and Mrs Peachum in Brecht's "Threepenny Opera". She has worked with directors including Jürgen Flimm, Werner Düggelin and Anna Viebrock as well as creating solo programmes and directing her own productions. In film and on television she has worked with personalities including Klaus Kinski and Xavier Koller. A friend's prediction in 1971, when she took up her post at the *Theater Neumarkt*, that Zurich would become Nikola Weisse's city and Switzerland her country has, as she herself says, come true. Weisse has been appearing on the stage in Switzerland for 40 years. Yet she has no thoughts of giving up, declaring: "I'll keep on going as long as I can!"

*Gardi Hutter, jury member*

"Nikola Weisse has been there ever since my interest in theatre was born. Inconspicuously conspicuous. No airs and graces. An absolute pro. Relaxed. Intense. Surprising. Her website offers no more than the bare facts: born in Belgard, Pomerania, in what is now Poland. Since 1963, she has worked with directors who have shaped German-language theatre, directed herself, and toured in between with her solo programmes. Nikola Weisse is to theatre what Parmesan cheese is to Italian cuisine: never overpowering, yet always imparting a distinct flavour. It is nothing short of remarkable that she has had to wait so long for her well-earned honour."

[www.nikolaweisse.ch](http://www.nikolaweisse.ch)

## Outstanding Female Actor 2014: Fabienne Hadorn

Fabienne Hadorn was born in Muri, canton of Aargau, in 1975. She graduated from drama college in Zurich in 1998 and has since worked as an actor, singer, lyricist and dancer. In 2000 she teamed up with Gustavo Nanez to form the group Kolypan, whose declared aim is to “bring pleasure to ourselves and humanity at large through musical and comic stories”. Their pieces, which they create themselves, tackle big issues and bring them to the stage in a humorous way. The topics covered include everything from global politics in “Miis” and the “Vladimir Show”, a chat show for abandoned toys, to the educational trilogy for young people and adults entitled “Pussy ‘n’ Pimmel”, “Joints ‘n’ Chips” and “Rock ‘n’ Revolt”.

Fabienne Hadorn is also involved in the productions of independent theatre and dance groups as well as established institutions. She made her debut as Bambi in “Bambification” by Mass&Fieber, appeared in 400asa’s “Italienische Nacht”, and has performed in classics such as Chekhov’s “The Cherry Orchard” at the *Theater Basel* and Brecht’s “Threepenny Opera” at the *Schauspielhaus Zurich*. Once described by a critic as “a comedic wild-child of boundless entertainment value”, Hadorn reveals her versatility not just on stage but also on the big screen, appearing in movies such as Xavier Koller’s “Dällebach Kari” and Bettina Oberli’s “Lovely Louise”. She also regularly performs sketches on TV. Fabienne Hadorn received the Migros Actor’s Award in 1995 and the Oprecht Actor’s Award in 1998.

*Kaa Linder, jury member*

“When Bambi emerged from the plastic in 1998, she saw meadows. Stages full of toys.  
Then along came Vladimir and Heidi, Mother Teresa, Bonnie and Clyde.  
A deluge of theatrical revolutions ensued. Because the deer can do everything:  
Spanish        singing        Swahili        dancing  
Blindly        backwards    doing the splits    falsetto  
in pyjamas and in every dialect. She can move faster than her shadow.  
Speed is her passion, humour her blessing.  
She makes children happy and stuns adults into silence.  
No challenge is too great.  
Fabienne Hadorn  
she is and  
remains very big.”

[www.kolypan.ch](http://www.kolypan.ch)

## Swiss Theatre Award 2014: junges theater basel

Since it was set up in 1977, the *junges theater basel* has been the go-to place for up and coming dramatic talent in the Swiss city, making its mark far beyond Basel and indeed Switzerland. It stages professional performances for young people and organises drama courses for students aged between 14 and 24 at which they can put their theatrical skills to the test. Some of these aspirants go on to appear in the shows themselves, with conditions that are the same as for professional actors. Between two and four productions are put on every year, each of which is performed around 30 times in Basel. The directors include personalities who are themselves former members: Rafael Sanchez, Suna Gürler, Sebastian Nübling and others launched their artistic careers with the JTB and frequently pay return visits.

Productions take place in the JTB's own venue, a converted stable in the barracks complex in Kleinbasel. The performances in Basel are mostly followed by guest appearances in Switzerland and at international festivals in Germany, Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands. Some projects are co-productions with partners such as the Ruhrtriennale music and arts festival, the *Staatstheater Stuttgart*, the *Schauspielhaus Zurich* or the *Theater Basel*. A relatively new innovation is the dance theatre performances. In 2014, these have included "Männer", a lively investigation of male gender roles that entertained the audience attending the first Swiss Theatre Awards ceremony. Uwe Heinrich, who followed Hansjörg Betschart and Heidi Fischer, has been the theatre's director since 2000. A tireless communicator, dramaturge, integrator and theatre educator, he received the City of Basel Culture Award in 2008 in recognition of his work.

*Heinz Gubler, jury member*

"They told me to keep it short. But how am I supposed to do that, when an award goes to a theatre that for over 30 years has created captivating and touching productions at the cutting edge? I can't even go easy on the popcorn at the cinema. I just can't resist.

So here it is, short and simple:

The *junges theater basel* has received a theatre award for 2014, because what they do is not for the moment, but for eternity."

[www.jungestheaterbasel.ch](http://www.jungestheaterbasel.ch)

## Swiss Theatre Award 2014: Cristina Castrillo

Cristina Castrillo was born in Córdoba, Argentina, in 1951 and attended drama classes at the city's university of the arts in 1969/70. She was the founder of the "Libre Teatro Libre", one of the most celebrated troupes in Latin America at the time. In 1980, having left her homeland to escape the military dictatorship, she continued her work with the Teatro delle Radici in Lugano, which remains a key centre for the theatre scene in Switzerland's Italian-speaking Ticino region to this day. Since 1990, the *Scuola Laboratorio Internazionale* has brought together theatre practitioners from a wide range of linguistic and cultural backgrounds to explore aspects of drama such as personal, physical and emotional memory: the focus of Castrillo's theatre is on the actors as 'radici', or 'roots'.

In a career as actor, educator, author and director spanning more than 40 years, Cristina Castrillo has created over 30 plays, from "Tracciato a Matita" (1982) to "Amori" (2013). Her solo "Sul cuore della terra" from 1988, which she has performed at countless festivals in Europe and Latin America, was adapted for TV in Ticino in 2001. Performances of her works and workshops have taken her to 37 countries in Europe, South America, Africa and Asia. She also has publications to her name: "Attore-Autore", "I Sentieri dell'Acqua", "Trilogia dell'assenza" and "Voci peregrine" are collections of the texts and performances of the Teatro delle Radici up to 2010.

*Mathias Balzer, jury member*

"Cristina Castrillo receives the Swiss Theatre Award 2014, together with prize money of CHF 30,000, for her tireless work as an actor, director and lecturer. Originally from Argentina, she has exerted a lasting influence on the drama scene in Ticino with her *Teatro delle Radici*, which was founded in Lugano in 1980. Her politically committed works have gained her worldwide attention. Through her *Scuola Laboratorio Internazionale* project and her publications, Cristina Castrillo makes a valuable contribution to the development of an ethically oriented theatrical idiom."

[www.teatrodelleradici.net](http://www.teatrodelleradici.net)

## Swiss Theatre Award 2014: Milo Rau

Milo Rau was born in Bern in 1977 and studied German, Romance languages and sociology in Zurich, Berlin and at the Sorbonne in Paris, inter alia under Pierre Bourdieu. He has also worked as a journalist for various newspapers and magazines, since 2001 mainly for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. After completing his studies he worked as an author and director at various independent, city and state theatres in the German-speaking countries, including the *Staatsschauspiel Dresden*, the *Maxim Gorki Theater* in Berlin and the *Theaterhaus Gessnerallee* in Zurich. In 2007 he set up the International Institute of Political Murder (IIPM) in Cologne, dedicated to promoting productive exchange between academic theory and artistic practice.

His international breakthrough came in 2009, when he established the re-enactment as a political theatre format: his “Die letzten Tage der Ceaușescus” was performed at the Avignon festival. “Hate Radio”, about the genocide in Rwanda, guested at the *Radikal jung* festival for up-and-coming directors in Munich and the Berlin Theatertreffen in 2012. A performance of “Moskauer Prozesse”, which dealt in part with the trial of the punk band Pussy Riot, was raided by the authorities in the Russian capital in 2013. Rau is considered one of the most controversial theatre directors of his generation. In addition to his work for stage and film, he has also written a dissertation on the aesthetic of the re-enactment, and lectures on directing, cultural theory and social sculpture at universities and colleges of art.

*Mathieu Menghini, jury member*

“In presenting an award to Milo Rau, Switzerland is honouring an artist of international importance: one whose engagement with social issues draws on the tradition of tragic theatre while at the same time developing highly challenging new forms for it. The young Bernese director exploits the power of performance to explore the personal and collective causalities that drive our thoughts and actions, while at the same time subjecting it to a critical reappraisal.”

[www.international-institute.de](http://www.international-institute.de)

## Swiss Theatre Award 2014: Beatrix Bühler/*auawirleben*

Beatrix Bühler was born in Freiburg im Breisgau in 1948 and studied drama, philosophy and German in Vienna and Berlin. From 1981 onwards, she worked under Peter Borchardt as an assistant director, director and dramaturge at the *Stadttheater Bern*. Borchardt launched a series of guest performances entitled “Aua, wir leben!” in which Bühler was involved from 1985 onwards. 1982, then, is considered the year in which the *auawirleben* contemporary theatre festival was born. In 1988 the festival parted company with the *Stadttheater* and was continued by Borchardt and Bühler. Trix Bühler has been its artistic director since 1999, working with varying teams; currently, her co-director is Nicolette Kretz. She is also a director in her own right, regularly staging premieres of Swiss writers including Guy Krneta.

Small in scale but highly regarded, this theatre encounter in Bern has dealt with topical social issues and subjects from the outset: “no world-wide-wintention, but rather an intentional linking together of the most diverse forms of theatrical expression motivated by interest”, as the website puts it. In 1997 Bühler and Borchardt received the City of Bern’s Sisyphus Prize for the theatre festival *auawirleben* and their work in promoting contemporary drama. On 25 April 2014 Trix Bühler received the Prix Suisseculture, not least in recognition of her achievements in building bridges between the independent scene and the city theatres.

*Anja Dirks, jury member*

“Beatrix Bühler is as unique as the *auawirleben* festival that she has shaped without ever dominating it. Both have character and attitude, their enthusiasm for theatre and its palpable interest in the world unerringly infectious. Trix Bühler is director, curator, networker and talent scout, all rolled into one. She is as unprejudiced as she is partisan, and as heartfelt as she is tenacious where artists are concerned. We need more like her.”

[www.auawirleben.ch](http://www.auawirleben.ch)



## Swiss Theatre Award 2014: Massimo Furlan

Massimo Furlan was born in Lausanne in 1965, the son of Italian immigrants, and studied at the École cantonale d'art de Lausanne from 1984 to 1988. He is also a stage designer, creating sets both for himself and for others, such as the choreographer Philippe Saire and the *Théâtre en Flammes*. In 2003 he founded his own production company, *Numero 23 Prod*, and has since created projects that refuse to be classified as either theatre, dance or performance and yet are invariably imbued with subtle humour. The fact that he has never trained as a director or actor gives him, as he himself says, the freedom to play the jester on stage. In 1988 Furlan received an award from the Fondation Irène Reymond in French-speaking Switzerland followed, in 2001, by a *Prix culturel vaudois jeunes créateurs beaux-arts*.

His works mostly start out with pictures or anecdotes from his childhood, such as looking forward to the Eurovision Song Contest in the 1970s in "1973" or recalling how, as a child, he played football alone in his room while listening to the commentary on the Italian Serie A on the radio. It was this that formed the basis for Furlan's legendary football theatre: in "Numéro 10" he is the sole performer, accompanied by original sound material, re-enacting historic footballing events and minutely dissecting them in step and gesture. His 2013 production "Giacomo" on the Italian motorcycle legend Giacomo Agostini, in which he continues the tradition of the fantastical *Tableaux vivants*, was performed at the first Swiss Theatre Encounter.

*Thierry Luisier, jury member*

"The first time I saw a performance by Massimo Furlan I smiled and laughed, overwhelmed by this unexpected method of presentation. The experience I shared with the other members of the audience at that moment was akin to theatre, a film, an exhibition and a performance, all at once. Massimo Furlan touches and surprises me, sparking memories and images veiled by emotion yet entirely without nostalgia. His performances are like a mirror in which my dreams and fantasies are reflected."

[www.massimofurlan.com](http://www.massimofurlan.com)