



allen + lafarge | GALILEO IN AMERICA



GALILEO IN AMERICA

created by
Robert Allen
+
Antoinette LaFarge

Experimental Media Performance Lab
Contemporary Arts Center
University of California, Irvine
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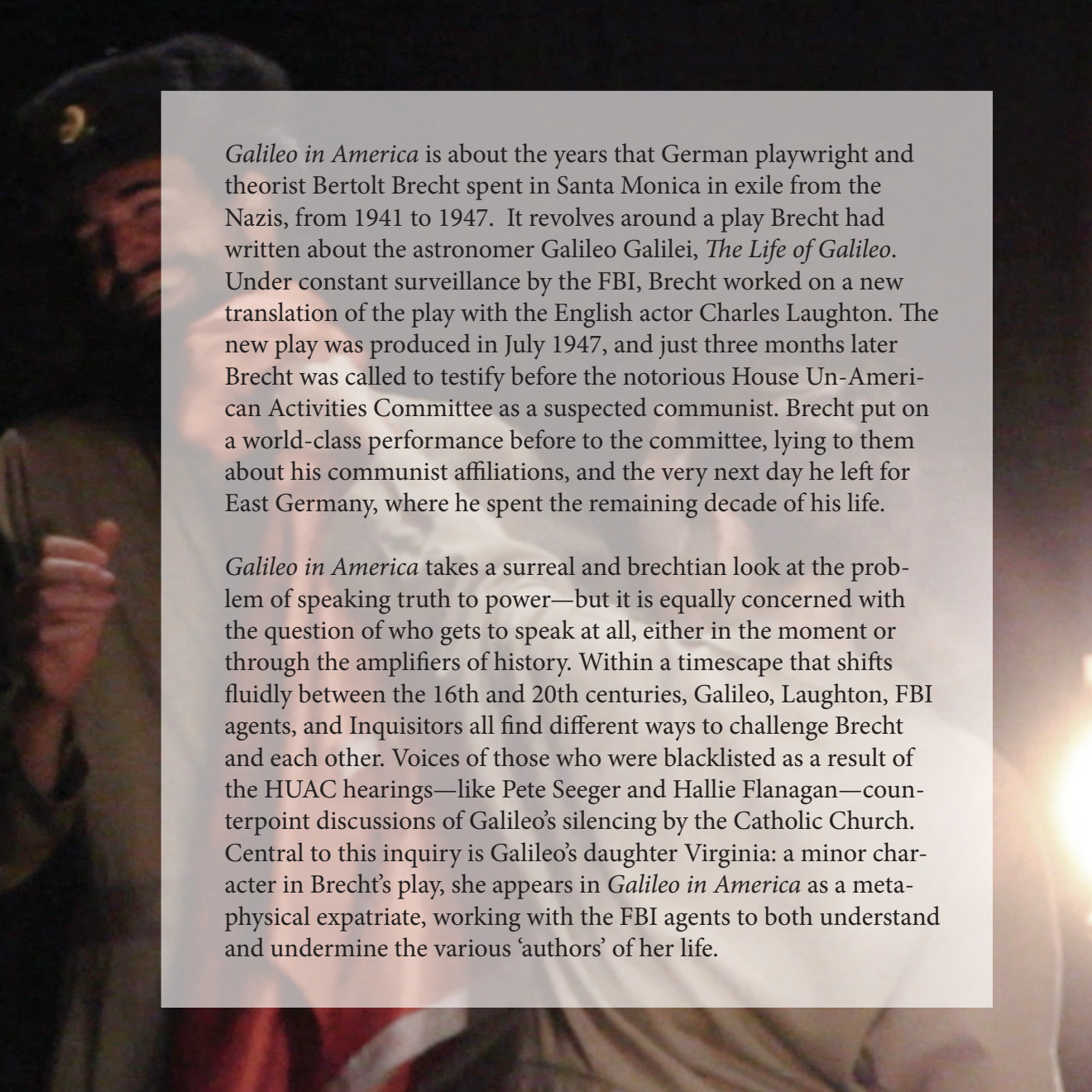
cast

Sam Breen (Bertolt Brecht)
Toussaint Jean-Louis (Galileo/Laughton)
Kristina Kahveciyan (Virginia)
Christopher Rivas (FBI Agent 1)
Tasha Tormey (Clown 1)
Jay Wallace (Clown 2, Pete Seeger)
Annie Loui (Hallie Flanagan)

creative team

Robert Allen (director)
Antoinette LaFarge (script, projections)
Philip White (music)
Ian Garrett (lighting)
Melody Brocious (costumes)

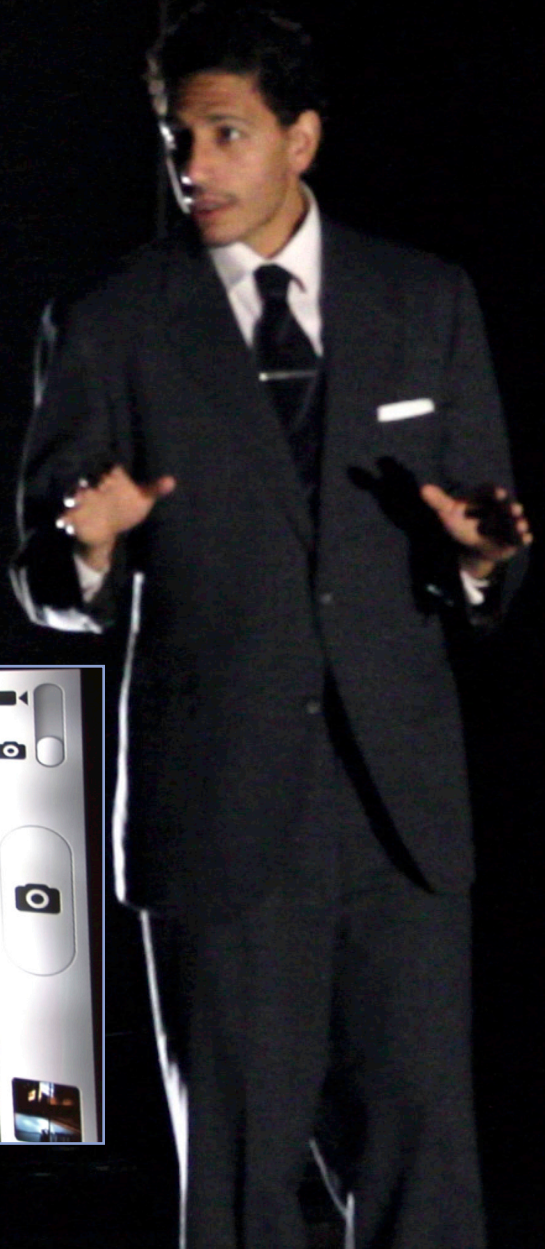
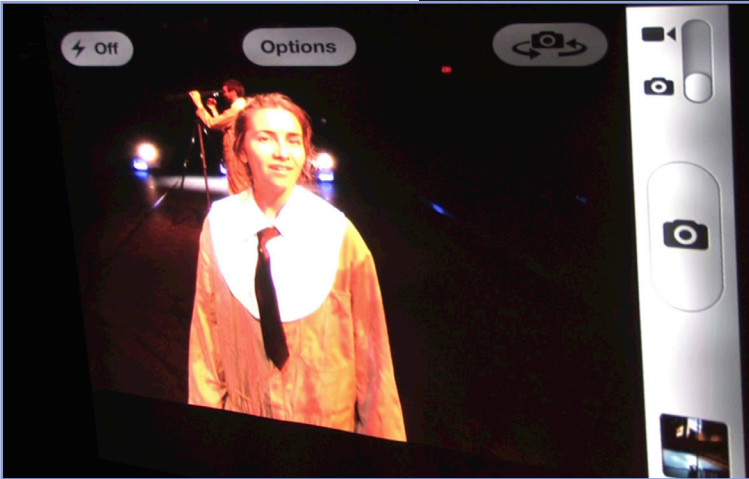




Galileo in America is about the years that German playwright and theorist Bertolt Brecht spent in Santa Monica in exile from the Nazis, from 1941 to 1947. It revolves around a play Brecht had written about the astronomer Galileo Galilei, *The Life of Galileo*. Under constant surveillance by the FBI, Brecht worked on a new translation of the play with the English actor Charles Laughton. The new play was produced in July 1947, and just three months later Brecht was called to testify before the notorious House Un-American Activities Committee as a suspected communist. Brecht put on a world-class performance before the committee, lying to them about his communist affiliations, and the very next day he left for East Germany, where he spent the remaining decade of his life.

Galileo in America takes a surreal and brechtian look at the problem of speaking truth to power—but it is equally concerned with the question of who gets to speak at all, either in the moment or through the amplifiers of history. Within a timescape that shifts fluidly between the 16th and 20th centuries, Galileo, Laughton, FBI agents, and Inquisitors all find different ways to challenge Brecht and each other. Voices of those who were blacklisted as a result of the HUAC hearings—like Pete Seeger and Hallie Flanagan—counterpoint discussions of Galileo’s silencing by the Catholic Church. Central to this inquiry is Galileo’s daughter Virginia: a minor character in Brecht’s play, she appears in *Galileo in America* as a meta-physical expatriate, working with the FBI agents to both understand and undermine the various ‘authors’ of her life.















BALLAD OF THE BLACKLIST

I'll sing you the song of a playwright named Bert,
Who swore by the red white and blue.
So the blacklist is out, it's got some of his friends—
Now what if they put Bert on too?

Down among the dead men,
Down among the dead men,
Down among the dead men let him lie.

Bert quakes and he shakes and he cooks up a plan:
He'll hire that gumshoe today
To investigate him up and examine him down
And scrutinize him every which way.

His strategy works, gets a clean bill of health—
There is nothing of note in his past.
He gets a certificate, signed and it's sealed—
They'll see he's no commie at last.

Down among the dead men,
Down among the dead men,
Down among the dead men let him lie.

A few weeks go by and Bert's life it turns strange:
There's no work to be had anymore.
He goes to his boss; what's the deal? he inquires—
Boss laughs as he shows him the door.

"That gumshoe came round, and he asked me some stuff,
And you know what I think about that?
Wherever there's smoke there's gonna be fire!
You're a commie, you're through, here's your hat!"

Down among the dead men,
Down among the dead men,
Down among the dead men let him lie.

So Bert he goes home and he writes a short note
"I love you, goodbye, gotta go."
Well, Bert's off the blacklist, he's a free man at last—
Certificate in hand and a tag on his toe.

Down among the dead men,
Down among the dead men,
Down among the dead men let him lie.





FBI AGENT

No one is exempt. Freedom is not an option. No one sees how much it takes to maintain this. Anger and tenacity. A grasp of detail. The will to strike quickly. Cold patience. Endless waiting. The devotion to an ideal unto death. We can only change reality when taught by reality. It is in the nature of principles to be eternal. "He who fights for Democracy must be able to tell the truth and not to tell the truth..." It's only the fight that changes. You only die one death. My death will be forgotten out of necessity. A man is something you shoot into. The killing is killing of another kind but it is still work like any other work.





CHIEF INQUISITOR: Please state your name and occupation.

HALLIE FLANAGAN: Hallie Flanagan, director of the Federal Theater Project.

CHIEF INQUISITOR: I want to quote from your article, "A Theater is Born", in the Theatre Arts Monthly edition of November 1931. "Unlike any art form existing in America today, the workers' theaters intend to remake the social structure without the help of money—and this ambition invests their undertaking with a certain Marlowesque madness." You are quoting from this Marlowe. Is he a Communist?

HALLIE FLANAGAN: I was quoting from Christopher Marlowe.

CHIEF INQUISITOR: Tell us who this Marlowe is, so we can get the proper reference.

HALLIE FLANAGAN: Put in the record that he was the greatest dramatist in the period immediately preceding Shakespeare.

CHIEF INQUISITOR: Of course, we had what some people call Communists back in the days of the Greek theater.

HALLIE FLANAGAN: Quite true.

CHIEF INQUISITOR: And I believe Mr. Euripides was guilty of teaching class consciousness also, wasn't he?

HALLIE FLANAGAN: I believe that was alleged against all of the Greek dramatists.

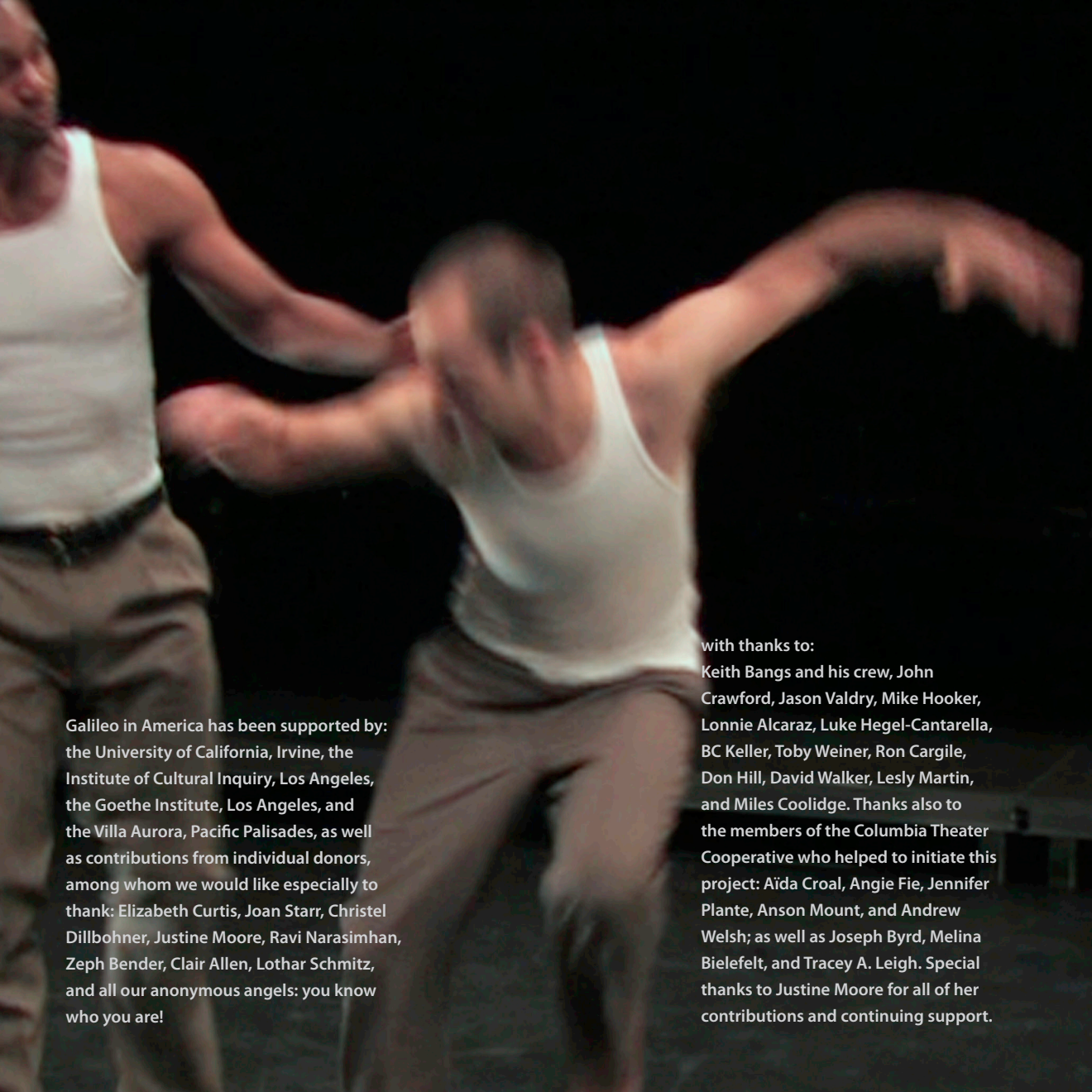
CHIEF INQUISITOR: So we cannot say when it began.









A photograph of two men in white tank tops and brown pants performing a physical exercise or dance move against a black background. The man on the left is standing upright, while the man on the right is leaning forward with his arms extended. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting their muscles and the texture of their clothing.

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