



A crazy director's cut

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Locals at Borotalpada, a small Santhal village nine hours by train from Kolkata, are set for an intimate encounter with a 'crazy, strange stage director'! This is how Jean-Frederic Chevalliar of Trimukhi Platform introduced Mexican stage director Hector Bourges to the villagers who, passionate about night-long art and theatre festivals, were drawn to participate in Bourges' experimental production, *I Saw the World Resting Within Myself*, as its cast. The production will be staged as part of the fifth edition of the Night of Theatre festival at Borotalpada. *HT City* caught up with Bourges soon after he landed in Kolkata, on his first visit to the country, soon after which he left for the village. Excerpts:

What made you say yes to a theatre project in a remote village where your cast does not understand your language and vice versa, among other challenges?

Many years ago, I was fascinated by the literature and certain ways of thinking about post-colonialism in India. I have studied political science and the works of political theorist Partha Chatterjee are my texts. More specifically, the idea of Night of Theatre, coming from my old friend

A DIFFERENT ACT

Trimukhi Platform is organising the fifth edition of the Night of Theatre festival in Borotalpada in association with Modern Academy of Continuing Education. This is the first edition of the festival in India, the first four having been held in Mexico. The festival will be held at a Cultural Centre that Trimukhi Platform is building in the village, with voluntary work from villagers. "We are trying to discover new ways of doing theatre, as the village has a night-long theatre festival culture. We are trying to bring people from the periphery to the centre," says Chevalliar.

(Chevalliar), allows the possibility to realise my idea of theatre as an experiment in conviviality. The exercise of translation is also a central part of my work in theatre.

What does your collective Teatro Ojo work on?

Teatro Ojo means 'eye theatre'. It's a group of interdisciplinary practises, with architects, writers, photographers, musicians, and theatre persons. For the last five years, we have worked with paradigmatic buildings in the city of Mexico — paradigmatic in the political sense — of historical importance to understand modernity in Mexico; buildings that have been abandoned. We are

working with people who live, worked or remember the buildings or the symbols of these buildings. Our works are experiments of social imagination, more than theatre. This Culture Centre in Borotalpada (being constructed by Trimukhi) is also an experiment of social imagination (which I will use to build the production).

Do you see construction at Borotalpada in contrast to the crumbling down or abandonment of architectural works in Mexico?

This in itself is an experiment in conviviality. This is a new centre, good for the community, where I will work with their promises, expectation, dreams about this new space, walls, ceilings, windows, new distribution of knowledge...

What's *I Saw the World...* about?

I Saw the World is a line in a poem by Octavio Paz, the Mexican writer who was the ambassador to India, a Nobel Prize winner, and for me a very great poet. It is a gamble for me, because I don't know the space in the village. I want to work with the action of construction, where local construction is used. I will work with the sensual memory of materials. One is the memory of hands that mould the walls and the house. The memory of every object is the expression of desires. How will I do it? That is a mystery to me now.