

## **Ubú Rey [Ubu the King], 1990**

The group staged its first show at Parakultural in 1990, presenting a puppet show version – and a bloody one at that – of *Ubú Rey*, by French playwright Alfred Jarry. For their debut, the group planned to sever their aesthetic ties with the classical puppetry – popular and aimed at children – they had performed in the Puppetry Group at the Teatro San Martín, under the direction of Ariel Bufano. Instead, they set out to invent a ‘theatre of objects’.

The stage design (inspired by the works of Max Ernst) and sketches of the dolls were created by the members of the group themselves. On the stage, with a table covered with a long black cloth, the performers remained hidden by dark hoods, gloves and robes, though they used an unconventional technique: they directly manipulated the dolls, shattering any ‘realistic’ illusion by revealing how they were being held. The anti-rationalist structure, the madness, the nonsense of Jarry’s text was personified by these anthropomorphic dolls, with the addition of ‘peripheral’ details, such as a Papa Ubu with a pointed hat and, instead of legs, a wheel that allowed him to move around. This marked the group’s first departure from traditional puppetry.