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# LENI'S LAST LAMENT

Written by Gil Kofman; Directed by Richard Caliban

The Paradise Factory | 64 E 4th St, New York, NY 10003

May 29th - June 14th



How do we remember artists who did things that disgust us? The *Cosby Show* does not have a second life in syndication even though the show was outstanding. Kate Winslet and other artists have made public apologies for working with Woody Allen and Roman Polanski. Theatre companies across the country were shamed out of producing the plays of Israel Horovitz. All the while, we watch films from the Weinstein Company without a second thought. Somehow we are able to separate the money-man from what he produced, but not the artists from what they create.

So, how should the world look at Leni Riefenstahl? Riefenstahl made propaganda films for Hitler. When she directed *Tiefland*, she pulled Santi and Roma people from work camps to be extras in the film. When filming completed, they were sent to Auschwitz. For decades after the war, she would deny any knowledge of the atrocities. She won over 50 libel cases brought against those who accused her of being complicit with the Nazis. Yet, evidence to the contrary was found in her archives.

Jodie Markell dazzles us as Leni in Gil Kofman's satirical romp through the revisionist history that was Riefenstahl's life. Part play, part cabaret, part fever dream, the production splices together yesterday and today. With fascism on the rise globally, we are reminded how a well packaged message can mask the

horrors at the heart of the matter. While we know we should not find Leni amusing, there is no denying it. Markell is electric.

Helmed by Richard Caliban, the production moves beautifully through time and space. Joey Moro's light and projection is some of the best use of the medium I've seen. Setting the tone, musician Spiff Weingand shares the stage with Markell both underscoring and accompanying. And even with everyone bringing their A-game, I am still torn about enjoying the show. There's no denying the effect her films had.

But isn't that the intended result? Leni is holding a mirror up to us so we can see how easy it is to appear comfortable with the world in its current form? How will we be judged by the generations that follow? Will we be remembered for the art or for the artist? And which is more important?

Click [HERE](#) for tickets.

Review by Nicole Jesson.

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**NEW PERSPECTIVES** was founded in 1991 as a multi-racial ensemble dedicated to using theatre as an agent for positive social change. Our mission is to 1) develop and present new plays and playwrights, particularly women and people of color, 2) present classic plays through a new lens that restores women & BIPOC artists' existence and contributions to the Canon, 3) present theatre to under-served audiences--especially young people and communities in need--to build life skills and promote participation in our society.

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