

LA ECONOMÍA ARGENTINA



LA ECONOMÍA ARGENTINA por Gerardo Naumann

La Economía Argentina is a musical theatre production and, at the same time, an SME. The SME has an owner: the director of the play, who wants to stop being an artist and become an entrepreneur. The actors in the play are the SME's employees. Or is it the other way around? Are the SME's employees the actors in the play?

There is a game of mirrors. In the SME, everything that happens to an SME in the context of the Argentine economy happens: the owner promotes his product with the play, looks for a partner he thinks might be sitting in the audience, publicizes investment opportunities and offers jobs to the spectators. In the play, everything that happens to an SME in the context of the Argentine economy happens: a company starts up, there is inflation, crisis, layoffs, a strike, negotiations, giant soaps chasing employees, and songs, lots of songs. And on stage, soaps are made, from the mixing of raw materials to the packaging. We see them pass by—tame—on the assembly line in front of us. At the end of the performance, they are offered for sale at affordable prices. They are branded *La Economía Argentina*.

The Product

We will manufacture soaps in three different scents and colours: lime lemon, lavender, and forest herbs. The practical reasons: a) the product is popular, inexpensive, and easily transportable at the end of the function; b) the raw material can be obtained without difficulty anywhere in the world; c) the process is simple, the machines are rustic and quiet.

Conceptually, we are interested in the tension that arises when we consider that the play —company offers a product for ‘washing your hands’ branded *La Economía Argentina*. On the other hand, we are curious about the conflict between soap—a basic necessity—made during a play—a non-essential product or one of vague necessity.



The Scenes

As in a game of distorting mirrors, reality and fiction become blurred in the play. On the reality side, there is a company called *La Economía Argentina*. In plain language, its owner, the director of the play, tells us that one day, tired of not having any money and rehearsing a play about the Argentinian economy, he came up with the idea of using the actors' time to—in addition to doing theatre—make something on stage during the play and sell it after the performance. This is how this SME was born. In his various appearances, the owner tells us what stage the company is at today, what its objectives are, what its needs are and what it can offer the market. Do we see an artist tired of his art in search of change? One capable of anything to attract attention in the art market, but destined to fail within the real Argentinian economy? A flourishing entrepreneur?

On the fictional side, there is a play, also called *La Economía Argentina*. Its owner, in the fiction, is an actress. There is also a production manager and a group of workers. Using the cut-up technique (more on this in 'The writing method'), the people on stage recount the story from the moment



the SME is born until the third day of operation, including two nights. During that time, the play reproduces everything that could happen in a company of that size, in the context of the current Argentine economy. There are more *realistic situations*: the owner's insecurity about opening the company, the meetings with the production manager and how he manages to convince her, the job interviews with a group of workers, the first day of business with its inaugural speech, the conversations during the lunch break, the love that blossoms and dies next to the coffee machine, the improvement of the facilities, the accident at work and the intervention of the union. And there are more *fantastic situations*: the fear of the 'ghost of inflation', the silent intervention of 'the invisible hand of the market', the persecution of employees by a giant bar of soap which calls itself 'Overproduction', the story of a bar of soap called 'Consumption', from 'the bowels of the machine' to the supermarket shelf, and its subsequent slow dissolution in a consumer's bathroom. The play itself seems to doubt whether what it tells is dream or reality. Perhaps—as in all plays—it is a mixture of both.

The Cast



The **owner** of the company in reality: the director of the play, a man in his 50s.



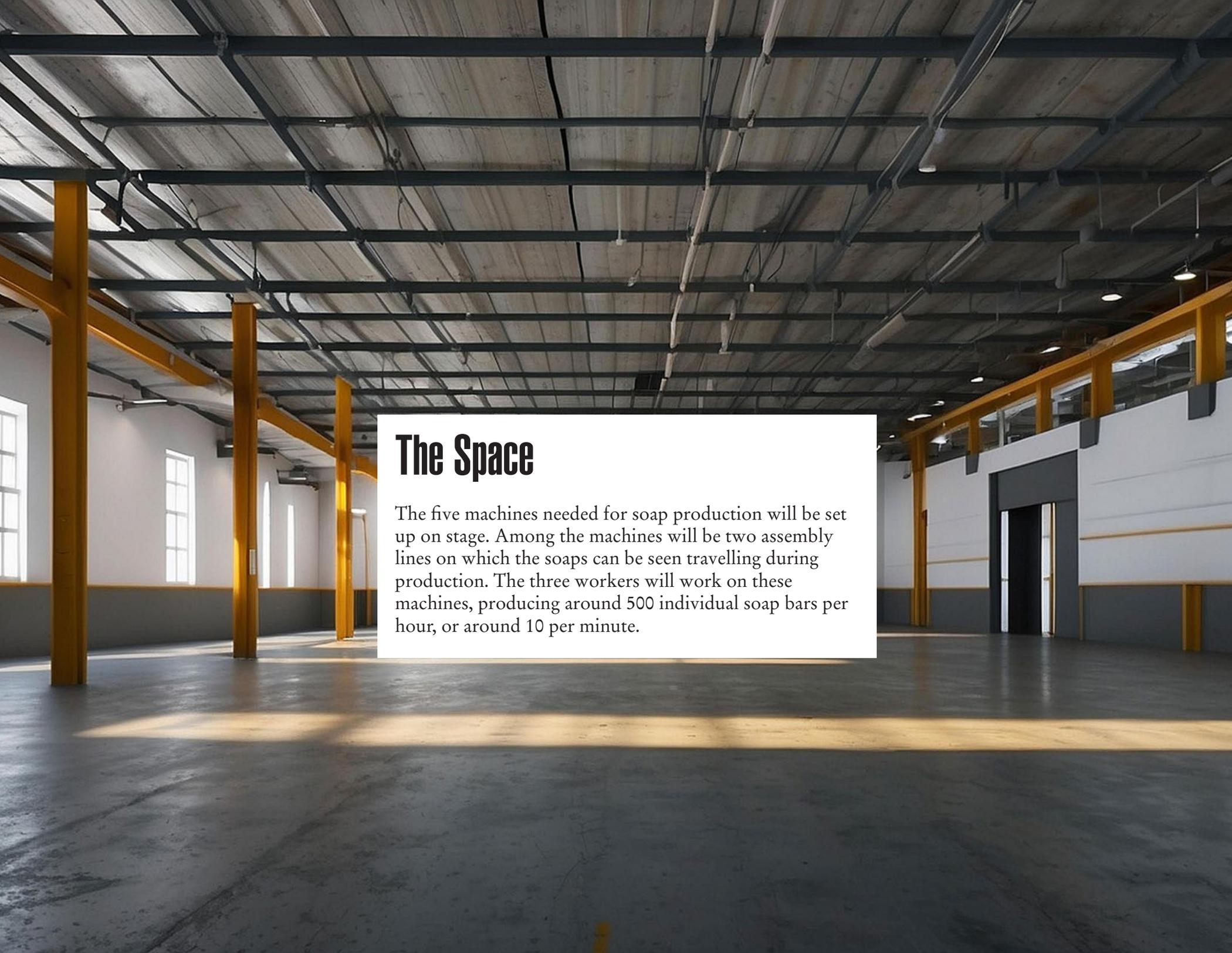
The **owner** of the company in fiction: an actress in her 50s



The **production manager** in fiction: a 45-year-old actor.

The **workers** in fiction: three people between the ages of 40 and 50 with no acting experience, but with experience as workers.





The Space

The five machines needed for soap production will be set up on stage. Among the machines will be two assembly lines on which the soaps can be seen travelling during production. The three workers will work on these machines, producing around 500 individual soap bars per hour, or around 10 per minute.

The mixer
mixes the raw
material—paraffin—
with the flavourings
and colourings.

The plodder
generates the
continuous
bar of soap.

The automatic cutter
cuts the continuous
bar into equal parts.

An assembly line will
transport the soaps
bearing La Economía
Argentina brand.

The die cutter
gives the soap its
final shape and
imprints the brand
name in low relief.



Music

In addition to the rhythm of the machines, there will be many moments of singing. These will be solos, duets or choral pieces performed in different formations. We will keep the melody of selected popular songs, adapting the lyrics to the work. We will not limit ourselves to particular musical genres. We will use ‘what we like to hear’. From a tango by Carlos Gardel to a ballad by Elton John, including Rosalía, Violeta Parra, Charly García, etc. The people on stage sing very well. For example, Jesus, who currently works as a bricklayer, brought a Gardel tango to the casting. He sang it [like this](#). [Here](#), during a rehearsal with Mariana, one of the workers.



Movement

Factory work contains the choreography of work. The play expands on this, creating a continuous movement that only stops at certain moments—do machines also rest? There is everything: from making a sandwich on a giant baguette using the assembly line to transport the slices of cheese, salami and tomato, to a choreography performed with the microwave, which dances better than anyone. We witness a rhythmic dialogue between people and machines.



The company and its Businesses Network

Once the company finishes its tour and performances in Buenos Aires, it will set up shop in a workshop space to continue production. It will need to expand its product range—will it make shampoo, solid shampoo, creams? Other items? Its products will be marketed through an extensive network of health food shops, perfume and cosmetics stores, art galleries, souvenir shops and online sales.

A percentage of the profits from *La Economía Argentina* will go to a fund that will select a development proposal for another SME once a year through a public competition. In this way, *La Economía Argentina* will help grow different small and medium-sized business projects that will form a network over the years. The people linked to this network—workers, employees, owners—will be invited to join a theatre group with which we will produce new plays.



CV's

Gerardo Naumann, Director

Born in 1974 in Buenos Aires. He graduated with a degree in Communication Sciences (U.B.A) and took undergraduate courses in Philosophy and Literature (U.B.A). He is a professor of Art and Social Policy (UNSAM). His plays include *Cosas*, *Emily*, *Una obra útil*, *La fábrica*, *La función*, *Trabajadores saliendo de la fábrica*, *El carterista*, *Los trabajos improductivos*, and *El lugar del hecho*. His plays have premiered at festivals in Buenos Aires, Portugal, Ireland, Germany, Switzerland, Poland, the Netherlands, India, France, and Singapore. In cinema, he directed the short films *Novios del campo* (Country Couples) and *El trabajo industrial* (Industrial Work) and the feature film *Ricardo Bär* (co-directed with Nele Wohlatz). His films have been screened at more than 20 international festivals. He has taught Film Scriptwriting (U.B.A) and Theatre Direction at the Goethe Universität (Frankfurt, Germany) and the Hochschule für Gestaltung (Karlsruhe, Germany). He was a final diploma tutor at the Akademi for Scenekunst, University of Dramatic Art (Norway) and a tutor for theatre projects at the MAKE Theatreforum Ireland (Ireland). He gave a seminar on directing at the Dublin Festival called *Cities as Text*. He received grants from the Proa Foundation, the Tupa Foundation and the Theaterforum Berlin, where he participated in a seminar on 'political theatre'.

Alejandro Ros, Designer, Set Designer.

Born in Tucumán in 1964. He graduated from the University of Buenos Aires with a degree in graphic design, in the first graduating class. He has designed for *Página/12* (*Radar*, *Las/12*, *Soy*, *Página/30*), Goethe-Institut, Malba, CCK, Morocco, Soda Stereo, Daniel Melero, Juana Molina, Fito Páez, Spinetta, Babasónicos, Illya Kuryaki, Gustavo Cerati, Leo García, Divididos, Liliana Herrero, Bersuit, Auténticos Decadentes, Los Fabulosos Cadillacs, Jaime Roos, Vicentico, Tan Biónica, Sandra Mihanovich, Pedro Aznar, Bajo Fondo Tango Club, Julieta Venegas, Wos, Conociendo Rusia, Juanse, Miranda!, Mercedes Sosa, among others. He designed books for Nicola Costantino, Maitena, Cambre, Jacoby, Mondongo. Some awards: Platinum Konex for graphic design (2002). Seven Gardel awards for album covers. Three Grammys for album covers. He has collaborated with Roberto Jacoby. With Pablo Schanton, he has created works investigating the use of aromas in art: *Cerca* (performance biennial), *Perfumancia* (Arco Madrid, CCK). Since 2000, she has organised the Costume Ball. She has made videos for Daniel Melero, Cerati, Fito Paez, Miranda!, Juana Molina.

Luciana Acuña, Dancer, Choreographer.

She was the director of Grupo Krapp and currently runs her own company. Some of her works include: Mendiolaza (Grupo Krapp /2002), The diptych: Adonde van los muertos (Grupo Krapp /2010), Por el dinero (Acuña/Moguillansky 2014), El futuro de los Hipopótamos (Grupo Krapp /2018), Rubios (2019), Requiem, Grupo Krapp's latest film (2021), Hielo Negro (Black Ice) (Acuña/Biasotto 2022), La edad media (The Middle Ages) (film Acuña/Moguillansky 2022), Efectos especiales (Special Effects) (Acuña/Moguillansky 2023), Bailarinas incendiadas (Burning Dancers) (2023). Participated in festivals such as American Dance Festival (USA), Groningen Festival (Netherlands), Zürcher Theater Spektakels (Switzerland), Rio Cena Contemporánea (Brazil), Festival de Oriente (Venezuela), Latino Cultural Festival (USA), Get Lost (Belgium-Netherlands), Santiago a Mil (Chile), FIBA (Buenos Aires), Coming soon: KVS Festival (Brussels), Festival de Cadiz (Spain) and film festivals such as: Bafici (Buenos Aires), Cannes (France/2019), Berlinale (Germany/2022). She is a professor of choreographic composition at the National University of the Arts in Buenos Aires.

Sofia Medici, Producer.

With a degree in Communication Sciences (UBA) and a postgraduate degree in Cultural Management from Pompeu Fabra University, Sofia has been producing theatre shows, performances, installations, cycles and festivals for more than 20 years, both independently and for institutions. Since 2007, she has been the artistic producer and tour manager for Lola Arias' projects. She has also worked with other international artists such as Stefan Kaegi and Ant Hampton. She was the producer of the Ciudades Paralelas Festival, INmotion Festival (Barcelona), Espacios Revelados Festival (Changing Places), Café Cultura de la Nación Cycle, Panorama Sur Festival, Grec Festival and Buenos Aires International Festival. In 2020, together with Luz Algranti, she founded Ninja, a production and creation platform. She currently also teaches in the Performing Arts degree programme at UNSAM.