MONTCLAIR, N.J. — The Chilean-born artist and director Alejandro Jodorowsky is most famous nowadays for “El Topo” and “The Holy Mountain,” a pair of mind-melding, mystico-absurdist westerns that lit up midnight screenings worldwide in the early 1970s. Mr. Jodorowsky is a singular character, to say the least, but a few years before making those films, in the mid-1960s, he more than met his match in Leonora Carrington, a painter, sculptor and writer who had hobnobbed with the likes of Max Ernst.

Their first encounter kicks off the Double Edge company’s trippy show “Leonora and Alejandro: La Maga y el Maestro,” part of Montclair State University’s Peak Performances series. Jodorowsky (Carlos Uriona) is here depicted as an apprentice on a quest, looking like a hybrid of psychedelic magician and glam-rock shaman in platform boots and a long black robe — an outfit not unlike the one he wore in “The Holy Mountain.” He is nervous entering Carrington’s home in Mexico City, where they both...
lived at the time. “That morning I washed my hands three times more than you normally do,” he says. “I could not decide which was more courageous: to stay here or to leave without saying anything.”

We are about five minutes into the show, and this is as close to a traditional narrative as it will ever get. From then on, trying to make sense of the story would be like trying to find documentary naturalism in Salvador Dalí’s melting clocks.

Conceived and directed by Stacy Klein, “Leonora and Alejandro” draws from its two subjects’ art and writings, including their stories, novels and memoirs. But the border between reality and dream, conscious and unconscious was porous for them — indeed, that ambiguity is one of the foundational elements of Surrealism, a style with which they are commonly associated. And so it is hard to judge the reliability of the memoir “The Spiritual Journey of Alejandro Jodorowsky,” from which the meet-cute details come from. Did Carrington (the sensational Jennifer Johnson) really draw blood from her thigh, pour it in a cup and gave to it Jodorowsky to drink? It’s best to just go with the flow.

The show, which runs just over an hour, has a narrower focus than the previous Double Edge production in Montclair, “The Grand Parade (of the 20th Century),” but it still feels like a peek into an expansive world — a hallucinatory, symbol-heavy tour of Carrington’s fervid mind. Ms. Klein and Ms. Johnson are particularly adept at rendering her dry wit and her instinctively feminist impulse to create her own spiritual and aesthetic universe, with many references to Carrington’s paintings and texts, including a bird (Amanda Miller) as a familiar, a hyena (Travis Coe) pulled from the story “The Debutante,” and lots of eggs.

Shunning theatrical conventions like plotlines, the show works on its own kooky terms. To fully enjoy it, it is best to follow Carrington’s advice to her visitor: “You’re trying to intellectualize something desperately, and you are wasting your time,” she tells him. “Use your feelings, there is no other way, no alternative way.”