

COLLECTIF **XY**

LE PAS DU MONDE*

* The Pace Of the World

Creation May 2025



As acrobats, we shape mountains with our bodies to shore up this world whose fate we are sealing, chart rivers and swaying forests with our modulating movements

Following the guiding inspiration of the startling murmururation in Möbius and nourished by the in situ creativity of performing in the public arena with Les Voyages, we have now chosen to immerse ourselves in metamorphoses of the living world.....and to surrender our human-centred visions to it.

To seize the ebb and flow of Time that erodes mountain peaks just as it crumbles our vertebrae... that writes History and is inexorable, creates the newborn baby and makes the tree decay...

Le Pas du Monde is in a perpetual state of flux, from heart-stopping thrills to the most subtle emotion, from the slightest of movements to the tumultuous tumbling of bodies. All linked, all connected.

This creation is a humble attempt at reconciling the living world with its temporality.

METAMORPHOSES

Whether you are observing it or feeling it, the living world is undergoing constant metamorphosis. A series of confluences and concertation, Time is the mastermind behind the transformations that we see: the different layers of the earth that tell the story of a thousand years, how long an oak tree needs to reach full maturity, a few hundred of our insignificant human years that, in the end, and in the grand scheme of things, boil down to just a few intense but ephemeral hours. Inspired by the talk given by d'Anne Teresa de Keersmaecker at the Collège de France in 2019⁽¹⁾, we ask ourselves the same question: how can we use our -acrobatic- language to reach our world and the cosmos? And thus: how do you collectively succeed in producing a creative work at a time when nihilism is so very unbridled?

A wildly ambitious idea that prompted us to question our relationship with the living world. Our initial instincts make us shy away from facing these issues head-on or from adopting an approach that may be too wishful or too scientific, but rather to question the living world from the standpoint of Time: how long is the life of a mountain, a forest, a river? How do we depict it, how do we portray it within the scale of a human life?

How do we use our bodies on stage to transcend these different timeframes, to make them coexist on the same plane, to blur our senses, measure our own relativity, and thus reflect on our relationship with the world from different perspectives?

⁽¹⁾ Incarner une abstraction, Conference at the collège de France (10 April 2019). Actes sud



THE POWER

So, everything is in constant movement, all the time.

This is what we feel, especially as acrobats. Whether we're supporting or flying, we are incessantly adjusting to the persistent movement that our art demands. We are inventing the blueprint of our own performance area, pushing the very boundaries of our capabilities. Using the perimeter that we have mapped out, we strive to maintain a fragile balance within the sequences of our teetering moves.

Our art makes us measure the relationship with Time with acuity: the lightning speed of a somersault, a column of bodies that slowly rises and falls, taking flight, being held in suspension.... Today, our bodies bear the traces and the memory of passing Time. We, more than anyone, are aware of its relentlessness.

Of this fleeting Time, we purport not to outwit it, but to play with it and glorify it through a sequence of metamorphoses that we have purposely designed to be at times, subtle and tenuous, at others, monumental and imposing, but all the while revealing relativity and fragility. The Power of Fragility.⁽¹⁾ This conviction is fundamental to each of our creations.

We are thus going to experiment with these metamorphoses in our acrobatics: building, transforming, de-constructing our human columns. To seamlessly go from one move to another like the imperceptible, slow erosion of a mountain peak or, in contrast, to hurl ourselves into the sudden shapeshifting of our human pyramids where pebble-bodies tumble like scree on a mountainside.

We envisage using an exploration of the physical to serve a performance storyline with two distinct themes. Firstly, the theme of the greatness of Nature around us, harnessing our bodies to sculpt landscapes, inspired by their unique rhythms.

Secondly, the theme of the human scale of life, from the very first cry in coming into the world, to the last breath when leaving it, with all the intense emotions, doubts, upheavals, and endurances in between.

What links, confrontations, similarities, or synergies will these two temporalities be able to forge together? How will they blend, one with the other? A woman who dances with a pyramidshaped mountain, an ocean of bodies and the crash of a wave, a forest of human columns swaying in the wind....

The imagination can run riot, and we will weave the threads of this play together like a living work of art, performing for the joy and complicity of the audience.

OF FRAGILITY



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LANDSCAPES

REIMAGINED

Representing Time in movement is tantamount to hurtling headlong into it and, through this tectonic shock, our scenery will be born.

Landscapes that are made of and moved by bodies.

Landscapes made of light and matter.

Landscapes undergoing change.

Take the few steps down into the garden and quite simply contemplate “walking into the landscape” like the artist Cézanne. (1)

This will be a major focus for our acrobatic experimentation: to bring to life these landscapes that we will shape with our bodies. This kind of undertaking, one that stretches our physical capabilities, should enable us to make possible our desire to become a bird, a wolf, grass, a mountain, or ocean.....

We imagine ourselves crossing different strata of earth. Like going from one season to another. Are there leaves? Is there clay? Soil? To bring the colours and organic matter of the outside world right to the stage, so that soil and bodies resemble each other and sometimes, even merge. To thus lose our bodies in matter.

Giving such depth implies thinking about our designs on several planes, rather like a tree that stands out against the blue of the mountain range behind it. Light will play a vital role in this performance and will underpin the interpretation of each scene, which we see as a deep dive into powerful and unique worlds.

However, we are just talking about a suggestion here.

(...) o simply copy how the world looks on the outside would not produce anything real. To get into reality, each of us must take an intimate look at our own universe. To find those details that contribute to the reality that we sense beneath the surface of things.

⁽¹⁾ Red roofs against the blue sea, Marie-Hélène Lafon (Flammarion, 2023)

⁽²⁾ Cited in Michel Mesnil, Kurosawa (Seghers, 1973)

HUMAN BEINGS

From now on, it's a question of organising the passage of our unique bodies through Space and Time. Women and men are the shattered fragments of the one and same story (1) - we are clearly subject to the changes in our environment and to the weight of Time.

This is why we want to portray the human lifetime as a lightning bolt on stage, in stark contrast to our human-construct landscapes, which unfold to other rhythms.

We will focus, therefore, on successive transformations spanning from our childhood bodies to the days of old age. It will not be a question of imitating them but rather, using them as inspiration for their distinct rhythm and energy:

- To seek in the innocent vibrancy of childhood a sense of hurtling along as we ourselves run, and perform care-free, weightless acrobatics.
- To seek in the hesitant steps of an old woman the deftness of our touchdowns and lifts.

We draw on the wide variety of physicality of our acrobats in this performance, bringing together, as ever in XY Cie, catchers and flyers, both women and men, of all shapes, sizes, and ages.

We want to find different physical expressions of walking or running, to tell a story about the world or of those affected by it: the fluid tread within the current, or the courageous step against the tide. Or how to scale a mountain and race back down the other side.... Experience the sensation of moving forwards and accelerating, but also remaining mindful of shy, holding-back, constant doubts and the paralysis when we hold our breath, and all seems to stand still. We will be "playing" in the literal sense of the word and bringing these unique bodies and these human landscapes into direct contact with each other within different timescales: tipping over a mountain with just one finger, watching with admiration as a forest grows, being caught up in a

wave without even going underwater.... We need to get to grips with interactions and interdependencies and make them our own metamorphoses. Life is a rhythmic flux, it pulses within us, beyond us and through us.(2) This is what we'd like to be seen and experienced.

Our relationship to the world and to ourselves has seemingly unravelled and we are experiencing a profound crisis in how we relate to living things. During this hour-long performance, we would like to reforge these bonds and put this relationship back at the very centre of everything. Intensify the care we use in our art and share it. At the very heart of our reflexions as a troupe, the question about "living together" resonates strongly, as does the on-going quest to understand "what makes a human, human."



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A LIGHTNING BOLT

(1) and (3) Wajdi Mouawad. Forward of Fragiles, Ed. Textuel (2022)

(2) Alain Damasio. Postface de Manières d'être vivant, Enquêtes sur la vie à travers nous (Actes Sud, 2020)



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LES PAS DU MONDE

SOUNDS, LIGHTS AND TEXTURES

We have chosen to explore our voices in this performance. From the very first cry through song and the spoken word, to the last breath. Because suggestion no longer suffices it seems, we dare to use words as a manifesto, songs as a balm, unless it's the other way around.

There will be three singers, three voices that will intermingle with our pack of acrobats.

Virginie Benoist, Julie Calbete and Cyril Héritier will be sharing their remarkable savoir-faire, positively bringing a tingle to your flesh and lips. We're hoping for a rich dialogue between the

wild atmospheres we will be creating and these voices as they rise upwards from the stage.

Fanny Soriano, director of the Livetivore company will be working closely with us.

« I like not wanting to explain everything, not being able to explain everything: to observe the body in movement as if we were observing Nature itself, ever-changing and fleeting; to observe the artistes and to try to understand the very essence of their physical virtuosity, but also of their humanity in all its uniqueness and universality. A kind of condensed humanity if you like. I am fascinated by the incredible ability that bodies have, to metamorphose, to shift from an organic state to a social body. By creating situations where movement, sound and set design all work together, I invite the audience on a journey into their subconscious, speaking directly to their bodies rather than to their heads. »

These sensitive words from Fanny Soriano speak clearly of our shared curiosity. Her perception of our landscape-bodies and the humanity we are hoping to make palpable, will be invaluable.

To follow our metamorphoses as closely as possible, we want both sound and light to literally sculpt these landscapes. We will be working with Éric Soyer because of his highly staged approach to lighting and his ability to create depth and contrast to our body-made structures and in equal measure to our lightning-fast acrobatics. We believe strongly in this partnership, that will we imagine at times push us to seek alternative solutions in our art, to dare us to use acrobatics with lighting conditions that have virtually never been seen within our disciplines, producing images and scenes that will be almost dreamlike or exceptionally dramatic.

Equally ambitious, we have asked the musician and sound designer Jack McWeeny (Compagnie Le Doux Supplce, Gisèle Vienne) to create a device that blends the voices, sounds and breaths we produce as we move on stage, and to design a musical accompaniment based on sounds from Nature: the creaking of a glacier, the wind in the trees, the clattering of scree.....

We are seeking a rich exchange between these untamed landscapes and our voices as they rise up from the stage.

Finally, we are leaving the choice of costumes and textures entirely open for the moment, with initial trials to be carried out in the lab during the first half of 2024. We imagine ourselves crossing different strata of earth. Like going from one season to another, marking the passage of time. How can our bodies be linked together to create mass and volume? A magma of fabric? Something draped?

How do we « schematize » our bodies to create these landscapes? Do we have outfits covered in hair or moss? We have also discussed the idea of nudity, to get as close as possible to the Nature we are seeking to embody.

OUR CO-PRODUCTIONS

PARTNERSHIP

Coproductions

Le Phénix scène nationale Valenciennes - Pôle européen de création / Chaillot - Théâtre national de la Danse, Paris / Maison de la danse, Lyon / Le Volcan, Scène nationale du Havre / EPPGHV, Parc de La Villette, Paris / Tandem, Scène nationale (Hippodrome de Douai) / Théâtres de Compiègne / Maison de la Culture d'Amiens, Scène nationale / La Comédie de Clermont, Scène nationale, Clermont-Ferrand / Château Rouge, Scène conventionnée, Annemasse / Scène nationale Carré-Colonnes, Saint-Médard-en-Jalles / Théâtre du Beauvaisis - Scène nationale, Beauvais / Le Bateau Feu, Scène nationale Dunkerque / Scène nationale Albi - Tarn / Espace 1789 de Saint-Ouen, scène conventionnée pour la danse / Festival Roma Europa (It.)

Residencies

Le Phénix scène nationale Valenciennes - Pôle européen de création / Tandem, Scène nationale (Hippodrome de Douai) / Le Bateau Feu, Scène nationale Dunkerque / Théâtre du Beauvaisis, Scène nationale, Beauvais / Le Volcan, Scène nationale du Havre / La Brèche - Cherbourg, Pôle national cirque en Normandie / Circa, Pôle national cirque, Auch

Acknowledgements

Ville de Puget-Théniers / La Carrière, école des arts du cirque Saint-Barthélemy d'Anjou.

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XY receive the support of Ministère de la Culture in France / DRAC Hauts-de-France according to the multi-year convention.

Since 2017, the company is associated for all his projects with the Phénix scène nationale Valenciennes - Pôle européen de création.

Since 2021, XY is associated too with Chaillot - Théâtre national de la Danse, Paris and since 2024 with Théâtre du Beauvaisis, Scène nationale - Beauvais..

The Company XY is supported since 2016 by Fondation BNP-Paribas.

OUR CO-PRODUCTIONS COLLABORATIONS



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A co-creation with the participation of

Airelle Caen, Alejo Bianchi, Alice Noël, Amaia Valle, Antonio Terrones y Hernandez, Camille de Truchis, Clémence Gilbert, Consuelo Burgos, Cyril Héritier, Denis Dulon, Diego Ruiz Moreno, Etienne Revenu, Guillaume Sendron, Florian Sontowski, Hamza Benlabied, Julie Calbete, Kritonas Anastasopoulos, Mikis Matsakis, Oded Avinathan, Raimon Mato Rabassedas, Raphaela Abreu Olivo de Almeida, Virginie Benoist.

Production directors

Antoine Billaud et Johanna Autran assisted by Alicia Gicquel

Production

Collectif XY

Working together with

Musical and vocal creation: Virginie Benoist

Sound design: Jack McWeeny

Light design: Éric Soyer

Costume designer: Céline Perrigon, assisted by Ophélie Parmentier

Artistic collaborations: Julie Calbete, Fanny Soriano, Maja Zimmerlin

Support in dramaturgy: Olivia Burton

Laboratories 23/24

- 9 & 10 october : Puget-Théniers ⁽⁰⁶⁾
- 11 > 15 march : Puget-Théniers ⁽⁰⁶⁾

In-residence creations 24/25

- 27 august > 6 september : Circa, Pôle national cirque, Auch ⁽³²⁾
- 16 > 27 september : La Brèche-Cherbourg, Pôle national cirque Normandie ⁽⁵⁰⁾
- 18 > 28 october : Le Volcan, Scène nationale du Havre ⁽⁷⁶⁾
- 20 > 31 january : Théâtre du Beauvaisis, Scène nationale - Beauvais ⁽⁶⁰⁾
- 11 > 21 february : Le Bateau Feu, Scène nationale de Dunkerque ⁽⁵⁹⁾
- 7 > 18 april : TANDEM Scène nationale, Hippodrome de Douai ⁽⁵⁹⁾
- 28 april > 13 may : Phénix scène nationale Valenciennes ⁽⁵⁹⁾

Premieres 25

- 14 > 17 may : Phénix scène nationale Valenciennes ⁽⁵⁹⁾
- 20 > 22 may : TANDEM Scène nationale, Hippodrome de Douais ⁽⁵⁹⁾
- 26 & 27 may : Maison de la Culture d'Amiens, Scène nationale, Amiens ⁽⁸⁰⁾

Tour 25/26

- 2 & 3 october : Le Volcan, Scène nationale du Havre ⁽⁷⁶⁾
- 10 & 11 october : Le Bateau Feu, Scène nationale de Dunkerque ⁽⁵⁹⁾
- 14 & 15 october : Espace Jean Legendre, Les Théâtres de Compiègne ⁽⁶⁰⁾
- 31 october > 23 november : EPPGHV, La Villette - Paris ⁽⁷⁵⁾
- 13 & 14 january : Le Théâtre de Saint-Nazaire ⁽⁴⁴⁾
- 16 & 17 january : Scène nationale Carré-Colonnes, Saint-Médard-en-Jalles ⁽³³⁾
- 20 & 21 january : Scène nationale d'ALBI - Tarn ⁽⁸¹⁾
- 27 > 29 january : La Coursive, Scène nationale La Rochelle ⁽¹⁷⁾
- 3 & 4 february : Théâtre du Beauvaisis, Scène nationale - Beauvais ⁽⁶⁰⁾
- 24 february : Auditorium, Opéra de Dijon ⁽²¹⁾
- 27 & 28 february : Château Rouge - Scène conventionnée, Annemasse ⁽⁷⁴⁾
- 5 > 7 march : La Comédie de Clermont-Ferrand, Scène nationale ⁽⁶³⁾
- 10 > 14 march : Bonlieu, Scène nationale Annecy ⁽⁷⁴⁾
- 21 > 28 march : Maison de la Danse, Lyon ⁽⁶⁹⁾

Simply step into the landscape...



Paul Cézanne, La Montagne Sainte-Victoire, vue de Bibémus, vers 1897

CONTACT DETAILS

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