

ĐƯỜNG BA PHƯƠNG CÀNG TỈNH

SAIGON

The major challenge facing our company is to know which narratives to present in order to describe the world we live in. We wish to consider the capacity of theater to be porous to the issues that worry and traumatize us, those things that keep us awake or otherwise and, finally, that which consoles us. We consider that we have this responsibility more than ever in today's world, as well as the duty to free our imaginations in order to represent the world as it affects us in all its reality and mystery.

It would be heartbreaking to leave abandoned lands, taboo subjects and unmentionable subjects of silence behind us, and by doing so building barriers between ourselves and others.

To do this we have decided to take a closer look at our country, or, more precisely, its people, and to hear the stories of France that deserve to be told beyond our borders. We are the fruit of the history of others and our suffering is also that of others. This is why we feel an urgent need, a need that viscerally motivates our SAIGON project, to present artists from far away so that we may build the project together and tell a story that is common to us all.

Les Hommes Approximatifs



Photography : Jean-Louis Fernandez

MARIE-ANTOINETTE'S RESTAURANT

Marie-Antoinette is Vietnamese, she arrived in France in 1954.

The sign reads SAIGON, just like it does outside the 979 restaurants which have this name in the whole of France. It is located at 176, Avenue de Choisy, 75013, Paris.

The restaurant can seat up to 40 patrons.

Marie-Antoinette is the manager, but she doesn't own the place.

People go there to speak Vietnamese.

And also to sing love songs. Love songs that lament broken hearts and sweethearts left behind. On certain evenings of the week, Marie-Antoinette herself takes hold of the microphone and sings. She removes her cook's outfit, her large apron and slips into her most elegant dress. She sings in Vietnamese, and sometimes in French accompanied by someone on the keyboard.

The kitchen was renovated to comply with new hygiene standards in 2002. The man from Health & Safety had indicated that the tiles and work surfaces didn't comply with European standards.

Marie-Antoinette had to take out a loan over 15 years to make everything "legal" as she says.

The walls were covered in a floral wallpaper when she took over, which Marie-Antoinette found very beautiful.

She added some artificial flowers and neon lights.

She set up the ancestor altar next to the entrance and often changed the fruit.

As she couldn't find any jack fruit, she replaced them with tangerines.

There was also a photo of her grand-parents on their wedding day. One day, among the offerings, she put a Twix.

On the counter, there is a little plastic cat with a mechanical arm that waves hello. Marie-Antoinette bought it specifically with her restaurant in mind. She knew it was Japanese, but over here, Vietnam or Japan, it was all the same for some of the French.

There was a Virgin Mary hung on the wall lit up alternately by little green or red lights. Most Vietnamese were Buddhist, but Marie-Antoinette was part of the 10 % Catholic minority who every weekend prayed at Our Lady's Cathedral in the heart of Saigon.

She is convinced that she is related to the TV presenter, Thierry Ardisson.



STORY IDEAS

1.

LINH & EDOUARD

MAJESTIC

The Consulate's wife was hosting a final goodbye soir ee at the Majestic.

The French had been summoned to leave the country.

For them, it represented the downfall of Saigon.

The buffet groaned under the weight of all the food, there were three orchestras playing in different parts of the hotel. The guests wore their most elegant clothes and their most precious jewels that the following day they would take with them into first class cabins on the ships that would sail them back to a country some of them hardly knew.

It was a decadent party, even the waiters were drunk. This whole chic crowd who put a glamorous touch on Saigon's high society was losing the city and losing face. Fugitives, hugely wealthy businessmen, wives of top civil servants could all be found here, side by side in the same place. Status didn't matter anymore. Only one thing mattered: spending extravagant amounts of money one last time in this city that was too hot and muggy and no longer belonged to them. In among the crowd there were also some Vietnamese about whom it was said between two flutes of champagne: they're not going to frighten us just because the Nhaqu es (Vietnamese bumpkin) have become Viet-Minh...

Some of these Vietnamese who managed to obtain French citizenship will leave on one of the big ships that arrive in the port of Saigon each month; the others, who collaborated with the French, will undoubtedly be in danger, on this land which is at last theirs. None of them know yet that another conflict will soon erupt.

Saigon will stop being Saigon in 1975 and become H  Chi Minh-City.

Edouard, is there that night. He is a member of the French Armed Forces stationed in South Vietnam. He has been in Indo-China for the last ten years. Since the defeat at Dien Bien Phu he knows that his time here is nearly up. He will have to go back to France where he has no-one to go back to. Vietnam has become his country, especially as he lives with a wonderful Vietnamese girl called Linh who comes from a rich Saigonese family. He lives at her place, eats at her place. He's even begun to learn some words in Vietnamese. Edouard is madly in love with this woman, his world revolves around her, the dearest creature he has ever met. Through her gentleness and his love for her, he has managed to integrate her family even though he doesn't speak their language. But now he will have to leave. For two years he has put off this decision to leave, but now, as a former soldier, Edouard is in real danger. He makes a first attempt to obtain French nationality for Linh, but to succeed they will have to marry. And quickly. He promises Linh that they will have a real wedding once they have settled in France. His efforts to obtain French nationality for his in-laws are, however, in vain. Linh has to leave, alone.

She remembers the very first time Edouard walked into their home, into the room where her father had invited him to drink tea. She remembers immediately falling in love with that face. She had never seen anyone so handsome. Linh chooses to leave her country and go to France.



When I show someone this photo of a child wearing a white jacket they say that the vest means he sings for foreigners because that kind of jacket is worn by foreigners. The child sings foreign songs and he is at the centre of everyone's attention. He represents the meeting between two cultures, but is he even aware of it ?

2. LINH

DISCUSSION WITH AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL PSYCHIATRIST, MR SHARP

You met Linh when she was 35 years old. How well did she speak French at that time?

Linh didn't have any trace of an accent and spoke a very polished and precise French, always adapted to the situation she was discussing. Never a word out of place, no mistakes ever.

This language that she worked so hard to master no doubt helped her fight against the depression and anxiety that threatened to overwhelm her when she arrived in France. What she didn't suspect, though, was that as she gained fluency in French, little by little she was drifting away from Vietnamese. She hid herself away when she spoke to her family on the phone. Perhaps she began to feel ashamed of her mother tongue. In any case, she no longer wished to speak it in public.

What do we leave behind when we stop speaking a language?

The effects of losing the use of one's mother tongue, insofar as it represents a separation without any end in sight, are similar to those associated with grief. In situations of exile, the suddenness of the rift causes a world to vanish and we can observe corporal symptoms (somatization disorders, invalidity) and other irrational responses that the body is in sway to. I'm thinking particularly about something Linh confided to me. She said that a pain would suddenly convulse through her body if by chance she heard someone talking Vietnamese in a supermarket.

Like a form of nostalgia for the language?

One day Linh said this to me: for a long time I thought that French people born in France, who had always been immersed in this language, did not actually have a mother tongue, because they had never had to leave France, they'd never lost anything, they were never faced with the obligation of having to speak a foreign language.

If we go back to its etymological roots, the word exile in old French is associated with other words or notions such as "leap outside of", "banish", "ravage" and "ruin". It also refers to the obligation to reside outside a particular place or far from a person we may long to be with. Yes, there is a nostalgia for a world that to all intent and purposes has been lost. But beyond that, the nostalgia for one's mother tongue reinforces the idea that this is the only language in which one can really know things, express him or herself fully and be fully understood.

What are the reasons that can explain why Linh never taught her son Vietnamese?

For reasons of integration, principally. The integration of her children was an obsession. It was inconceivable for her that they would go through the same difficulties as she had. Vietnamese had become a sort of forbidden language for her. She never spoke or soothed her children to sleep in Vietnamese or even in a mix of French and Vietnamese. This language was abandoned, left in abeyance and the French she spoke to her son became a language of dis-integration.

During one particular session, she called Antoine "my French son".



3. MAI & HAO

Letter 6

Love of my life.

We are getting ready to celebrate New Year.

This year there will be someone missing at every table we set.

You are not here. It's hard for me to breathe.

Nga doesn't go out anymore.

I only have your absence to cry for, but that's already so much! I don't know how I could weep for more than one without my heart breaking.

I don't have any space left for another sadness than the one you cause me.

Not a single night or a single day goes by without me seeing your face.

And yet the sun continues to rise and set each day.

In my happier moments, I tell myself that you are safe and well. You go for walks in Paris, progress in your studies and each day you spare a thought for me. I can't understand why you didn't take the photo I gave you. Why not?

In the darkest moments, I think that you have already forgotten me or that you are courting other women. French women must be beautiful and rich and tall. I would rather you were dead.

Sorry.

Don't die. In France people are not murdered.

Write to me.

Do you dream of me?

Do you dream of Vietnam?

Do you sleep well?

I'm still working in the restaurant. I no longer look after Mrs Gauthier's children. They're emptying their big house. Rumour has it that her husband's factory was set on fire one night. They're getting out of Saigon. But I think they're happy to be going home to their country. I've often seen her looking worried. I think that woman is unhappy.

My darling, how I miss you.

I will love you for the rest of my days.



Letter 72

Why don't you write to me?

Why this silence?

I feel humiliated.

I feel ugly.

I'm just a little Vietnamese woman.

I hate white women. I hate French women. I hate France.

You love them and by loving them you have betrayed me.

And by not loving me you have betrayed your country.

You have abandoned me.

I can't sleep.

I don't love you anymore.



4. ANTOINE & LINH

24 nov. 2006 at 20:08,

Antoine Courtault <antoinguyen1981@yahoo.fr> wrote:

Mum,

could you write to me, in ten points (you could start a new line after each point) what you think you have experienced that I haven't;
don't give it too much thought, please
we'll talk about it later

Your son, who loves you

Sent from my iPhone

24 nov. 2006 at 21:29,

Linh Nguyen <linh.guyenvan@orange.fr> wrote:

???

24 nov. 2006 at 21:32,

Antoine Courtault <antoinguyen1981@yahoo.fr> wrote:

Don't think.

please

Sent from my iPhone

24 nov. 2006 at 21:40,

Linh Nguyen <linh.guyenvan@orange.fr> wrote :

But what's the point?

24 nov. 2006 at 21:42,

Antoine Courtault <antoinguyen1981@yahoo.fr> wrote:

It's for me, mum. don't worry.

it's just something to think about. it might help me. help us.

Sent from my iPhone

24 nov. 2006 at 22:29,

Linh Nguyen <linh.guyenvan@orange.fr> wrote:

Help us in what way???

A letter has arrived for you here, from the bank.

your current account is overdrawn. shall I wire you some money?

Le 24 nov. 2006 à 22:34,

Antoine Courtault <antoinguyen1981@yahoo.fr> wrote:

example:

1 : I've never experienced exile

2 : I don't know what it's like to have to suddenly leave

24 nov. 2006 at 23:39,

Antoine Courtault <antoinenguyen1981@yahoo.fr> wrote:
Mum, WILL YOU PLEASE ANSWER MY QUESTION !!!!!

Stop running through the worst-case scenarios!!
Do you have my online access code?
Sent from my iPhone

24 nov. 2006 at 23:50,

Linh Nguyen <linh.guyenvan@orange.fr> wrote:
18
three times
PS: we didn't leave from one day to the next.
We had 1 month to leave France

24 nov. 2006 at 23:54,

Antoine Courtault <antoinenguyen1981@yahoo.fr> wrote:
leave FRANCE???????
Sent from my iPhone

24 nov. 2006 at 23:56,

Linh Nguyen <linh.guyenvan@orange.fr> wrote:
Sorry, I meant Vietnam.

24 nov. 2006 at 23:59,

Antoine Courtault <antoinenguyen1981@yahoo.fr> wrote:
and so...

Sent from my iPhone

24 nov. 2006 at 23:59,

Linh Nguyen <linh.guyenvan@orange.fr> wrote:
Darling, I don't understand what you want me to say...

24 nov. 2006 at 23:59,

Antoine Courtault <antoinenguyen1981@yahoo.fr> wrote:
Ok
I'm going to write a list and
you tell me what you think.
Sent from my iPhone

28 nov. 2006 at 00:43,

Antoine Courtault <antoinenguyen1981@yahoo.fr> wrote:

The boat leaves without us knowing when we'll be coming back
we knew that we would never come back.

The pain of a mother who doesn't know when she'll see her son
again *yes*

This song is her childhood and she came here with the French.

Maybe she learned it at school ?

I can see her now, a little girl in a state school uniform, surrounded by all her classmates, and they are all singing.

The teacher is a white woman, as was she whom they called the 'old Donnadiou', Maguerite's mother, and the teacher is conducting the singing with a long wooden ruler.

The children are called Janine, Dominique, Madeleine and Simone and they are little French girls, the descendents of the Gauls and Edith Piaf.

Did Piaf know that her songs were being sung by children in the colonies? Did she imagine that they would continue to be sung a long time after her death in faraway countries where, moreover, the French language is no longer anything but a language that is sung ?

S. is singing on this ship.

I am face to face with the little girl from Saigon who is wearing a polka-dot dress, and this instant, this ordinary and instinctive moment, is the revenge of the little girl from Saigon.

It is the revenge of the little native French girl. Here she is, on the earth of her ancestors, and after exile, war and the dictatorship. She is here.

Sing in this language, a language that was handed down to her own children.

This French language that she no longer shares with the people of Vietnam when they sing.

*She is here,
she is beautiful,*

*in her eyes can be seen an indefinable joy,
and her regard kisses Saigon, her native city.
Ho Chi Minh City.*

But for her it is Saigon.

Sài Gon.

Saigon, this evening, is the name of her hurt.



4. HAO

DISCUSSION 1

- What's the literal definition of *Viet Kieu*?
- It means foreign Vietnamese.
- So it designates those who left?

- Yes, all the Vietnamese who left.
- Everyone, without exception?
- Everyone.
- But, look, I understand that you are *Viet Kieu* because you've been away from Vietnam for 60 years, but take Anh for example?
- What about Anh?
- Anh is leaving to do a project with us in France for two years.
- And so what?

- Does she also become a foreign Vietnamese?
- All those who leave Vietnam become foreigners to Vietnam.

DISCUSSION 2

- Sorry to keep coming back to this, but I still don't really understand.
- What?
- Isn't it strange to say about someone that they are both Vietnamese and a foreigner?
- Why?
- They're in a fix! They are neither foreign nor Vietnamese!
- No, you've got it the wrong way round. They will always be Vietnamese and always foreigners.

DISCUSSION 3

- How long was it since you last came to Hô Chi Minh-City?
- I hadn't been back to Saigon for 50 years.

DISCUSSION 4

- Sorry, but I can't get this *Viet Kieu* thing out of my head...
- Yeah, I see that.
- Is that the official term?
- No idea.
- For us, in France, someone who goes to live in a foreign country while keeping his French nationality is called an "expatrié", an expatriate or expat.
- Alright.
- But I feel that that's not it, it's not the right translation of the word.
- No.
- If a French guy goes to live abroad and becomes, let's say, Swedish, there's no word to qualify him. Except to say that he's Swedish.

- But have the French ever left France in massive numbers?
- No.
- Has France ever seen a massive number of these same French people coming back to live in their country of birth?

CAROLINE GUIELA NGUYEN INTERVIEW

By Francis Cossu for the 71^e Festival d'Avignon

How did you work on the fictional elements in SAIGON?

Caroline Guiela Nguyen : It's a long process. In 2008, after directing several classic texts, I realised that some stories and people were missing from theatre stages. I wanted our shows to carry the noise of the world and I thought some voices were missing. So in 2009 I founded the company Les Hommes Approximatifs with Alice Duchange (scenographer), Benjamin Moreau (costume designer), Jérémie Papin (lighting designer), Mariette Navarro (writer and playwright), Antoine Richard (sound designer), and Claire Calvi (artistic collaborator). Since then, our preoccupation has been to figure out which are the stories that tell us about who we are today, and over all who are the people who have to inhabit our stage.

For SAIGON, we had to cross our own borders, and go looking for faces all the way to Vietnam. Over the past two years, we gathered testimonies. Periods of immersion in Ho Chi Minh City and in the 13th arrondissement in Paris allowed us to hear again stories, words, and languages that had become inaccessible to me, like my grandmother's limited French, or my uncle's pidgin. I was then able to write a book I gave the actors on the first day of rehearsals. That book isn't the text of the show, because it was the actors themselves who informed me about their own language, their own way of speaking. For instance, Hiep speaks French, but it isn't her native language. She uses it differently from Pierric, for whom French has always been there. That's the reason why I want to keep writing with the actors, based on what they say. I can't run ahead of them. This book is therefore a sensitive landscape that was the basis for the stage writing I did with the actors during rehearsals. It's in a way the subtext to SAIGON. It's a dream that amplified and expanded during rehearsals.

You've said that the city also influenced your project...

Whenever I left Vietnam after spending some time in residence there, I told myself: "Don't forget Saigon." Up until now in my work, it was the actors who told me where the story should go. Working on a show in a foreign city made me realise that the city itself could also give me functional indications.

Ho Chi Minh City is full of stories of departure, of exile, it is full of people who are missing in their own families, and it is that absence that creates fiction. Paradoxically, the more the memories we have of someone else are in danger, the more we feel the need to remember. That's how we create lies, myths. There's always someone to mourn, and our show is about finding this journey of tears again. Melodrama is omnipresent in the daily lives of the Vietnamese. Karaoke and its popular songs marked by exile, love, the importance of flowers... There is in Ho Chi Minh City a permanent presence of nostalgia and pain, probably because it is a wounded city with its own ghost, Saigon.

.../...

But Saigon is a dead city, full of stories and myths. When we talk about Saigon, what are we talking about? France? Vietnam? Martin Sheen at the beginning of *Apocalypse Now*? The 235 restaurants that bear that same name in France?

It's not only about the Vietnamese, or about the French who left for Indochina, it's about our collective memory. Saigon belongs to all of us.

Saigon is a city, a colonial imprint, a story at once French and foreign. Where would you place the play, given how much its title means to you?

Colonisation is something we care about, we work on its history, its big and small events, the context of its development, but we do that among other things, because if we didn't Vietnam would be what, nothing more than a former colony? I'm the daughter of Viet kieu¹ but SAIGON isn't a show to settle the score with France. It would be at once too easy and too general.

If you insist, I'd say that the colonial question, if treated like a "topic" about which the show has to take position, would become most harmless. I don't want speeches about people, I want the people themselves, their faces, their landscapes, their bodies, their languages. People are the reason why I start writing, like the first time I realised my mother speaks a version of Vietnamese that no longer exists because she was forced to leave her country when she was 11 and speaks the language of a stateless person.

Or like that man from Indochina who insults his Vietnamese wife because the times, in spite of the great love he feels for her, authorise him to think that there are superior beings on one side and indigenous people on the other. That's where colonisation is, within the very hearts of those human beings. And so if it makes sense to tackle the colonial past of France through individual destinies, sometimes broken, sometimes split, sometimes displaced and forever exiled, it only does so as a way to make people hear the insistent rumble of the forgotten and the invisible. That's how I want to respond to that question as an artist: by inviting Vietnamese people, Frenchmen and –women, and Frenchmen and –women of Vietnamese descent to write our show with us so that people can see them, hear them, and for our world to broaden thanks to their presence.

Interview conducted by Francis Cossu and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach

* *Viet kieu*: literally "Overseas Vietnamese," a word with no official legal definition used by the communist regime to designate the Vietnamese living outside Vietnam, foreign nationals of Vietnamese descent, and Vietnamese refugees living abroad who haven't yet become citizens of their host countries.

Cast at the creation in 2017

Caroline Arrouas	My Chau Nguyen thi
Dan Artus	Pierric Plathier
Adeline Guillot	Thi Thanh Thu Tô
Thi Trúc Ly Huynh	Anh Tran Nghia
Hoàng Sơn Lê	Hiep Tran Nghia
Phú Hậu Nguyễn	

Text

Caroline Guiela Nguyen with the whole artistic team

Director

Caroline Guiela Nguyen

Artistic Collaborator Claire Calvi

Set Design Alice Duchange

Costume Design Benjamin Moreau

Light Design Jérémie Papin

Sound Design Antoine Richard

Original music composed by Teddy Gauliat-Pitois

Dramaturgy and overtitles

Jérémie Scheidler et Manon Worms

Dramaturgy trainee Hugo Soubise

Translation

Duc Duy Nguyen et Thi Thanh Thu Tô

Production Managers

Jérôme Masson, Serge Ugolini

Lighting Operator Sébastien Lemarchand

Sound design assistant and sound operator

Orane Duclos

Session Musicians

Nina Millet and Mathieu Schmaltz (violin)

Aurélie Métivier (viola)

Lydie Lefebvre (cello)

Teddy Gauliat-Pitois (piano)

Pierric Plathier (guitar)

Costume-makers

Aude Bretagne, Dominique Fournier, Frédérique Payot, Pascale Barré

Backstage hands, costume dressers Barbara Mornet, Nathalie Sanson

Wigs and make-up Christelle Paillard

Administration, production

Juliette Kramer and Elsa Hummel-Zongo

Duration : 3h05 (including interval)

Creation on La Comédie de Valence for the festival Ambivalence(s)
and at 71st Festival d'Avignon / Gymnase du Lycée Aubanel

Production

Les Hommes Approximatifs, La Comédie de Valence, CDN Drôme-Ardèche

Coproducers

Odéon, théâtre de l'Europe

MC2: Grenoble

Festival d'Avignon

CDN de Normandie-Rouen

Théâtre national de Strasbourg

Centre dramatique national de Tours – Théâtre Olympia

Comédie de Reims-CDN

Théâtre National de Bretagne - Centre européen théâtral et chorégraphique

Théâtre du Beauvaisis, Scène nationale de l'Oise en préfiguration

Théâtre de La Croix Rousse-Lyon

With the financial support of

**Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Conseil départemental de la Drôme,
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de Cinéma de Hô Chi Minh-Ville** and of **La Chartreuse, Villeneuve lez Avignon –
Centre national des écritures du spectacle**

The text is laureate to the Commission nationale d'aide
à la création de textes dramatiques - ARTCENA

With the artistic participation from **Jeune théâtre national**.

Construction of the decor in the workshops of **Odéon, théâtre de l'Europe**.

Caroline Guiela Nguyen is a member of the artistic collective of **La Comédie de
Valence - CDN Drôme Ardèche** and an associated artist for **l'Odéon, théâtre de
l'Europe** and for **MC2: Grenoble**.

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Rhône-Alpes, Conseil départemental de la Drôme** and **Ville de Valence**.



TOURS

2022 - 2023
(in progress)

2021 - 2022

Domaine d'O - Montpellier - 14 to 16 April 2022

Teatro Nacional Dona Maria II Lisbonne - 22 to 24 Avril 2022

2019 - 2020

Territory Festival, Moscow - 10 to 11 October 2019

Theatre Olympics, Saint Petersburg - 18 to 19 October 2019

Thalia, Hambourg - 26 & 27 October 2019

L'Onde, Vilézy-Villacoublay - 7 & 8 Novembre 2019

Le Carreau, Forbach - 15 Novembre 2019

ASIA TOPA, Melbourne - 12 to 15 March 2020

2018 - 2019

The Ingmar Bergman International Theatre Festival, Stockholm (Sweden) – 31 August & 1st September 2018

Théâtre Ben Thanh, Hô-Chi-Minh Ville (Vietnam) – 21-22 September 2018

Festival Romaeuropa, Rome (Italy) – 29-30 September 2018

Festival Sirenos, Vilnius (Lituany) – 08-09 October 2018

Festival Teatr, Minsk (Belarus) – 15 October 2018

TNS, Strasbourg – 06-16 November 2018

Théâtre du Beauvaisis – Scène Nationale de Beauvais – 22-23 November 2018

Le Grand R, La-Roche-sur-Yon – 28-29 November 2018

Théâtre de Cornouaille – Scène Nationale de Quimper – 05-07 December 2018

Le Théâtre – Scène Nationale de Saint-Nazaire – 12-13 December 2018

TNBA, Bordeaux – 19-22 December 2018

Centro Dramático Nacional, Madrid (Spain) – 10-12 January 2019

Théâtre Angoulême – Scène Nationale – 16-18 January 2019

Théâtre Lliure, Barcelone (Spain) – 25-26 January 2019

Théâtre La passerelle – Scène Nationale de Gap – 31 January & 1st February 2019

Scène Nationale de Sète et du Bassin de Thau – 06-07 February 2019

La Filature – Scène Nationale de Mulhouse – 27-28 February 2019

Le Grand T, Nantes – 20-22 March 2019

Le Liberté – Scène Nationale de Toulon – 28-29 March 2019

Théâtre de l'Archipel – Scène Nationale de Perpignan – 11-12 April 2019

Scène Nationale d'Albi – 17-18 April 2019

La Criée – Théâtre National de Marseille – 25-27 April 2019

Théâtre d'Esch (Luxembourg) – 10 May 2019

Comédie de Caen / Théâtre de Caen – 22-23 May 2019

Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe, Paris – 5-22 June 2019

2017 - 2018

La Comédie de Valence, CDN Drôme-Ardèche, festival Ambivalence(s) – 1-3 June 2017

71e Festival d'Avignon – 8-14 July 2017

MC2: Grenoble – 7-11 November 2017

Comédie de Reims-CDN – 6-7 December 2017

Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe – from 12 January to 10 February 2018

CDN de Normandie-Rouen – 21-23 February 2018

Théâtre Dijon Bourgogne-CDN – 6-9 March 2018

La Comédie de Valence, CDN Drôme-Ardèche – 13-14 March 2018

Théâtre de la Croix Rousse-Lyon – 4-7 April 2018

Schaubühne - Berlin (Allemagne) – 13-15 April 2018

CDN de Besançon – 25-26 April 2018

Théâtre National Bretagne - Centre européen théâtral et chorégraphique - Rennes – 15-18 May 2018

Centre dramatique national de Tours – Théâtre Olympia – from 29 May to 2 June 2018

Festival Theaterformen - Braunschweig (Germany) – 7-8 June 2018

Holland Festival – Amsterdam (The Netherlands) – 13-14 June 2018

Poly Theater – Beijing (China) / Magnificent Theater – 23-24 June 2018

Oriental Arts Center – Shanghai (Chine) / Magnificent Theater – 29-30 June 2018

LES HOMMES APPROXIMATIFS

Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company was founded in 2009, bringing together Caroline Guiela Nguyen (director), Alice Duchange (set design), Benjamin Moreau (costumes), Jérémie Papin (light design), Antoine Richard (sound design), Claire Calvi (associate artist) and Jérémie Scheidler (video, dramaturgy).

In each production, the company affirms a dual passion for fiction and the real, sides which are explored conjointly by bringing together amateur and professional actors coming from different social, geographic, cultural and spiritual horizons, so that “different worlds should meet and together we try to invent a common space”. The company's philosophy is to have both feet firmly on the ground while affirming that the most powerful tool we possess today is our imagination: what would become of us humans if we could no longer imagine what being human meant?

The company's most recent production, *SAIGON*, was extremely well received both during the Festival Ambivalence(s) organised by the Comédie de Valence Theatre where it premiered and during the 71st edition of the Festival d'Avignon where it then transferred. On tour in France and throughout the world (China, Vietnam, Lithuania, Belarus, Germany...), it chalked up its 180th performance. *SAIGON* was nominated at the Molières, the principal French theatre award ceremony, in three different categories and won the Georges Lherminier Prize awarded by the Association Professionnelle de la Critique de Théâtre, Musique et Danse).

In 2018, the company Les Hommes Approximatifs began a new cycle of creations around the question of FRATERNITY, which includes three opuses: *Les Engloutis*, a film made a film made with the inmates of the Arles central prison and co-produced by Les Films du Worso, *FRATERNITÉ*, a *fantastic tale* created during the 75th Festival d'Avignon, *L'Enfance, la Nuit* which will be created at the Schaubühne in october 2022.

Caroline Guiela Nguyen is associated with the Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe in Paris, the Schaubühne in Berlin and the Théâtre national de Bretagne in Rennes. The company Les Hommes Approximatifs is associated with the Comédie - CDN de Reims. Since 2009, it has been based in Valence, in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company is registered and supported by the French Ministry of Culture (DRAC Auvergne Rhône-Alpes), the French administrative region of Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes and the City of Valence. The company is funded by the Conseil Départemental de la Drôme [Drôme county council]. The company also receives financial backing from the French Institute at Paris for its international activities.

FICTIONAL WORKS

- _ *Se souvenir de Violetta* [Theatre] 2011
Dumas-the-younger / Caroline Masini / Caroline Guiela Nguyen

- _ *Ses mains* [Theatre] 2012
Caroline Guiela Nguyen / L'équipée Theatre Company

- _ *Le Bal d'Emma* [Theatre] 2013
Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company / Caroline Guiela Nguyen

- _ *Elle brûle* [Theatre] 2013
Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company / Caroline Guiela Nguyen

- _ *GirlNextDoor* [Electro-erotic Psalms] 2014
Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company

- _ *Le Chagrin* [Theatre] 2015
Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company / Caroline Guiela Nguyen

- _ *Le Chagrin (Julie et Vincent)* [Radio play] 2016
Caroline Guiela Nguyen, Alexandre Plank and Antoine Richard
Won Prix Italia and SGDL's Grand Prix for radio fiction 2016

- _ *Mon grand amour* [itinerant work performed in people's homes] 2016
Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company/ Caroline Guiela Nguyen

- _ *SAIGON* [Theatre] 2017
Caroline Guiela Nguyen
Prix Georges Lermnier 2018 (Best production outside Paris)

- _ *SAIGON - À l'origine* [Book] 2018
Book by Caroline Guiela Nguyen published by the Théâtre National de Bretagne and Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company

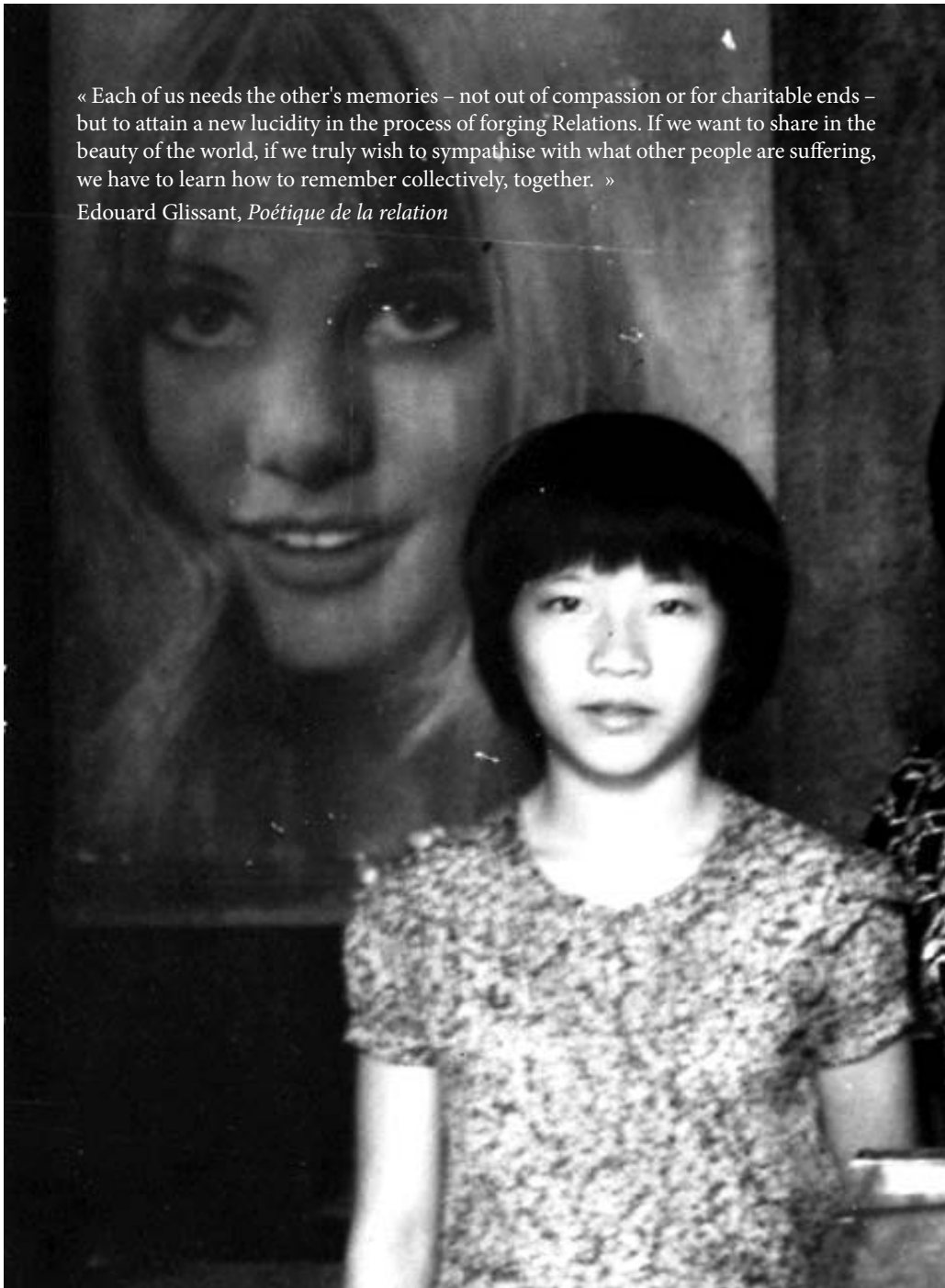
- _ *SAIGON - Linh & Édouard* [Film] 2019
Film short directed by Caroline Guiela Nguyen, produced by Les Films du Worso Production Company run by Sylvie Pialat and Benoît Quainon, and Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company

- _ *Les Engloutis (The Departed)* [Film] 2021
Film short directed by Caroline Guiela Nguyen, produced by Les Films du Worso Production Company run by Sylvie Pialat and Benoît Quainon, and Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company

- _ *FRATERNITÉ, Conte fantastique* [Theatre] 2021
Caroline Guiela Nguyen

« Each of us needs the other's memories – not out of compassion or for charitable ends – but to attain a new lucidity in the process of forging Relations. If we want to share in the beauty of the world, if we truly wish to sympathise with what other people are suffering, we have to learn how to remember collectively, together. »

Edouard Glissant, *Poétique de la relation*



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