



FRATERNITY, A FANTASTIC TALE

CREATION
6- 14 JULY 2021

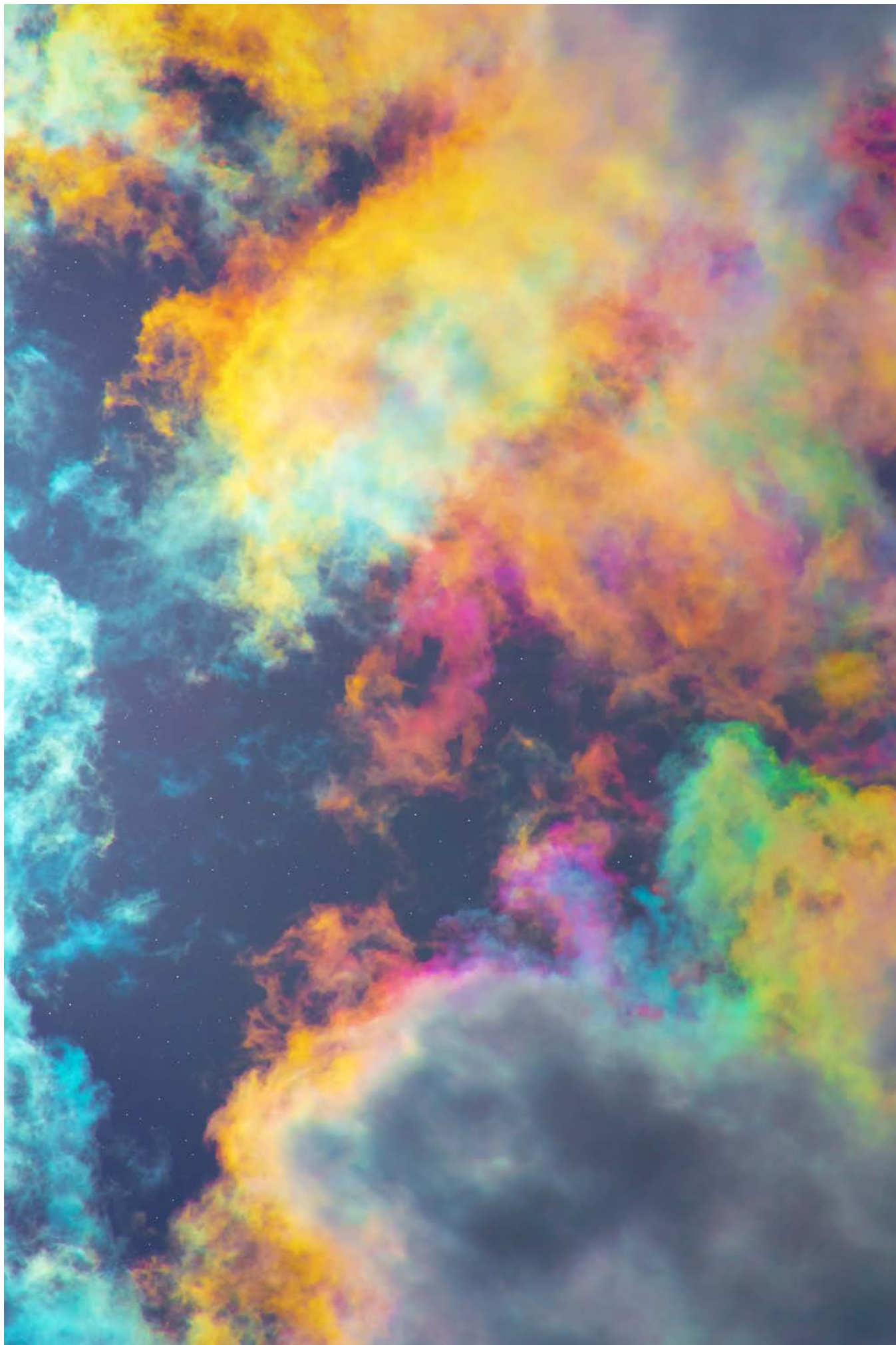
ARTISTIC FILE
FEBRUARY 2022

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FRATERNITÉ, CONTE FANTASTIQUE _ ARTISTIC FILE_ JUNE 2021

FRATERNITY, A FANTASTIC TALE

PROJECT NOTE

In 2019 we began a cycle of new works around a single word : FRATERNITY. We set off to meet people, associations, institutions to see how this word was embodied in today's world. By immersing ourselves in different settings we were able to observe that it transpired as much in the individual decision of an Italian coroner who alerted the world to the moral necessity of identifying the corpses of migrants drowned at sea as it did in the work of a whole service like the Red Cross's office for finding missing relatives.

Gradually, then, fraternity appeared to us as a pressing movement that from a moment in the present turns and looks towards the past and towards the future.

In this show, fraternity is what develops along the paths the characters take as they seek to build a common future with their Departed. Together they give body to the symbolic and material sense of the word fraternity : recognizing without hesitation a stranger as one's own kin, and acting with them and on their behalf, because we all form part of the same human community.

Caroline Guiela Nguyen
May 2021

MEND WOUNDS FOR YESTERDAY AND TOMORROW

Interview with Caroline Guiela Nguyen conducted by François Cossu,
translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cleach for the 75th Festival d'Avignon

After the success of *SAIGON*, you're coming back both to the stage and to the screen with a cycle of creations entitled *FRATERNITY*. The first part is a short film made with the inmates of the Arles prison. Why? And what is its relationship with the second part, a show you're presenting at La FabricA??

I wanted to be able to fully explore the topic of fraternity with different teams, to work on it in several European countries. The first part of the cycle, *Les Engloutis* (The Drowned), is a film I shot in 2020 in the Arles prison, where I have worked for almost 8 years with people serving long sentences. I've always wanted to bring a camera into that closed, almost forbidden place, hidden from sight. With them, I wanted to create a fantastic tale. The idea for the film came from something an inmate told me after seeing his daughter whom he'd left as a child and met again, four years later, as a young woman. He confessed he hadn't been able to recognise her completely. His brain resisted that recognition because he couldn't deal with this vision of a time from which he had been excluded. What we can talk about with these men is the question of time. It's their area of expertise, in a way. I wanted them to be able to tell us about this very specific time they're going through, and how they experience it. The story of the film is a simple one: a number of people who had disappeared for forty years return home. They are given messages left for them by their loved ones while they were away and they find themselves faced with an archive of their lives from which they were excised and excluded. *FRATERNITY*, a fantastic tale, the show we're presenting at the Festival d'Avignon, asks the question of time from the point of view of those who wait, and no longer from that of those who come back. The characters of the show are the survivors of a catastrophe that took their loved ones away. We watch how over the following years and decades they gather together in a "centre for healing and consolation," trying to fill the void now at the heart of their lives.

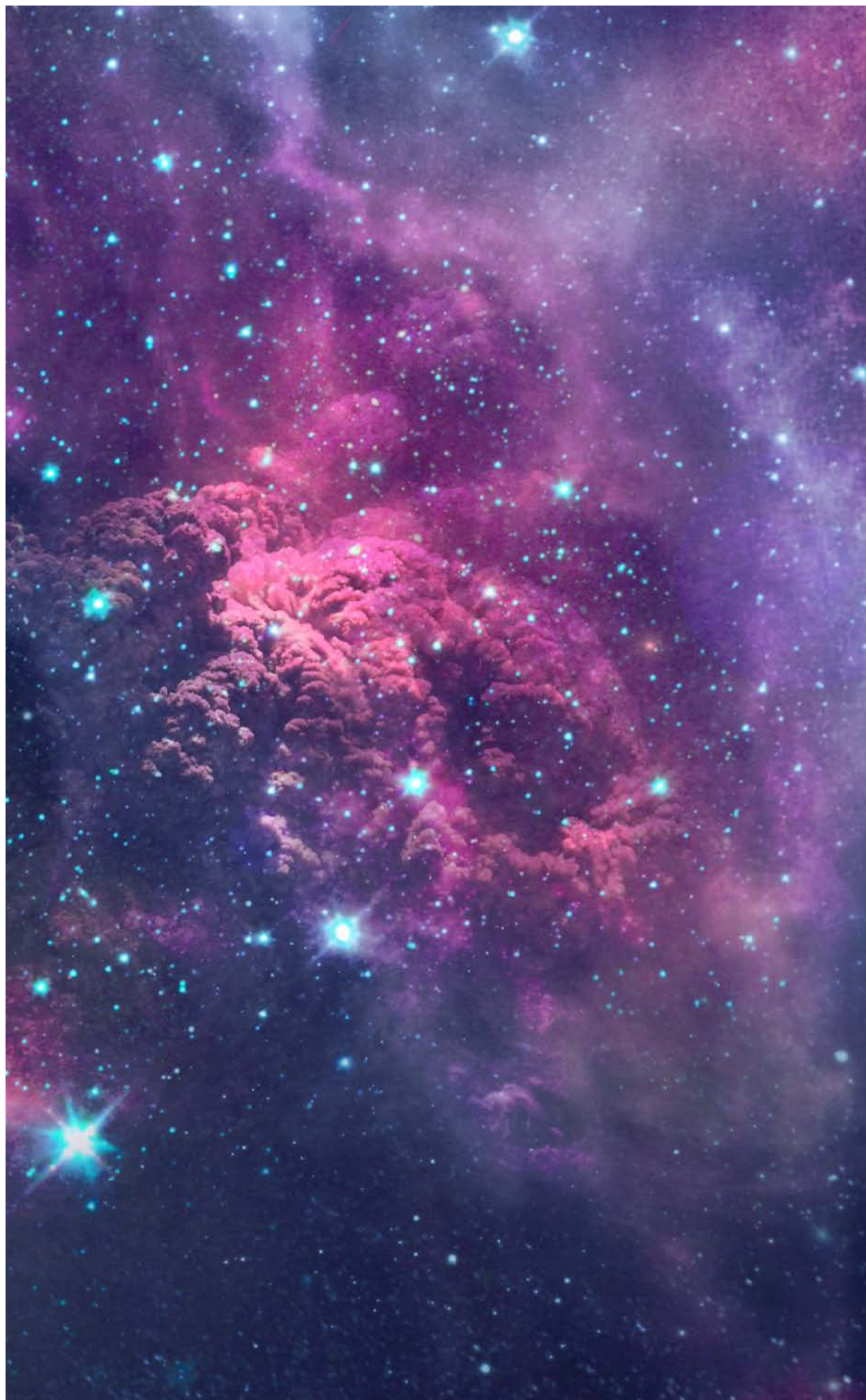
Can you tell us about your sources of inspiration, about your unique team, but also about the idea of place, which is very important in your work? How did all those elements combine to create the fantastic in your show?

To come up with *FRATERNITY*, a fantastic tale, I gave my team a text without any dialogue, in which I talked about the show from a literary and aesthetic point of view. We then worked on this original story with the actors, the scenographer, and the costume and sound designers through moments of improvisation and research. It's through those exchanges that we were able to write the play. Originally, we only had the basic narrative architecture: the show's duration, the period and, above all, the place where it is set. In truth, it is this place, this centre for healing and consolation, which gave the project its structure, which guided its construction and casting. It's inspired by the social centres we visited, the way they function, their goals and missions, the concrete activities that take place there, and the men and women who gather there because they need to find answers to the things they are going through. It also allows me to show the people working there, who wonder how to help and heal men and women who don't share a common referential and cognitive system. Finding tools for healing without imposing a dominant framework first and foremost means being able to confirm someone else's reality. The other fundamental aspect was to find the right faces to carry the story onstage. Right

from the start, I wanted the main character of FRATERNITY, a fantastic tale to be the group, which is why we spent two years bringing together this team of professional and non-professional actors from very different backgrounds and aged 21 to 82, and who speak different languages during the show. We met them while travelling and they all bring to the stage their own unique way of embodying the story. The characters of the play are as diverse as the people I met in terms of age, language, and culture. What's fantastic is how we were able to gather all those bodies on a stage for a fiction that is itself fantastic! While an actor, through his or her body but also through the role he or she has been assigned, is often consigned to a certain reality, here I wanted the fiction to fully inhabit those bodies, both individually and collectively. It has to do with the fact that, for us, imagining the future isn't synonymous with a dystopia. Quite the contrary. We want to show the idea of the future as a space and time in which healing, mending, and the acceptance of the other in all his or her otherness have become possible, and allow us to keep a deeply wounded, amputated, and changed society alive.

After several months immersed in your work, how would you define fraternity today?

I see fraternity as a way to look from the present towards both the past and the future. It means recognising the other as a brother, without hesitation, and acting with him, for him, because we're part of the same human community. In the play, it's expressed through the story of characters who are trying to build a shared future with the invisible people they carry within themselves. They embody the whole range of the meaning, both symbolic and concrete, of the word fraternity. But fraternity also manifests itself in life, which is what I learned from the people I met during my various periods of immersion before I started writing: from Cristina Cattaneo, an Italian medical examiner who has been fighting to identify the bodies of the migrants who have drowned while crossing the Mediterranean, to the staff of the Red Cross' Restoring Family Links programme, who help those who have lost a loved one to find them, in the name of the right of every human being to be close to those he or she loves. It's the same right that allows inmates to receive visits from their families, for instance. The emotional bond is a central and necessary element in any human life. I'm reminded of those two sisters who were separated during World War II. Sixty years later, when they were both over 80, they got a call from the Restoring Family Links programme. Throughout the decades, their file had never been closed, just suspended in the hope that new information would come. Fraternity can always arise, even after a hundred years... That's why today, Cristina Cattaneo is as intent on figuring out the identity of a man who just washed ashore as that of someone who died in the 18th century... Time doesn't heal wounds, but it makes it so we can one day mend them. I think that's what fraternity means to me, this urge that drives us to mend wounds for both yesterday and tomorrow.



ONCE UPON A TIME...

... the story of a humanity that had lost half of itself and who decided to erect a place solely for the purpose of awaiting the return of the departed.

In this place, women and men would constantly scan the sky, because it had all begun the day that the sun had disappeared behind the moon.

They had come together to watch the eclipse, excited, unsuspecting.

It lasted 4 minutes... 4 long minutes... !

The world was bathed in a sort of strange twilight... Right in the middle of the afternoon...

And when at last it was over, and the sun had reappeared, the women, the men, their children... they all looked around them... and what they discovered shook them to the core... Half of their neighbours were no longer there. Half of all humanity had vanished...

They called this event : "The Great Eclipse".

Humanity needed help, no-one had been left unscathed. And everyone had to lend their help to all.

They had to find ways to abate the feeling of emptiness left by the sudden disappearance of those who had departed.

They had to find the words to tell a child : your father loves you even though you can't see him, even though he has become unseeable.

They had to find new techniques to care for a new type of hurt...

In this state of global emergency new places popped up all round the world.

These places would be given the name : "Centres for Care and Consolation".

Try and imagine these years spent laying plates in front of chairs that remained empty, and sending messages to the depths of the cosmos in hope of a message that did not come...



Rehearsals at Theatre National Wallonie Bruxelles, May 2021 © Jean-Louis Fernandez

MESSAGE RECORDING BOOTHS

Instructions of use

- 1 — This machine allows you to leave a message to your Departed.
- 2 — You may leave them a message regardless of the nature of your relationship with the Departed. All you have to do is state their name at the beginning of the message when the yellow light comes on.
- 3 — Please begin your message by stating clearly, "I wish to leave a message for" followed by the person's name and surname.
- 4 — For data storage reasons please do not leave messages that exceed 1 minute 30 in length
- 5 — Although a child may enter the booth unaccompanied to leave a message, it is advisable that an adult be around to collect them when they leave.
- 6 — Messages left here can neither be consulted, retrieved nor deleted once they have been recorded.
- 7 — These messages are strictly confidential. The only person or people who may consult them are those to whom the message is addressed.
- 8 — You must sign up on the schedule displayed at the booth entrance.
- 9 — Users who encounter difficulty recording a message are invited to sign up for time slots where it is indicated that volunteers will be present to guide you through the different steps of the recording.



Rehearsals at Theatre National Wallonie Bruxelles, May 2021 © Jean-Louis Fernandez



Rehearsals at Theatre National Wallonie Bruxelles, May 2021 © Jean-Louis Fernandez

"- Today they've installed a machine so that people can leave messages for all those like Mum who are no longer here. Apparently it sends them out into space, between the stars. Unbelievable, isn't it? It's to make sure that one day they'll hear us.

- And we can leave messages for Mum, too?

- Of course we can sweetheart, we can leave bags of messages, tons of messages telling her how much we love her. I've already left one where I said how pretty you were and how much you looked like her."

"You know, I've lost everything, there's nothing left at all.

You are all I've got.

Your face, your habits, your smell, your taste...

I speak to you every night when the stars come out.

Your ring is the only thing I have of you. I'll keep it with me until I take my last breath.

I love you."



*"I'm really sorry...
But you must listen to me !
Something very strange is happening in the sky.
The stars are slowing down to an extraordinary extent,
much more powerfully than anytime before.
The tiniest celestial object is practically at a standstill, and we don't know why.
I have to ask you to fill in these questionnaires...
It is imperative that we grasp something about
what is happening to us right now.
Please, write down what you are feeling.
Quickly."*

"It's been 5 years !

60 months.

1865 days that I have been waiting, that I am in the dark, longing for my family.

And what now? What's the next move?

Are you going to draw up a new schedule?

Set up support groups on how to wait? Or how to love?

Are you going to ask people to leave their thousandth message in that fucking booth?

Prepare food baskets, a couscous, an osso bucco?

And then at last we take each other by the hand and go round and round doing the circle of hope?

I'm in pain,

I'm suffering,

and I'm going to say something terrible, and it kills me to say it...

the life we had before has gone and it's never coming back.

And nothing, do you hear me, nothing

will ever bring me the slightest comfort."



© Jérémie Scheidler

Something in the universe seemed to respond
to this bottomless distress
gaping in the hearts of each and everyone.

The cosmos became the mirror of their hearts.

Chant pour la mémoire

1.
À ce qui persiste d'eux dans le
continent de notre mémoire.

*To what remains of them
in the continent of our memory.*

2.
Je ne me souviens
Ni de ton nom
Ni de ton visage
Ni de ton sourire
Je me souviens
De l'amour si fort

*I do not remember
Or your name
Neither of your face
Or your smile
I remember
Love so strong*

Chant des Absents

1.
Que dire à la mère sans enfant
Que dire à l'amant sans amour

*What to say to the childless mother
What to say to the lover without love*

2.
Que faire de nos maisons
De nos jardins de nos églises
Que faire de nos écoles

*What to do with our houses
From our gardens to our churches
What to do with our schools*

3.
Ô le manque intarissable

Ho the inexhaustible lack

4.
Chaque matin
Je prie pour que le monde se renverse
Et emporte avec lui
Le reste d'une vie qui ne me sert qu'à te pleurer

*Each morning
I pray that the world will overturn
And take with him
The rest of a life that only makes you cry*

CAST

FRATERNITÉ, Conte fantastique



Rehearsals at Theatre National Wallonie Bruxelles, May 2021 © Jean-Louis Fernandez

Text Caroline Guiela Nguyen
with the whole artistic team

Direction Caroline Guiela Nguyen

Artistic collaboration Claire Calvi

Scenography Alice Duchange

Costumes Benjamin Moreau

Light Jérémie Papin

Sound and music production

Antoine Richard

Video Jérémie Scheidler

Dramaturgy Hugo Soubise, Manon Worms

Original music

Teddy Gauliat-Pitois et Antoine Richard

With

Dan Artus

Saadi Bahri

Boutaina El Fekkak

Hoonaz Ghajallu

Maïmouna Keita

Nanii

Elios Noël

Alix Petris

Saaphyra

Vasanth Selvam

Anh Tran Nghia

Hiep Tran Nghia

Mahia Zrouki

FRATERNITY, a fantastic tale is the second part of the FRATERNITÉ cycle, which includes two other creations to date : *Les Engloutis* (2021), a short film co-produced by Les Films du Worso and Les Hommes Approximatifs; *L'Enfance, la Nuit*, a show created at the Schaubühne in Berlin in 2022.

Sound collaboration Orane Duclos
 Sound production assistant Thibaut Farineau
 Light collaborator Mathilde Chamoux
 Video assistant Marina Masquelier
 Stage manager Serge Ugolini
 Coaching vocal Myriam Djemour
 Conception « Memo » Sébastien Puech
 Interpreters Fabio Godinho and Camille Hummel (English), Cao Nguyen (Vietnamese)
 Collaboration casting Lola Diane
 Painting Magali Poutoux
 Music studio Quatuor Alternatif:
 Laura Al Tinaoui, Aurélie Métivier,
 Lydie Lefebvre, Mathieu Schmaltz

With the participation of Rosanna Artus,
 Habib Azaouzi, Majida Ghomari, Lee
 Michelsen, Ruth Nuesch, Jean Ruimi

Production diffusion Isabelle Nougier,
 Technical direction Xavier Lazarini,
 Coordination Elsa Hummel-Zongo
 assisted by Marguerite Cornu
 Press, communication Coline Loger,
 Administrative management Stéphane Triolet

Set design
 Atelier du Grand T, théâtre de Loire-Atlantique
 Costumes making
 Atelier du Théâtre de Liège
 with the support of Atelier du
 Theatre national Wallonie-Bruxelles

Production Les Hommes Approximatifs
 Executive production
 Les Hommes Approximatifs, Festival d'Avignon

French production – Odéon Théâtre de l'Europe,
 ExtraPôle Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur*,
 Comédie – CDN de Reims, Théâtre National
 de Bretagne, Théâtre National de Strasbourg,
 Châteauvallon scène nationale, Théâtre de
 l'Union – CDN du Limousin, Théâtre Olympia
 CDN de Tours, MC2 : Grenoble, La Criée
 - Théâtre national de Marseille, Le Grand T
 théâtre de Loire-Atlantique, Célestins - Théâtre
 de Lyon, Comédie de Colmar – CDN Grand Est
 Alsace, La rose des vents – Scène nationale Lille
 Métropole Villeneuve d'Ascq, Le Parvis - Scène
 nationale Tarbes Pyrénées, Théâtre National de
 Nice, Théâtre du Beauvaisis - Scène nationale

Internantional coproduction - PROSPERO –
 Extended Theatre**, - Théâtre National Wallonie-
 Bruxelles, Théâtre de Liège, Les théâtres de la
 ville de Luxembourg, Centro Dramatico Nacional
 - Madrid, Dramaten - Stockholm, Schaubühne
 – Berlin, Teatro Nacional D. Maria II - Lisbonne,
 Thalia Theater- Hambourg, RomaEuropa Festival

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 de l'ENSATT et de l'Institut français Paris.

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 Falco, Avril Tembouret, Malone Artus, Farah Beguin
 El Fekkak, Adeline Guillot, Charlesse Tekabanza
 Diampova, Judith Leimann, Ossem, Shaina Bensalah,
 Maream El Araishy, Salvador Noël, Mathilde Rochais-
 Gensac, Badr Boukikaz, Boney Fields, Maria
 Rosa Yvon, Charles Berling, Alfredo Canavaten,
 Youssef Gueye, Claire Rolland, Carl Holland

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 Ateliers Médicis, la Fondation Minkowska, la
 Fondation Teresa Pontès, et au Bureau du
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 Rouge pour leur accueil en immersion

to the teams of la Comédie – CDN de Reims,
 Théâtre National de Bretagne, Théâtre National
 Wallonie-Bruxelles, au Théâtre de Liège, au
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 Valence, l'association Filigrane, Traces Migrations

* ExtraPôle Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur is a production
 platform supported by the Région SUD Provence-Alpes-Côte
 d'Azur

** PROSPERO – Extended Theatre is a project co-financed
 by the Creative Europe programme of European Union



Rehearsals at Theatre National Wallonie Bruxelles, May 2021 © Jean-Louis Fernandez



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TOURS

2021 - 2023

— 2022/2023 (in progress)

from 11 to 13 November
— Festival RomaEuropa, Rome, Italy

from 18 to 20 November
— Comédie de Colmar - CDN Grand Est,

from 5 to 9 December — Théâtre Olympia,
CDN, Tours

from 12 to 21 January
— Théâtre National de Strasbourg

from 26 to 28 January
— Piccolo Teatro, Milan, Italy

2 & 3 February
— Théâtre National de Nice, Nice

from 22 to 24 February
— Comédie de Clermont-Ferrand, Clermont-Ferrand

29 & 30 March
— La Passerelle - Scène Nationale de Saint-Brieuc

27 & 28 April
— Les théâtres de la ville de Luxembourg

from 28 to 31 October
— Centro Dramatico Nacional – Madrid (Spain)

8 & 9 November
— Le Parvis – Scène nationale Tarbes Pyrénées

1st & 2 December
— Théâtre de l'Union – CDN du Limousin

from 8 to 10 December
— Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles (Belgium)

from 6 to 15 January
— Célestins – Théâtre de Lyon

from 23 February to 3 March
— Théâtre National de Bretagne – Rennes

from 9 to 11 March
— La Comédie – CDN de Reims

from 17 to 19 March
— Châteauvallon – Scène nationale

from 24 to 26 March
— La Criée – Théâtre national de Marseille

4 & 5 April
— Schaubühne – Berlin

9 & 10 April
— Thalia Theater – Hambourg

26 & 27 April
— São Luiz Teatro Municipal – Lisbonne

from 11 to 13 May
— La Rose des Vents – Lille 300 / Le Grand Sud

5 & 6 May
— MC2 : Grenoble

6 & 7 July
— Epidaurus Festival, Athens, Greece

— 2021 / 2022

from 6 to 14 July
— Festival d'Avignon

from 27 August to 3 September
— Dramaten – Stockholm (Sweden)

from 16 September to 17 October
— Odéon – Théâtre de l'Europe



THE FRATERNITY CYCLE

4 NEW TALES :

ARLES - PARIS - BERLIN

Since 2018, the company has been working on a cycle of new works that have one word in common: FRATERNITY.

This has taken us on a path into the fantastical and we have imagined several tales that unfold over the next hundred years

FRATERNITY covers 4 new works at this time :

- ***The Departed (Les Engloutis)***: a short film shot in July 2020 inside Arles Prison that is scheduled for release during spring 2021. This short film is produced by Les Films du Worso (Sylvie Pialat and Benoît Quainon's production company) and Les Hommes Approximatifs
- ***FRATERNITY, A Fantastical Tale***: a theatre work to be premiered during the summer of 2021, and then on tour in France, notably at the Odéon, Théâtre de l'Europe, then in Sweden, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Belgium among others.
- ***L'Enfance, la Nuit*** : a theatre work to be devised with members of the Schaubühne artistic ensemble and a group of children. It will be premiered in spring 2022 at the Schaubühne Theatre in Berlin.

ANNEXES

1_ ENCOUNTERS AND IMMERSIONS

RETHINKING WHO WE ARE FOR ONE ANOTHER

In November 2019, we set out to meet people who represented institutions tasked with alleviating exile and separation related issues, or people whose work resonated with our project. The Restoring Family Links service (RFL) run by the French Red Cross was one of those we contacted. It is a research and identification unit that provides help to anyone seeking to know where and how their relatives and loved ones are. This service gives seekers the opportunity, should they so wish and insofar as conditions permit it, to send their loved ones a message, thus exercising a fundamental human right.

The Restoring Family Links service - The pursuit of re-establishing and maintaining family links has been one of the missions of the Red Cross from the outset, since Henry Dunant collected the first Red Cross messages from soldiers to their families. When we open a research request, we never know when we will be able to close it. It might concern families that have been separated by a natural catastrophe, a humanitarian crisis, by migration. A separation is always provoked by an external element. We work within a framework dictated by international humanitarian law. Our duty to remember is crucial. There is nothing trivial about depositing – and I use this term deliberately – about depositing one's personal history, that involves the loss of loved ones, into the hands of an institution that is neutral, impartial, with a long history and with offices throughout the world.

How we receive and listen to these families is of utmost importance, it's an act of recognition and commitment because all requests can be revived at any moment. They are not closed. We refer to them as "suspended". But they can be reactivated, put on hold, revived at any moment. Whereas at one particular time we might find ourselves at a dead end, at another time it's possible to continue. Everything is linked to changing geopolitical contexts and the availability or not of certain data.

The families are frozen, like they have been put on standby. It's difficult for them to go forward with their lives. For as long as they don't know what has happened to a sister, a father or a child, they cannot mourn, because they don't know if the person is dead or alive.

Les Hommes Approximatifs —. Regarding how you react to their emotions, what space or how much space do you allow for that emotion to live?

RLF —. It's very different for each person. You mentioned space. Sometimes you leave some space because you anticipate an irruption of joy if you call someone to tell them that you've found the person they were looking for. And nothing comes. The seeker doesn't react at all in the way you expected them to react. You put the phone down and you don't even know if you're happy or not to have found someone. Each person deals with it in their own way, you can't tell how it is going to be at each step of the process, the period of mourning, acceptance, etc. There are no consistent rules. There are also situations where people have completely rebuilt their lives and then it's complicated. It doesn't necessarily result in them refusing to renew contact, but the links between the seeker and the person contacted, who they are for one another, have to be rethought. And that can be extremely violent, depending on the role the person occupies in the relationship. Even for the person who has built a new life for themselves it can be very difficult. Different time scales, the mourning process, these are very important notions in what we do. What does it actually mean when we say that someone has disappeared? We can't put our finger on a disappearance. Has the person disappeared in the sense that they are on the other side of the wall and we can no longer see them? Or are they simply no longer there? These questions give the imagination plenty to work with.

LHA —.: "Rethinking who we are for one another" could almost be the subtitle of our show.

BRLF —. We try to make our volunteers understand that our mission is a response to a need. The need to know, the need to be with that person: needs that are just as necessary as having clothes and food to eat.

BRINGING THE MISSING BACK INTO THE PRESENT

From 11 to 17 December 2020, Caroline Guiela Nguyen was a guest artist at Madrid's Centro Dramatico National to take part in a writing residency. While she was there she met Almudena Carracedo, director of the documentary "El silencio de otros" (The Silence of Others). Over the course of several years Almudena Carracedo filmed families who were engaged in a struggle against the law of silence enacted by the 1977 vote in favour of a general amnesty that has, right up to the present day, prevented any crimes committed during the Franco era from being heard in court.

Caroline Guiela Nguyen —. We are made of those who were and those who will come...

Almudena Carracedo —. That's why silence is such an integral part of the disappearances, because silence makes people disappear completely. So memory, remembering, is the end of silence. It's sort of a way of bringing the missing back into the present. Remembering is essential. There are three pillars in the work involved in restoring a democratic memory: truth, justice and reparation. Reparation encompasses many different things. Cultural productions form part of the reparation, by taking back history and restoring a part of the truth, and thus giving recognition. Individuals, whether alive or dead, don't feature in official discourse. For example, all those people who have disappeared in the biggest of all the common graves, the Mediterranean Sea, don't exist. They exist only as numbers, we don't know their names. So we have to put back the faces and the personal histories into what happened, and in this way bring them back into the present. Because the past has not passed; the past exists today, right now. It exists in the things we tell and the things we see.

CGN —. What pushed you to make *The Silence of Others*?

AC —. It's part of my own history, and a sense of duty, something I owed. The feeling of belonging to a generation that knew nothing, but which had to plunge into the past to find it and bring it back to the present. I had this pressing need to learn about what had happened, to make it known, to share it with as many people as possible, but not in a militant way – even though I am an activist – but in a way that would make this past reach people who were not political or engaged in a cause, “normal” people in touch simply with the humanity that is in each of us. And so we decided to focus on personal stories rather than the words of politicians or historians. It's these singular stories told by each person in the documentary, “real people”, that allow us to connect with them. Lots of people say: “don't dig up the past, don't dig up the earth”, physically and psychologi-

cally. And then there is María Martín who goes every week to sit on her mother's grave. Could you look her square in the eyes and tell her not to do that? The conversation suddenly shifts onto a whole different plane, because it is no longer a political discussion, but a conversation with a real person.

CGN —. Square in the eyes. I can relate to that. I really understand everything that you have said, because when we made our show *SAIGON*, that's exactly how we conceived it. In France, what we call political theatre is often a theatre where the political is a discourse, thoughts... Whereas in my view, what is most profoundly political today is the effect of politics on people's bodies.

AC —. That's exactly what I've always said. Because politics literally is embodied – becomes a body – in and by the victims. The stealing of babies, the disappearances, acts of torture, all that happens to the bodies of people. Politics, for me, is that.

CGN —. We are at a point, in France, but also more generally across Europe, where the political discourse has reached a level of abstraction that the only way of restoring some reality is by looking squarely at what this politics does to man. And that's why I think that documentaries, the cinema, works of fiction and character-based theatre can allow us to occupy this political place, to imagine the human inside what politics does to him. And that's also what I admire so much in your documentary, the human dignity, the fact that a victim is never only that. My mother, for example, is a woman conditioned by colonial violence, just as she has been conditioned by many other more complex things. That is also her dignity. Human dignity means considering that person in all that she or he is made up of. I really think that to take stock of the political, you have to look at men. In *The Silence of Others*, the thing that finally brought me to tears was when you say, "The families take down the photos of those who have disappeared". That's what made me cry and what suddenly made me want not to make a speech, but to take up arms, the arms at our disposal.

2_ THE COMPANY 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), Manon Worms (dramaturgy), 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 to date includes four opuses: *Les Engloutis*, a film made with the inmates of the Arles central prison and co-produced by Les Films du Worso, *FRATERNITÉ, a Fantastic Tale*, created in 2021, *L'Enfance, la Nuit* which will be created at the Schaubühne in Fall 2022.

Caroline Guiela Nguyen is associated with the Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe in Paris, the Schaubühne in Berlin, the Théâtre national de Bretagne in Rennes and the Piccolo Teatro in Milan. 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 Lerminier 2018 (Best production outside Paris)

- _ *SAIGON – À l'origine* [Livre] 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* [Film] 2020
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. International and National Competiton at the International Short Film Festival of Clermont-Ferrand

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

- _ *L'Enfance, la Nuit* [Theatre] 2022
Caroline Guiela Nguyen

CLAIRE CALVI

After studying the dramatic arts at Avignon Conservatory, then at ERCAM, a drama school in Cannes, Claire has pursued a career as an actrice principally in the French region of PACA. She has notably performed in Jean-Louis Benoit's production of Shakespeare's *La nuit des rois* [Twelfth Night], in Genet's *Les Bonnes* [The Maids] directed by Ivan Romeuf, as well as in *Trouble(s)* and *Tout ce dont* with Corps de passage Theatre Company. She also collaborates with other theatre companies, namely Compagnie Rhizome and Compagnie Furiosa.

It was in 2012 that she joined Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company as associate artist on the show *Le Bal d'Emma*. Since then, she has collaborated on *Elle brûle*, *Le Chagrin* and *SAIGON*.

ALICE DUCHANGE

After a university degree in textile design, and a diploma specialised in costume creation in Lyon, Alice entered the drama school attached to the Théâtre National de Strasbourg (TNS) in the set and costume design section where she learnt the trade under the watchful eye of theatre directors including Pierre André Weitz, Daniel Jeanneteau, Alexandre Dedardel, Benoît Lambert and Richard Brunel. From 2011 to 2014 she joined 16 other artists in the shared workshop space, laMezz, in Lyon. She has also worked either on set design or costume design with Estelle Savasta, Lazare Herson Macarel, Nasser Djemaï, Anne-Laure Liegeois, Benoit Bradel, Christian Duchange, Marion Guerrero, Jean Lacornerie, Julien Geskoff, Yan Raballand, Frédéric Sonntag, Marion Chaubert and Catherine Anne. It is in her capacity as set designer that she joined Les Hommes Approximatifs Theatre Company and to date she has designed the sets for *Andromaque*, *Se souvenir de Violetta*, *Le Bal d'Emma*, *Elle brûle* and *SAIGON*.

<http://aliceduchange.over-blog.com>

CAROLINE GUIELA NGUYEN

Caroline Guiela Nguyen is a writer and director for both stage and screen. After starting out as a sociology student she joined TNS drama school. In 2009, she created her own theatre company, Les Hommes Approximatifs. Their work, drawing on their own life stories, gives centre stage to bodies and histories that the theatre has generally paid little attention to. Their shows include: *Se souvenir de Violetta* (2011), *Ses Mains*, *Le bal d'Emma* (2012), *Elle brûle* (2013), *Le chagrin* (2015), *Mon grand amour* (2016). Since 2015, she has also collaborated with Joël Pommerat and his company Louis Brouillard, and with Jean Ruimi creating shows at the Maison Centrale d'Arles Prison. In 2016, she wrote and devised a radio play with Alexandre Plank and Antoine Richard, *Le chagrin (Julie et Vincent)* for the radio station France Culture as part of their Radiodrama series. Caroline Guiela Nguyen created *SAIGON* (2017), which she presented at the Ambivalence(s) festival at the Comédie de Valence and at the 71st edition of the Avignon Festival. From 2017 to 2020, the show will tour in about fifteen countries (France, Sweden, China, Germany, Australia, Vietnam...). In 2018, she starts with the company Les Hommes Approximatifs the cycle FRATERNITÉ which counts four creations to date: a film co-produced by Les Films du Worso,

Les Engloutis, *FRATERNITÉ*, *Conte fantastique*, created in 2021 and *L'Enfance, la Nuit* which will be created at the Schaubühne in 2022.

Awards:

2015: Nominated for a Molière in the category of best director for *Elle brûle*

2016: Prix Italia in the fiction category for new radio plays for *Le Chagrin (Julie & Vincent)*, Grand Prix new radiophonic fiction awarded by the Société des gens de lettres also for *Le Chagrin (Julie & Vincent)*

2016 : nominated to the grade of Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture.

2017: *SAIGON* is the winner of ARTCENA's bursary for artistic creation.

2018: Nominated for a Molière in the category best living French-speaking author, won SACD's Best New Theatre Talent prize.

2019: Jürgen Bansemer and Ute Nyssen Dramaturgy Prize awarded by Goethe-Institut Paris for *SAIGON*.

BENJAMIN MOREAU

As a costume designer and set designer, he works regularly with Les Hommes Approximatifs, Caroline Guiela Nguyen; Richard Brunel - theatre and opera -; Le théâtre déplié, Adrien Béal; Espace Commun, Julien Fisera. He also collaborates on a more occasional basis with Yngvild Aspeli, Marc Lainé, David Geselson, Boutaina Elfekak & Abdellah Taïa, Laure Seguet and Agnès Larroque, Guillaume Barbaut, Lola Naymark, Nasser Djemai, Clara Simpson, Delphine Hecquet and the Cie des Brigands. In the near future, he will collaborate on David Geselson's *Nehenderthal*, Yngvild Aspeli's *Maison de Poupée*, Thomas Quillardet's *Une télévision Française*, Mahmoud El Haddad's *Self-entitlement* and Marc Lainé's *Au travers de la gorge*. He has lectured at the Paris School of Decorative Arts, the Nantes School of Architecture, the Besançon Faculty of Performing Arts, the DMA Costume Designer Diderot-Lamartinière in Lyon and the Notre Dame de Sion High School in Istanbul.

JÉRÉMIE PAPIN

After his training in the lighting design department at TNS Drama School, he worked as a lighting designer with Didier Galas from 2008 to 2012, then lit Lazare Herson-Macarel's shows at the Odéon Theatre, Paris and at Avignon Theatre Festival. At the Philharmonie Luxembourg Concert Hall, he worked on *Cordes* by Garth Knox in 2010. Between 2010 and 2016, he collaborated with numerous directors, including Eric Massé, Yves Beaunesne, Richard Brunel, Maëlle Poésy, Christian Duchange, A. Béal, Nicolas Maury, David Geselson and Julie Duclos. At Dijon Opera House he designed the lights for *Opéra de la Lune* by Brice Pauset and Actéon conducted by Emmanuelle Haïm, both directed by Damien Caille-Perret. He lit *La Pellegrina* conducted by Étienne Meyer and the opera *Meine bienen eine schneise*, composed and conducted by Andreas Schett and Markus Kraler, and directed by Nicolas Liautard. More recently, he has collaborated with Jeanne Candel and Samuel Achache on the lighting design of *Orfeo* performed at Bouffes du Nord Theatre in Paris. He has been a member of Les Hommes Approximatifs Company since 2008, for which he has designed the lighting on *Macbeth*, *Se souvenir de Violette*, *Le Bal d'Emma*, *Elle brûle*, *Le Chagrin* and *SAIGON*.

ANTOINE RICHARD

After his training in the department of sound design at Ensatt, a national school for dramatic arts, he began working with a number of theatre directors, including Matthias Langhoff, Jean-Louis Hourdin and Richard Brunel. He collaborates with a host of companies such as the Company des Lumas (led by Angélique Clairand), Company Ostinato (Olivier Maurin), La Maison Jaune, Le Théâtre des Turbulences, Company D'un Instant à l'autre, Le Théâtre du Rivage, Le Théâtre de l'Homme, and more besides. He has also designed, for various projects – danse, radio or musical, a sound universe drawing on “the real”. On the national radio station France Culture, he notably works with Alexandre Plank and Laure Egoroff, and he is an instructor on Phonurgia Nova's summer workshops in Arles alongside Kaye Mortley. In 2010 he founded Le Sillon, an artistic collective dedicated to new works for radio. For Les Hommes Approximatifs Company, he worked on the sound design of *Gertrud*, *Se souvenir de Violette*, *Ses mains*, *Le bal d'Emma*, *Elle Brûle*, *Peut-être une nuit/GirlNextDoor*, *Le Chagrin*, *SAIGON*. In 2016, along with Caroline Guiela Nguyen and Alexandre Plank, he was the recipient of the Prix Italia and the SGDL's Grand Prix for new radio fiction for his work on *Le chagrin (Julie et Vincent)*. www.antoinerichard.fr

JEREMIE SCHEIDLER

Born in 1983, Jérémie Scheidler holds a double Master's degree in philosophy and cinema. He is a member of Caroline Guiela Nguyen's company Les Hommes Approximatifs, as dramaturge and video artist. He creates video devices for the stage with Caroline Guiela Nguyen, David Geselson, Dieudonné Niangouna, Richard Brunel, Marie Rémond, Julien Fisera, Adrien Béal, Aurélia Guillet, Norah Krief, Kristoff K.Roll. Within the company *d'un pays lointain*, which he founded with Florence Verney and Boutaina El Fekkak, he directs the texts he writes. In 2017, he created *Layla - à présent je suis au fond du monde*, a solo he wrote for Boutaina El Fekkak, adapted into a fictional work for France Culture in June 2017. In November 2019, he creates *Lisières*, with 7 actors, at the Théâtre de Vanves, in coproduction with La Comédie - Centre Dramatique National de Reims. <http://jeremiescheidler.com>

HUGO SOUBISE

After an initial training in Philosophy and Theatre Studies in Lyon, he joined the group 44 of the TNS drama school in dramaturgy (graduation in July 2019). While at the school, he collaborated on the creation of the show *SAIGON* by Caroline Guiela Nguyen, as well as on the workshops given by his company Les Hommes Approximatifs at the Maison Centrale in Arles, as part of the film project Les Engloutis. In autumn 2019, he will be working as an assistant and dramaturge on Martin Crimp's *Le reste, vous le connaissez par le cinéma* with Daniel Jeanneteau and the T2G, Théâtre de Gennevilliers. He is also dramaturge for the Cie A Vrai Dire, led by the author and director Vincent Ecrepont, with whom he will work again in 2022 on a text in progress: *Des Places*. In 2022 and 2023 he will collaborate with Mathilde Delahaye and Marie-Laure Crochant.

MANON WORMS

Trained at the ENS (Paris), then at the University of Paris X-Nanterre, Manon Worms is a director, playwright and researcher in Theatre Studies. In 2015, she directed *Si bleue, si bleue la mer* by Nis-Momme Stockmann in Paris, then co-directed short films in Chile. Between 2016 and 2020 she led a cycle of creations around the Chilean artist and activist Pedro Lemebel, which ended with the creation of the show *Cœurs Fugitifs* (2020), Artcena laureate in Plural Dramaturgies. She is the artistic director of the transdisciplinary artist collective KRASNA in Marseille, which she co-founded in 2016. As a dramaturge, she works with Les Hommes Approximatifs, Elise Vigneron, Myriam Soulanges, Alix Denambride, Adèle Gascuel, Brune Bleicher, Stéphane Braunschweig... She also runs workshops on theatre practice and/or theory. In 2020 she defended her doctoral thesis in Theatre Studies at the University of Lyon 2, on the omnipresence of the figure of the victim and the new emotional sharing of performances in contemporary European theatre.

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