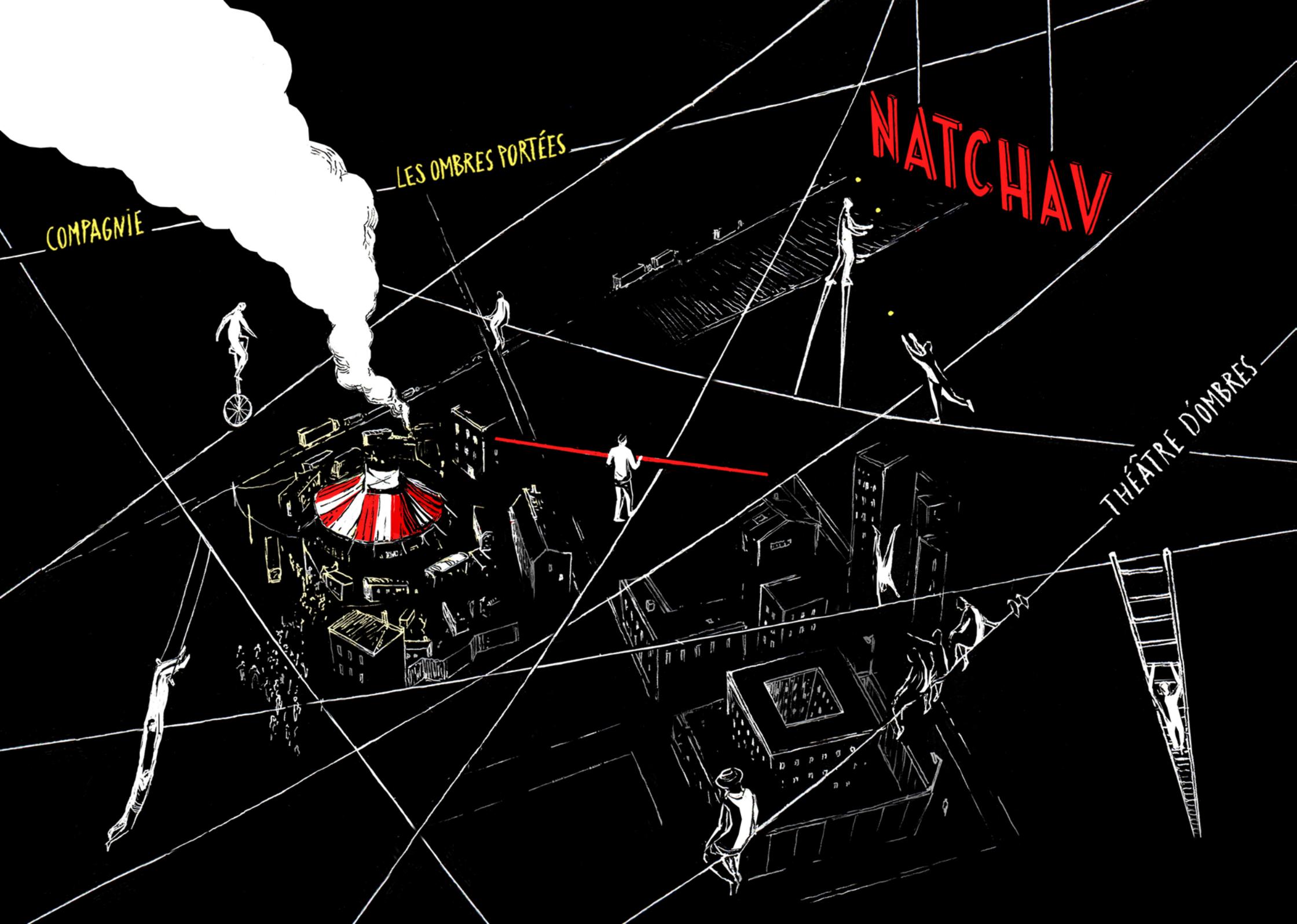


COMPAGNIE

LES OMBRES PORTÉES

NATCHAV

THÉÂTRE D'OMBRES





NATCHAV

Compagnie Les ombres portées

Shadow theatre with live music

Show with no spoken

Suitable for all ages, from 8 years old

Running time: 50 minutes, followed by an exchange with the audience

Premiered on December 2nd & 3rd 2019 at La Maison de la Culture de Nevers Agglomération

Idea and design: Les ombres portées

Puppets and lights: 4 puppeteers (alternating)
Erol Gülgönen, Florence Kormann, Frédéric Laügt, Marion Lefebvre, Christophe Pagnon, Claire Van Zande

Music and sound effects: 2 musicians (alternating)
Séline Gülgönen (clarinet), Jean Lucas (trombone, accordion), Simon Plane (trumpet, tuba, accordion, percussion), Lionel Riou (trumpet or trombone, accordion, percussion)

Lighting: 1 lighting director (alternating)
Nicolas Dalban-Moreynas, Thibault Moutin

Sound: 1 sound director (alternating)
Frédéric Laügt, Yaniz Mango, Corentin Vigot

Production and distribution: Christelle Lechat

Production and administration: Susanna Hsing

Margot Chamberlin helped build the puppets and performed with us until 2024.

With help from: Zoé Caugant (costumes), Léo Maurel (sound effect machines), Baptiste Bouquin (outside ear), Jean-Yves Pénafiel (outside eye).

Also thanks to: Francine Benotman, Jacques Bouault, Stéphane Revelant, Elsa Vanzande.

We dedicate this show to Olivier Cueto, a cherished member of the company who passed away in March 2020. He imagined, created and performed this show with us until the very end.

THE SHOW

At the first light of dawn, the Natchav circus arrives to town. Soon, the first blows of the sledgehammer ring out, and the sound of the immense canvas whipping through the air can be heard as it unfurls along the tent poles being hoisted towards the sky. But the authorities don't take such a poetic view and oppose this new arrival...The circus performers resist; an acrobat is arrested and a whole world becomes imprisoned.

Natchav, meaning "to go away, to run away" in Rromani, recounts the adventures of a circus that - to remain free - defies every rule, including the laws of gravity. Four puppeteers and two musicians/foley artists confront two worlds in total opposition, that of the circus and that of the prison. Like a film shot live on stage, they take us on an adventure while simultaneously revealing what goes on behind the scenes.

ARTISTIC STATEMENT

Natchav tackles the notion of freedom, an idea largely diminished due to overuse, so much so as to be left devoid of meaning by a world that controls, counts and submits.

With its roots in the preservation of a lifestyle of nomadism, independence, community, movement and play, the circus invites audiences on a journey into the extraordinary, the wonderful... Time is measured in the moment. There is even an expression in circus jargon: "the point of suspension", which describes the moment when an acrobat is free from the binds of laws, including that of gravity. In contrast, the primary purpose of a prison is the deprivation of liberty: it is there to punish and confine, with all that this implies in terms of permanent constraints, lack of space, solitude, inactivity and monotony. In addition to the lack of space, there is an excess of time.

The current difficulties facing most circuses reveal a fundamental discord between their way of life and the societies they live amongst: the progressive privatisation of public spaces prevents these communities from finding their place, the growing number of safety regulations generates changes and costs that they may not be able ensure... Moreover, borders are increasingly being conceived as tools for controlling the movement of people, whereas travel and nomadism look past identities and states.

The freedom that these circuses defend and which we want to explore with *Natchav* is a sentient and infectious idea; it is a point of departure, a perpetual movement inextricable to anyone who wants to feel alive.



A SCENOGRAPHY IN MOVEMENT

Following the French-style puppet stand of *Pekee-Nuee-Nuee* and the large-scale production of *Les Somnambules*, the company Les ombres portées continues its exploration of the world of shadow theatre with its third creation.

In an attempt to break with the linear nature of image-based narratives, this creation plays with a scenography aimed at freeing the audience from the traditional frontal character of shadow theatre.

On stage, in full view of the audience, the performers illuminate and manipulate the different sets and characters of the narration. Installed on mobile supports, the prison, cells, marquee and others are brought and arranged on stage as the story unfolds — their shadows projected in large on a panoramic screen at the back of the stage.

The spectator's eyes are drawn from one direction to the other by the projection of the shadows, the theatrical play of the puppeteers and the musicians on the stage.

These interwoven narratives participate in a multi-layered theatrical and scenic composition, allowing the audience to witness the making of the story as it happens.



SHADOW AND LIGHT

Both of the worlds encountered in *Natchav* lend themselves particularly well to the techniques of shadow theatre.

The world of the prison is a setting of opacity, secrecy and silence. It is never revealed what really happens within the cells. The truth is hidden behind a maze of walls and bars. The shadows reflect this dark, obscure and hidden dimension. What is shown of the prison is revealed through various angles and vantages. Cracks, prison bars, peepholes and cameras act as filters, providing an intimate glimpse inside.

On the other hand, in the dreamlike world of the circus, everything is visible: from the arrival of the caravans and the rigging of the tent to the smallest details of the acts themselves under the spotlight. The physical manipulation of the sets and characters in full view of the audience captures this raw exposure and provokes a feeling of tension in the audience comparable to that experienced during a real-life circus performance.

A CINEMATOGRAPHIC MONTAGE

The treatment of the plot is borrowed in part from the narrative techniques of noir novels and film narratives, mixing suspense with an array of twists and turns.

Like a camera, light serves as a guide for the narration, offering spectators a myriad of perspectives. Panning shots, zooms and cuts rhyme with the narration and create a dynamic reading of the story like a film shot live using multiple cameras.

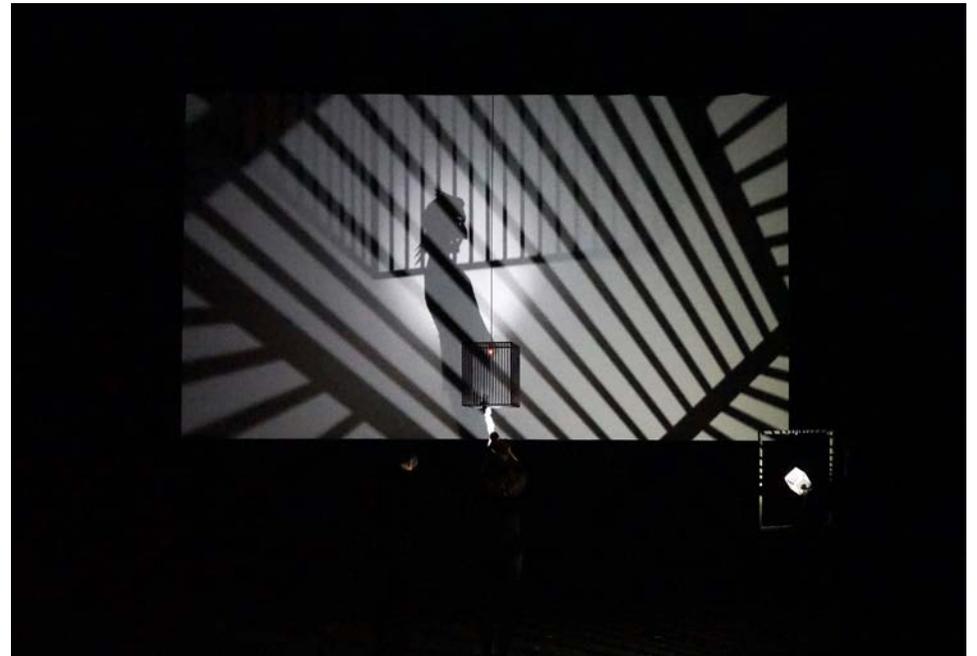
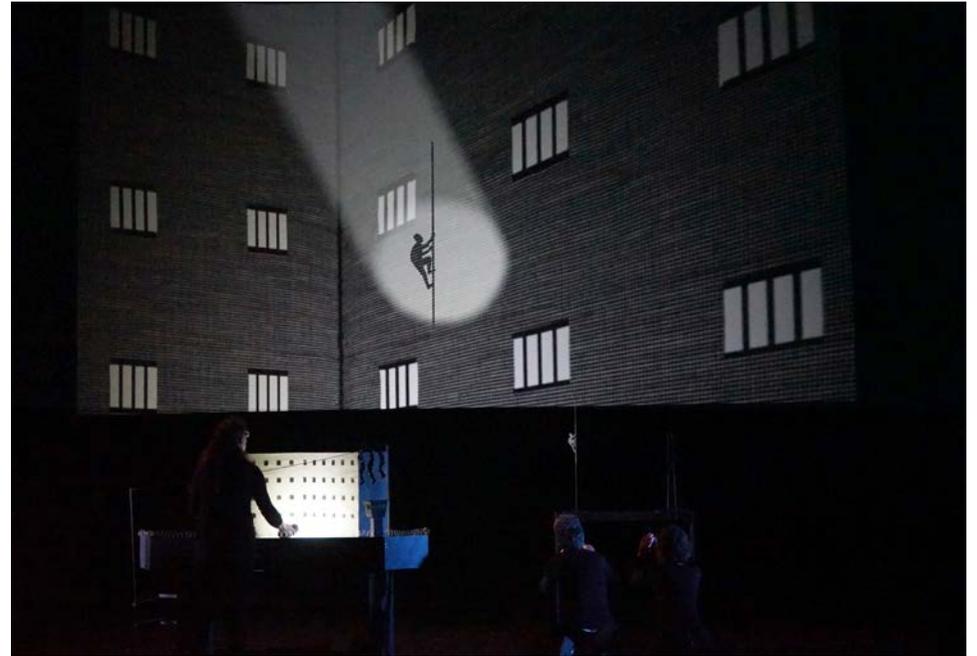
LIVE MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

The music, played on stage live and in full view of the audience by two multi-instrumentalists, features original compositions, musical improvisation and sound effects. Partly inspired by traditional circus themes, the musical score expands on the genre by adding a cinematographic dimension. As with live film concerts, the music actively participates in the narration and highlights or creates tension and surprises.

The work of a lutherie was incorporated to design singular instruments and sound effects, which act as acoustic counterparts to the visual devices.







Performance photos



Set decor and puppets





STAGE PLAN

For the staging of the show, a large cyclorama is placed at the back of the stage. It is framed by borders at the bottom, on the sides and at the top.

Several large-scale mobile sets are used to represent the different scenes of the narration. These sets and the puppets are manipulated live by 4 puppeteers and their shadows are projected onto the large screen at the back of the stage. As the show progresses, the sets are brought to and from the wings to the stage.

Two musicians, playing live side by side, are positioned downstage right.

Leg drapes are required, with either Italian or German front curtain openings depending on the theatre.

STAGE REQUIREMENTS

The audience is to be seated directly in front of the stage.

Total darkness is required for the room.

The stage must be raised or at ground level.

The stage must be covered in black vinyl dance flooring.

Stage dimensions (minimum) // German stage curtain opening (fly curtain)

Wall-to-wall clearance: 12.5 m

Depth: 9.5 m

Height to lighting rig: 6 m

Proscenium width: 9 m

Stage dimensions (ideal) // Typical stage curtain opening (swag curtain)

Wall-to-wall clearance: 16 m

Depth: 12 m

Height to lighting rig: 7.5 m

MAIN TECHNICAL INFORMATION

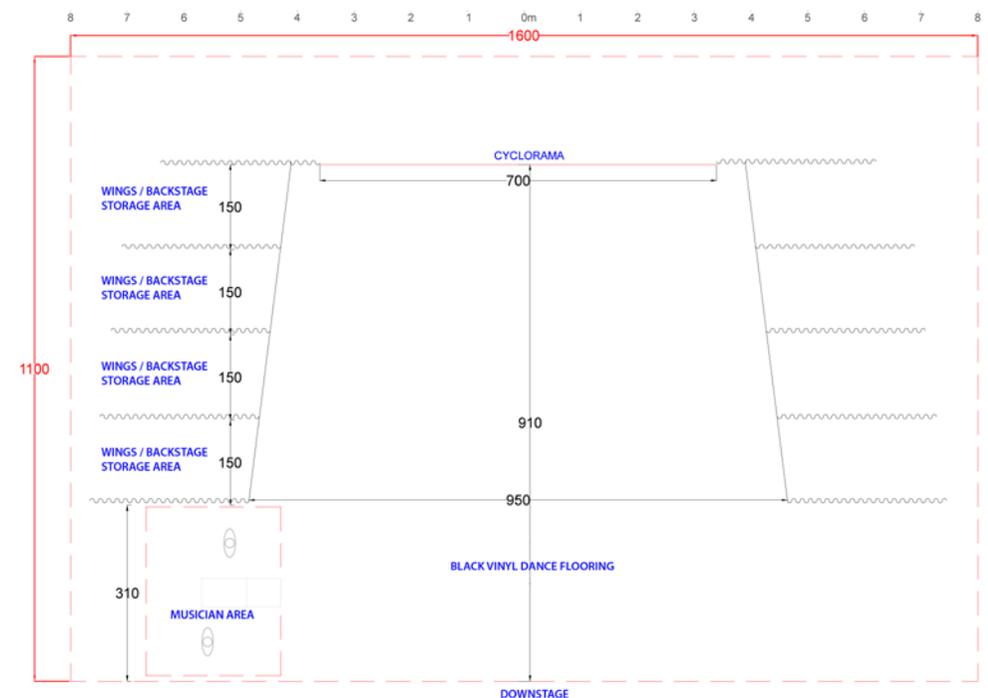
Touring company: 9 members (4 puppeteers, 2 musicians, 1 lighting technician, 1 sound technician, 1 tour manager)

Running time: 1 hour

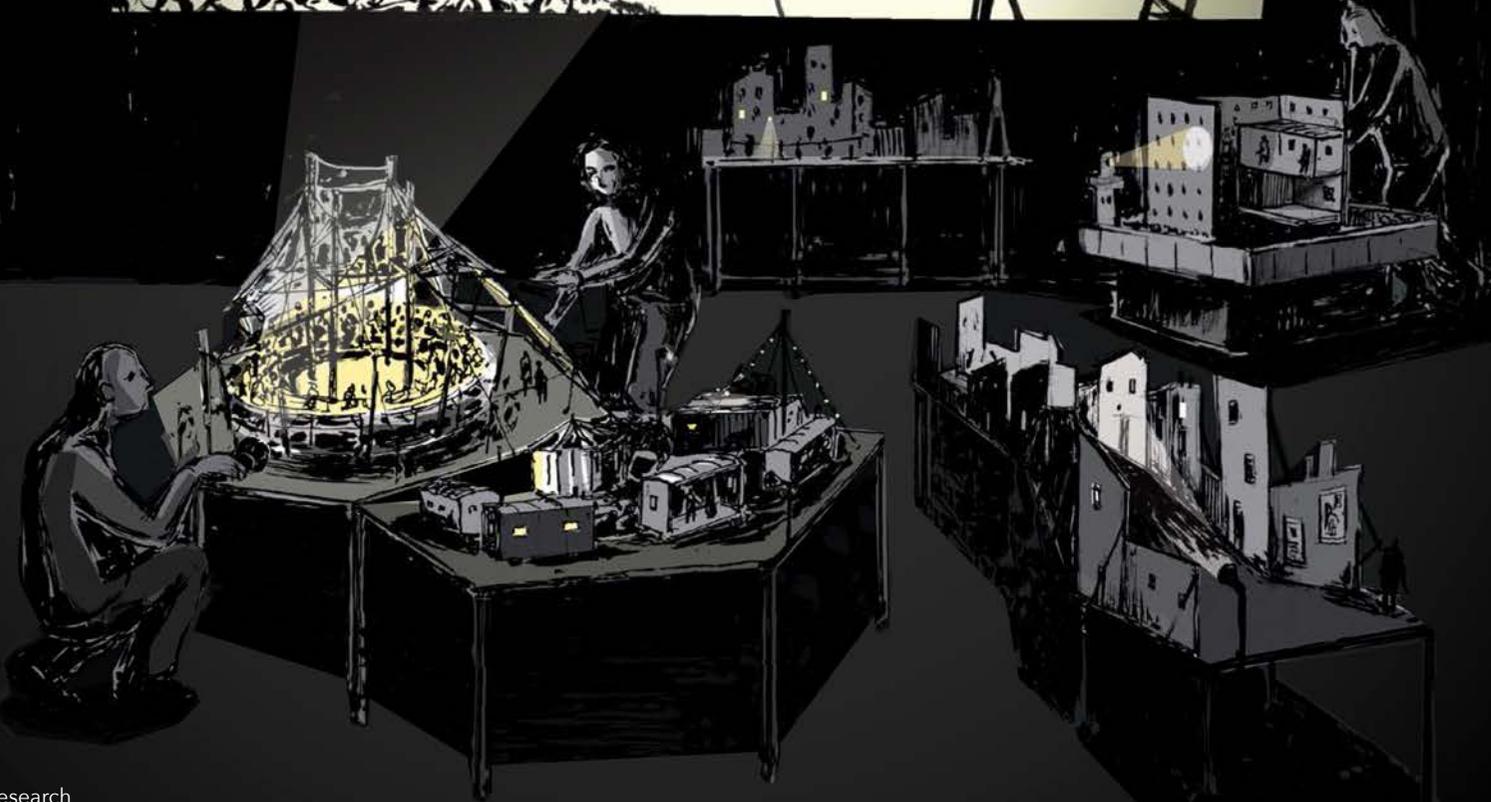
Capacity for all-ages performances: between 250 and 400 people (to be adjusted according to the seating configuration)

Capacity for school performances: between 250 and 300 people maximum

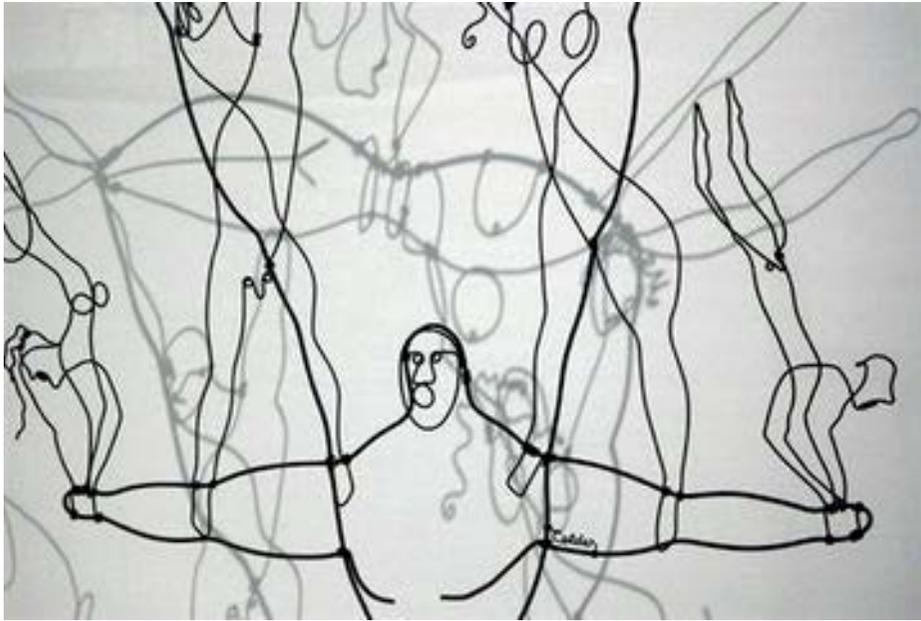
Installation: Advance set-up of drapery, lighting and sound system required + 4 installation and fitting sessions.



Typical stage layout



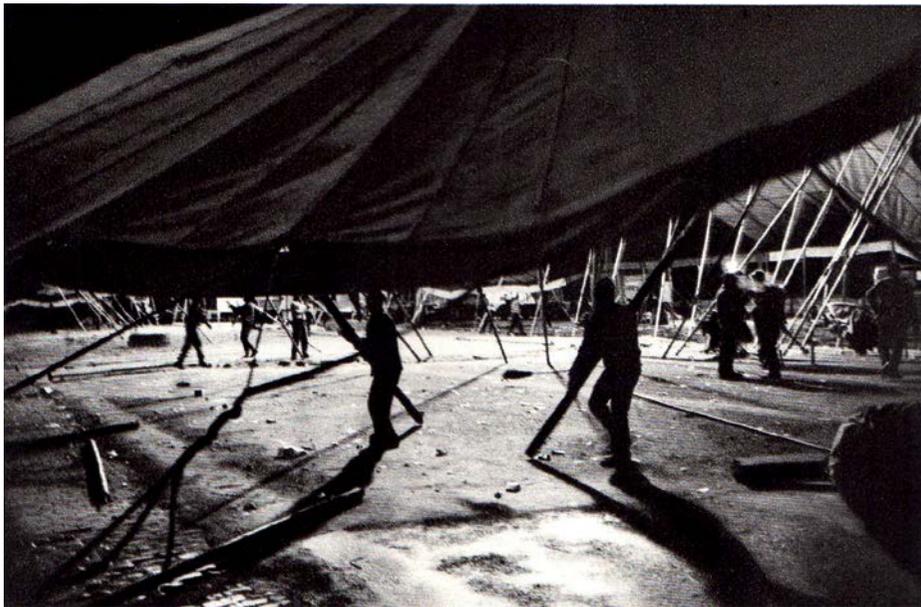
SOURCES AND INSPIRATIONS



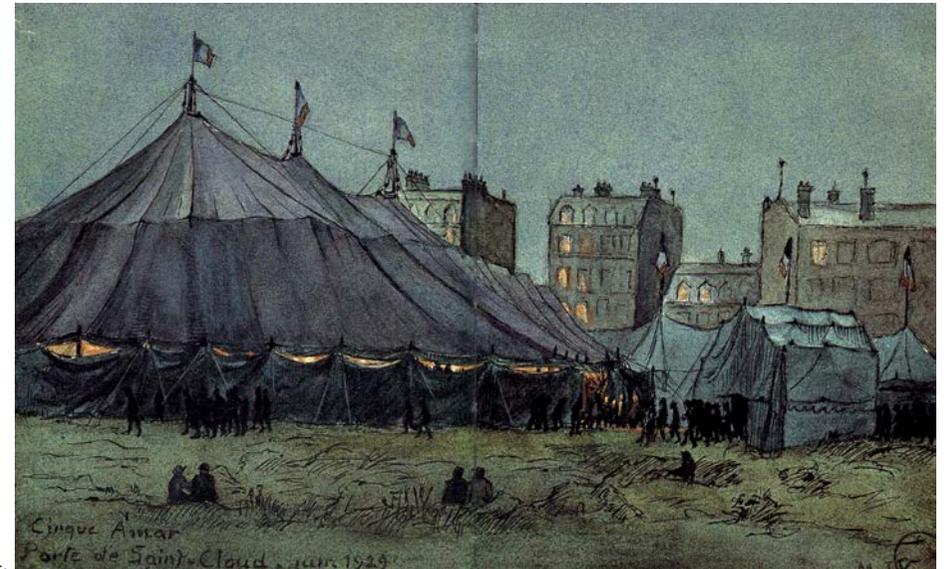
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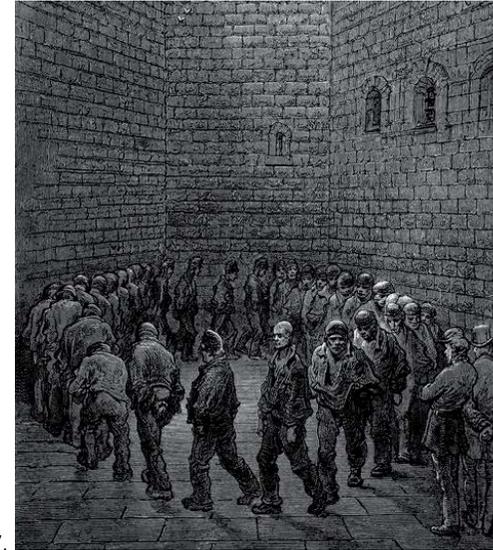
1. *The Brass Family*, brass wire, 1929, Alexander Calder
2. *Breaking Down the Grand Cirque de France During the Night*, 1963, Paul de Cordon, *Instants de Cirque*
3. *Un passage des Palacios*, Ringling Brother and Barnum & Bailey Circus, 1963, Paul de Cordon
4. *The Cirque Amar at Porte de St Cloud (Paris) in June 1929*, the Vesque Sisters



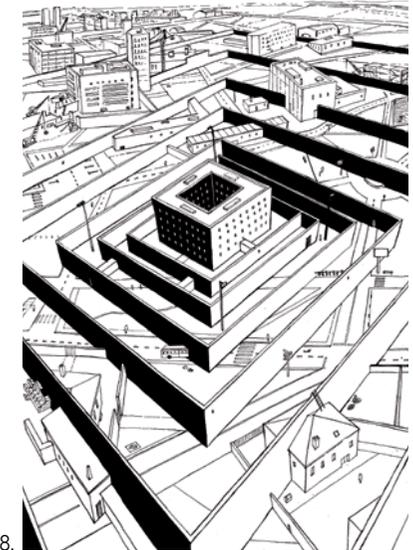
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L'Envolée, Serge Coutel, 1985
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Monstres en cavale, Cloé Mehdi, ed. Le Masque, 2014
A ceux qui se croient libres, Nadia Ménenger, ed. L'Insomniaque, 2009

FILMOGRAPHY

Man on a Tightrope, Elia Kazan, 1953
The Circus, Charlie Chaplin, 1969
Freaks, Tod Browning, 1932
Parade, Jacques Tati, 1974
People Who Travel, Jacques Feyder, 1938
Planète cirque, D Auclair and L Chevallier, documentary series, 1992–1993
Calder's Circus, Carlos Vilardebo, 1961
I clowns, F Fellini, 1971
Sawdust and Tinsel, I Bergman, 1953. I. Bergman 1953
Runaway train, Konchalovski, 1985
The Hole, Jacques Becker, 1960
Animal Factory, Steve Buscemi, 2000
Omblin, Stéphane Cazes, 2012
Down by law, Jim Jarmusch, 1986
A Man Escaped, Robert Bresson, 1956
Freedom for Us, René Clair, 1931
Starred Up, David Mackenzie, 2014

5. Screenshot from the film *Le Trou* de Jacques Becker, 1960

6. Aerial view of the prison in Fleury-Mérogis, Cliché Avia-Taxi

7. *Newgate Prison Courtyard*, Gustave Doré, 1872

8. Illustration for the newspaper *L'Envolée*, Erol Gülgönen

THE COMPANY

Created in 2009, Les ombres portées is a shadow theatre company composed of a collective of artists and technicians from a diverse range of backgrounds. For any given project, up to twenty members come together pooling their various expertises (music, stage design, construction, drawing, lighting, writing, etc.) to create a singular production.

Revisiting the art of shadow theatre, the company produces original creations for audiences of all ages. Performed both on the traditional stage and in public spaces, the shows interweave dynamic visual elements with live music. Each project is an opportunity to develop a new narrative approach, unique scenographic device and distinct musical score in line with the themes and ideas being explored and defended.

The shows *Pekee-nuee-nuee* (2011), *Les Somnambules* (2015), *Natchav* (2019) and *La Renverse* (2024) have been performed

throughout France and abroad.

In addition to producing shows, the company offers a wide range of outreach activities for all types of audiences, as well as scenographic projects.

The company is an associated artist with the Théâtre-Sénart (2024 to 2026) and the cultural centre Houdremont in La Courneuve (2025-2026). Previously, the company was an associated artist at La Faïencerie-Théâtre de Creil (2020 to 2023) and the recipient of a territorial residence with PIVO (2024 to 2025).

The company has been supported by the DRAC Île-de-France since 2020 and its activities have been funded by the Région Île-de-France since 2024.



The greatest stars of the flying trapeze circus, Ringling Brother and Barnum & Bailey Circus, 1935. Colour-adjusted image

TOURING

2019 - 2020 SEASON

Maison de la Culture de Nevers Agglomération • Le Théâtre, scène conventionnée, Laval • La Minoterie, scène conventionnée, Dijon • TJP, CDN Strasbourg – Grand Est • Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt avec l'Espace Germinal de Fosses, Goussainville • Espace Lino Ventura, Garges-lès-Gonesse • Espace des Arts, scène nationale, Chalon-sur-Saône

2020 - 2021 SEASON

Espace Marcel Carné / service culturel de La Norville, Saint-Michel-sur-Orge • Théâtre Charles Dullin, Le Grand-Quevilly • Les Rotondes, Luxembourg • À La Faïencerie, scène conventionnée, Creil • Théâtre Sénart, scène nationale, Lieusaint

2021 - 2022 SEASON

Théâtre Roger Barat, Herblay • Festival Mondial des Théâtres de Marionnettes, Charleville-Mézières • Théâtre du Cormier, Cormeilles en Paris • La Ferme du Buisson, scène nationale, Noisiel • Festival franco-allemand Loostik, Forbach • Théâtre des Quatre Saisons, Gradignan • Théâtre Chevilly-Larue André Malraux • L'Hectare, Vandôme • MA scène nationale – Pays de Montbéliard • La Mouche, Saint-Genis-Laval • Le Triangle / Festival Compli'Cité en partenariat avec Momix, Huningue • Festival Panoptikum, Nuremberg (Germany) • Les Bords de Seine, Espace culturel Alain-Poher, Ablon-sur-Seine • Maison de la Culture de Bourges • Le Carré, scène nationale, Château-Gontier • La Ferme de Bel Ebat, Guyancourt • Le Bateau Feu, scène nationale, Dunkerque • DSN, Dieppe scène nationale • Théâtre de Nîmes Bernadette Lafont / Odéon • Théâtre Le Dôme, Saumur • Le Dak, Schaan (Liechtenstein)

2022 - 2023 SEASON

Théâtre au Fil de l'eau, Pantin • Pôles en scènes à l'Espace Albert Camus, Bron • Escher Theater, Esch-sur-Alzette (Luxembourg) • Cité musicale à la BAM, Metz • acb, scène nationale, Bar le Duc • CIRCA, Auch • Espace d'Albret, Nérac • TSQY, Scène nationale, Saint Quentin en Yvelines • Théâtre Antoine Vitez, Ivry-sur-Seine • Le Sablier - Centre National de la Marionnette, Ifs • La Halle Ô Grains, Bayeux • Centre culturel Robert Desnos avec la Scène nationale de l'Essonne, Ris-Orangis • Théâtre de l'Espace - Les 2 scènes, scène nationale de Besançon • CCAM, scène nationale, Vandoeuvre-lès-Nancy • Théâtre Massalia, scène conventionnée, Marseille • Théâtre Le Sémaphore, scène conventionnée, Port-de-Bouc • Salle Jacques Brel avec Fontenay en scènes, Fontenay-sous-Bois • Théâtre Gérard-Philippe, Champagne-sur-Marne • Théâtre Jean Arp, scène conventionnée, Clamart

2023 - 2024 SEASON

Salle du Lignon, Vernier (Switzerland) • Théâtre & cinéma, Choisy-le-Roi • Le

Vilar, Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium) • Le Manège, scène nationale de Reims • Théâtre des Aspres, Thuir • TNP, Théâtre National Populaire, Villeurbanne • Théâtre Gérard Philipe, CDN, Saint-Denis • Centre des arts, Enghien-les-Bains • Le Grand R, scène nationale, La Roche-sur-Yon • 30CC with Boze Wolf Festival, Louvain (Belgium) • Cultural Center of Bruges (Belgium)

2024 - 2025 SEASON

SAMPO Festival, Helsinki (Finland) • Festival Cultura Nova, Heerlen (The Netherlands) • Festival MFEST, Le Tas de sable, CNMa et Cirque Jules Verne, Amiens • L'imaginaire, Centre des arts et de la culture, Douchy-les-Mines • Maison Folie Wazemmes, Lille • Festival Théâtre à tout âge - Théâtre de Cornouaille, scène nationale, Quimper • Espace La Maillette - Centre Morbihan Communauté, Locminé • Centre culturel Jacques Prévert, Villeparisis • Théâtre de la Foudre - CDN Normandie-Rouen, Petit-Quevilly • Le Théâtre, Aurillac • Agora, pôle national cirque, Boulazac • Théâtre Paul Eluard, Bezons • Philharmonie de Paris

SAISON 2025 - 2026

Le Théâtre, scène nationale de Mâcon • Espace Jéliote, CNMa, Oloron Sainte-Marie • Théâtre La passerelle, scène nationale de Gap et des Alpes du Sud • Le Manège Maubeuge, scène nationale transfrontalière • L'Azimut au Théâtre La Piscine, Châtenay-Malabry dans le cadre du festival MARTO • Théâtre de Saint-Maur-des-Fossés • Théâtre Jean Vilar, Vitry-sur-Seine

For a detailed agenda, please take a look at our website.





SUPPORT

Co-productions and residencies:

Espace Périphérique - Mairie de Paris - Parc de la Villette • La Fabrique, Messeugne • La Faïencerie, théâtre de Creil • La Ferme du Buisson, scène nationale de Marne-la-Vallée • Festival Momix et le CREA, scène conventionnée Jeune Public d'Alsace, Kingersheim • La Fonderie, Le Mans • Le Théâtre, scène conventionnée de Laval • Maison de la Culture de Nevers Agglomération • La Maison des Enfants du Quercy, Le Bouyssou • MA scène nationale – Pays de Montbéliard • La Minoterie, Scène convention Art, Enfance, Jeunesse, Dijon • Le TANDEM, scène nationale, Arras-Douai • Le Tas de Sable, Amiens • Théâtre La Licorne, Dunkerque • Théâtre-Sénart, scène nationale • TJP, CDN Strasbourg - Grand Est

Grants:

Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication - DRAC Île-de-France • Région Ile-de-France

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