

AND...

LIVE BROADCAST OF THE SHOW

On facebook.com/festival.avignon
and in the Nave of Images, église des Célestins (except July 12 and 19)

THE GENDER LIBRARY

July 2 to 28 (except July 8, 14, 15 and 22) from 10:00 to 18:00, bibliothèque Ceccano

THE WORKSHOPS OF THOUGHT

Jack Ralite Day with David Bobée, July 12, Maison Jean Vilar
Dialogue artists-audience with David Bobée, July 15 at 16:30,
site Louis Pasteur Supramuros de l'Université d'Avignon

CINEMATIC TERRITORIES

cinéma Utopia-manutention

Entre deux sexes by Régine Abadia,
encounter with Vincent Guillot, July 15 at 11:00

Laurence Anyways by Xavier Dolan,
encounter with Arnaud Alessandrin, July 15 at 14:00

Leto by Kirill Serebrennikov,
encounter with David Bobée, July 17 at 14:00

Ouvrir la voix, by Amandine Gay,
encounter with David Bobée and Rébecca Chaillon, July 18 at 14:00

NAVE OF IMAGES

Excerpt of *Platonov* (2002) by Éric Lacascade, assisted by David Bobée,
and excerpt of *After / Before* (2005) with David Bobée,
July 16 at 16:50, église des Célestins

TOUR DATES AFTER THE FESTIVAL

- May 4, 11, 18, 25 and June 1st, 2019, Curieux Printemps,
CDN de Normandie-Rouen

LADIES, GENTLEMEN, AND THE REST OF THE WORLD

The Ceccano garden will once again this year turn into an open stage, an agora where a series about political activism will unfold, where the invisible will be seen and heard. An artist scandalised by inequalities, David Bobée has chosen to use that space to explore the misunderstandings, taboos, and preconceived ideas about a concept nowadays most useful to redefine the right not to be discriminated against: gender. Using sociological research, but also literary and poetic texts, as a starting point, the director invites amateurs and artists to embody, on this public place, one of the liveliest of modern debates. In this zone of judgment-free speech, life stories will allow all to understand everyday constraints and unconscious “norms,” but also to celebrate the beauty of diversity and cast away gender to be free together. Performances, readings, role-playing games, workshops... all that and more make up the different episodes, in which struggle and controversy can't keep away lightness and poetry. David Bobée welcomes us all: *“the series allows people to share a moment of critical analysis, a point of view about the world that affects us all, without rejecting anyone, and quite simply offers keys to think about reality.”*

DAVID BOBÉE

A director and scenographer, David Bobée mixes theatre with other techniques and disciplines—video, light, dance, circus, music, and cinema—and works with actors, dancers, or acrobats, professionals or amateurs, some of them handicapped. He has been the director of the Centre dramatique national de Normandie-Rouen, the first interdisciplinary CDN, since 2013. A member of the collective Décoloniser les Arts and of the Collège de la diversité within the Ministry of Culture, David Bobée defends, through both his practice and his public stance, an intersectional approach to the fight against discrimination, and the setting up of positive actions against discrimination in culture.

The bibliography of the show is on sale
at the bookshop in the Maison Jean Vilar.

72th
EDITION

In order to bring you this edition, over 1,750 people, artists, technicians, and organisational staff, have worked tirelessly and enthusiastically for months. More than half of them are state-subsidised freelance workers.

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FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON 72°

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JARDIN DE LA BIBLIOTHÈQUE CECCANO

INTERVIEW WITH DAVID BOBÉE

The serial format used in the Ceccano Garden is very different from your usual creations. Did you see it as a challenge?

David Bobée: The very concept of daily encounters in the Ceccano Garden is fascinating. Performing outside in broad daylight, you have to take all that into consideration, even the question of the stage. Here, I love the fact that access to culture is free, as well as the possibility to encounter current political texts through the pleasure of theatre. The idea of defending politically engaged art in such an open place is particularly interesting. It's an expression of the very essence of the Festival d'Avignon. The format of the series leads to two issues: you have to be able to talk to spectators who will only see one episode, that is, picture each encounter as separate, with a beginning and an end, but you also have to think about those who will see all of it, all of the season, so to speak. I'm using the vocabulary of television. You have to work on each episode as an autonomous unit, while at the same time never losing track of the overall dramaturgy. This summer, what will bring us together every day for three weeks is the fight for true equality and against all forms of discrimination, in particular those having to do with gender. Every step is here to explore this question from a different angle, complementing the ones that come before and after. Working with nonprofessional actors and simple citizens is part of the mission I've been tasked with, and highlights the legacy of popular theatre and the spirit of decentralisation in Avignon. That's why I think it's important to work with people who aren't familiar with the Festival. I don't know if I'd call it a challenge, but I know I'm not used to this kind of guerrilla theatre, light and steeped in everyday life; if you know the dramatic forms I'm partial to, you know they're drastically different and often flirt with the spectacular.

How did you create continuity between each "episode" while keeping the show accessible to newcomers?

The dramatic structure was conceived with Arnaud Alessandrin, a doctor in sociology and specialist in gender studies, who brought all the scientific material we needed, and Ronan Chéneau, a writer with whom I've worked for a long time and who brings his poetic and political language. In order to tackle the subject from all possible angles, we collected a large number of texts and chose to use several different dramatic stratagems: debate situations, participative workshops, personal accounts, and public readings. There's something of the ancient agora. There are thirteen episodes in total, and we're trying to be situationists, involving the audience as much as possible in a different way every day. The series begins with a simple situation, an introductory episode in which we present the vocabulary and programme, in order to provide people with the keywords and concepts of the theme we'll be tackling throughout July, so that we all understand and speak the same language. It's a somewhat parodic situation which allows us to give everyone a shared vocabulary, but most importantly a pool of knowledge. For instance, can we tell the difference between biological sex, sexuality, and gender, with the specificity of each word and concept?

There are multiple sensitive things at play here. What is your approach? What do you want to tell the audience of the Festival d'Avignon?

First and foremost, we want to fight this distorted version of universalist thinking according to which since we're all equal, we should all be the same, which erases all differences and specificities, and makes impossible any active policy to achieve true equality.

This approach makes it easier to understand how differences unite us rather than separate us. I fight every day for both ethnic diversity and gender diversity to be recognised. French law defines twenty-four discrimination criteria, and that's why the group of nonprofessional actors we're currently imagining and living the different episodes with needed to be diverse and eclectic. We conducted workshops in June before the performances with five different groups, including two mixed groups, one group of women, and one group of children. Student-actors from the École de la Comédie in Saint-Étienne will also join us for the series. This very powerful principle of transmission is indeed primordial. They're accompanied by a group of actors: Radouan Leflahi, Grégory Miegé, Adrián de la Vega, Gerty Dambury, and actress Rebecca Chailion, whose humour allow her to do and say anything. We'll use a different format every day: participative forms, workshops, carte blanches, readings. The second episode focuses on the idea that we're all a minority, in order to redefine the concept of diversity and make a list of all discrimination criteria. There's no majority population anymore, only different minorities; we're all someone else's other. The third episode is a class on masculinity given by a drag king questioning everything that makes masculinity—how do you stand in public when you're a man, for instance?... The next day, we'll talk about the "Matilda effect", or how our society has erased the names of women from history in favour of men, in order to understand the evolution of discriminations against women... It will allow us to question the place given to bodies in our modern worlds, both male and female bodies, their presence and their freedom in the public space. What does it mean to be a woman in everyday life? At stake is our understanding of all the little fights and the great struggles that are forever being fought. There will be a fake ceremony for the "non-racist, non-gendered" Molière awards, testimonies by trans people with Clémence Zamora Cruz or by intersex people with Vincent Guillot (in an episode entitled "Tiresias 2018"), guests like Carole Thibaut, Béatrice Dalle, Phia Ménard, Denis Lavant, Gurshad Shaheman, Malik Djoudi, Agnès Tricoire, etc., carte blanches with Rokhaya Diallo and Virginie Despentes... One episode in particular will ask the fundamental question of singularity and of the freedom to be, to think, to express oneself, and to create, by focusing on the figure of artist Kirill Serebrennikov.

What do you hope to experience with the audience of the Festival d'Avignon?

The series is built like a political journey, a place for discussion and popular education about a topic which, by questioning some of the tools we use to understand the world, aims to open up the discussion as well as the way we look at things. The episodes will be both serious because of their political subject and humorous because of the people tackling it; the goal is to make our way through July in a pertinent, brave, and gentle way, to question the concept of true equality. We'll use this concept of a "poor" theatre, without resorting to the spectacular. The garden is enough in and of itself, it's a soothing environment for the actors and the audience. It's the democratic question of a collective exchange and of communication in general, very important here, that will unfold in the form of a discussion. The series allows the audience and the participants to share, through theatre, a moment of critical analysis, a point of view on the world which involves us all, without leaving anyone on the sidelines, and gives us keys to think about reality. True equality needs to be redefined. The idea is to bring several different entities together, the Ceccano Garden isn't a place of artificiality but truly a place of sincerity in our gestures and our words.

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Interview conducted by Moira Dalant and translated by Gaél Schmidt-Cléach