

AND...

CINEMATIC TERRITORIES

Tomboy, by Céline Sciamma, encounter with Sophie Cattani, actress,
July 12 at 14:00, cinéma Utopia-Manutention

THE WORKSHOPS OF THOUGHT

Women in the performing arts, should we worry about a great replacement?
Gender struggle or class struggle? with Sophie Cattani,
Région Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, July 13 at 14:30,
site Louis Pasteur Supramuros de l'Université d'Avignon

TOUR DATES AFTER THE FESTIVAL

- September 21 to October 13, 2018, Théâtre Ouvert
Centre national des dramaturgies contemporaines, Paris
- March 29, 2019, Théâtre_Arles
Scène conventionnée art et création - nouvelles écritures

UFO(S)

OVNI(S) (UFO(S)), or, an encounter with the alien. A succession of characters, and a succession of words. Facing us, every one of them relates their discovery of a UFO and their experience, and tells us of this feeling of connection, reconnection, even communion, with themselves, if not with the world. The head of a company, a delivery man, a student... One after the other, they share their lives and enjoin us, in their "before" and their "after," to grasp the thread of their lives, the moment when things changed, the instant of realisation. The theatre stage turns into a sound stage, and invites us on a journey from one corner of the planet to the other. A journey during which we'll meet apparently normal people who don't know one another but share this need to tell their story. "*UFO(S) is about our modern, hyper-connected world, in which temporal fissures or emotional pauses sometimes swallow some of us.*" When civilisation meets the other and feels the need to create a modern mythology. None of which has anything to do with religion, even if we do talk of heavens...

COLLECTIF ILDI ! ELDI

Sophie Cattani and Antoine Oppenheim are ildi ! eldi. As founding members of this collective born in 2008, they strive to play a part in every step in its creative process. As directors, actors, dramatists, or video makers, they journey through a theatre they want to be simple, funny, and flexible in its relationship to fiction and reality. They like to grapple with dramatic and non-dramatic texts to better live them onstage. They recently created a series of short plays about cinema, in collaboration with writer Olivia Rosenthal: *Antoine & Sophie font leur cinéma*.

72th
EDITION

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

FESTIVAL-AVIGNON.COM



#FDA18



FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON 72°

JULY 7 8 9 10 11 | THÉÂTRE BENOÎT-XII

INTERVIEW WITH SOPHIE CATTANI AND ANTOINE OPPENHEIM

UFO(S). A striking word, idea, and concept... How did it all begin?

Sophie Cattani: It started with a series of witness accounts gathered and recorded by Russian playwright Ivan Vyrypaev. A raw material collected throughout the world via the internet, from people who claim to have been in contact with extraterrestrials. It all began with the discovery of those accounts collected by Vyrypaev, and our desire to turn them into a show, or more precisely into a film co-written with novelist Jérôme Game. We explain at the beginning of the show how we wrote the screenplay, when the project was still to make a feature film based on those interviews. But due to production issues, the film was never made, and we turned to the theatre. Several characters/witnesses follow one another on the stage to tell the details of their experiences in the form of a monologue. That was the basis of our work.

Antoine Oppenheim: The “screenplay” is about a journey across the world, like a state of the world address, in which entirely unconnected and anonymous people share their emotions and private thoughts. *UFO(S)* is about our modern world and its hyper-connectivity, in the middle of which still appear temporal rifts, or emotional pauses, which can swallow some of us. At the centre of this state of hyper-agitation and information overload, isolation and inertia reign supreme, it becomes difficult to tell reality from its virtual counterpart, and consumers feel like they're the ones being consumed; those people therefore experience a moment of extreme connection, of communion perhaps, first with themselves, then with the world. They describe a moment of revelation, of absolute and increased meaning of the world, a moment of pure and temporary focus and understanding, like at the end of a quest; that's what they call this moment of “contact with a UFO,” and which they experience without being aware of it. A company CEO, a UPS driver, a yoga-practicing student, a video game programmer, a record store clerk, all talk about their lives before and what happened after this moment of realisation.

The UFO is an object or a concept onto which it is easy to project images. What did you choose to focus on? What will the stage look like?

Sophie Cattani: We asked writer Jérôme Game to write a screenplay based on this series of accounts, a screenplay that would describe images, atmospheres, and places. The stage will therefore be relatively minimalistic, sometimes littered with cinema props, and doused in artificial light. Part of the characters' experiences is impossible to explain and thus to show, so we play with this impossibility to visually represent it and place all our trust in this act of oral sharing, as if they were telling you about the film, with words that try to describe those feelings and that inner light. We have fun talking about this impossibility to show.

Any visual representation would be a letdown compared to the experience as it is told. That's why we called on Jérôme Game, a novelist and poet, to write a text that would frame those monologues, a technical and poetic description of a film. The show is therefore built like a montage of voices. The embodied writing of the testimonies joins Jérôme Game's more cinematographic and visual writing, which zooms in and out. It all allows us to move from one country and one character to the next. To counter our infinite consumption of images, this show contains none. Only bodies, people coming together to try to tell us about their experience. The sound design by Chloé Thevenin also evokes cinema. The idea is to stimulate the imagination by creating mental images.

Having characters directly tell the audience private stories in the first person creates an intimate situation, almost like a confession.

Sophie Cattani: The “I” is at the heart of those monologues, which reveals a strong cult of the individual, it truly is a succession of solitudes. This portrait gallery also doubles up as an effective and relevant state of the world, and reveals in each of us an aspiration to something else. Those characters describe rather simple events, which we might almost call “naïve,” as if they remembered how to breathe for the first time. Their accounts are very sincere. The two types of writing—the personal testimony on the one hand, the cinematographic screenplay on the other—are always intertwined, which allows for a direct address and a style of performance deeply connected to the audience, to move back and forth between narration and embodiment through the performance. We want the audience to be actively involved through those speeches.

Antoine Oppenheim: We created our collective with a desire for a rather simple, very direct and open theatre, pushing the concept of detachment to its breaking point. Nothing much happens in terms of action, but the avenues it opens up in the imagination can be infinite. It doesn't mean we're just sitting still on chairs, our theatre isn't very formal, there's a casual, everyday-like quality to the performances. Especially since it's about one's inner life, which means each and every one of us can empathise and maybe recognise him- or herself in it. All those elements, all those confessions happen live.

—
Interview conducted by Moira Dalant and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach