

AND...

SUJETS À VIF - WITH THE SACD

Jardin de la Vierge du lycée Saint-Joseph

Programme A, July 8-14, 11:00

Ezéchiël and the sound of shadow, Koffi Kwahulé and Michel Risse*Incidence 1327*, Gaëlle Bourges and Gwendoline Robin

Programme B, July 8-14, 18:00

The Same Thing, Joachim Lатарjet and Nikolaus*Bulletproof Laughter*, Julien Mabilia Bissila and Adèll Nodé-Langlois

Programme C, July 19-25, 11:00

(Untitled) Humpty Dumpty, Sir Alice and Cristina Kristal Rizzo*Accents*, David Somló and Claudia Triozzi

Programme D, July 19-25, 18:00

Bastards, Mathieu Desseigne-Ravel and Michel Schweizer*The Hatching of the gorillas who fall in love too easily*, Jann Gallois and Lazare

NAVE OF IMAGES (screenings)

20 years of Sujets à vif, every morning from July 8 to 26 (except 14 and 20),

Église des célestins

LE SUJET DES SUJETS
20 YEARS OF SUJETS À VIF

An explorer of places and relationships, Frédéric Ferrer will dress up as the master of ceremony to unveil the secrets of the Sujets à vif: what is under that stage? What is really at play in the Jardin de la Vierge? Based on encounters and inventiveness, the mythical "Sujets" couldn't celebrate their twentieth birthday without a few guests and without imagining for themselves a new destiny, and maybe a major one, within the Festival.

FRÉDÉRIC FERRER

Since 1994, Frédéric Ferrer, actor, director, and writer, has explored onstage the theories and scientific experiments revolving around the climate, madness, and the Anthropocene, mapping with his shows of absurd geography the relationship between Man and space in general, spaces in particular, and thus to himself.

GUESTS

JULY 8 Mélissa Von Vépy

JULY 9 Olivier Dubois

JULY 10 Aude Lachaise

JULY 12 Jacques Bonnaffé

JULY 13 Johanne Saunier

JULY 14 Phia Ménard

JULY 19 D'De Kabal

JULY 20 Josef Nadj and Dominique Mercy

JULY 21 Claire Diterzi

JULY 23 Nadia Beugré

JULY 24 Sylvain Prunenec

JULY 25 Agnès Sourdillon

71st
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 71^eJULY 8 9 10 | 12 13 14 AND 19 20 21 | 23 24
JARDIN DE LA VIERGE DU LYCÉE SAINT JOSEPH

INTERVIEW WITH FRÉDÉRIC FERRER

How did you construct the *Sujet des sujets*? Will it be a historical review, or a *Sujet* itself?

Frédéric Ferrer: I met with the successive directors and administrators of the Festival d'Avignon and the SACD who created and worked on the *Sujets à vif*. And in parallel to that, I met with the artists I wanted to work with—I'm inviting one of them every evening. Picking artists among the 240 who took part in the 120 *Sujets à vif* over the past 20 years was difficult. At the same time, the *Sujets* have always been based on the encounter between two artists; it would have been a shame to celebrate them on my own... So: who? How do I pick twelve of them? According to what criteria? To answer those questions, I watched recordings of all the *Sujets*, taking notes throughout. I slowly created new categories based on what I saw—the way they used the statue of the Virgin, the architecture, outside elements, themes. I didn't pick my "favourite" *Sujets*. Failures and misunderstandings are also part of their history. I therefore looked for themes that, even if they remain tied to my subjectivity, come close to a relative objectivity, something I can explain. I call on artists who pointed at the heart of a question that I want to explore. Who better integrated the Virgin into their show, for instance? I call on that artist to talk about all those who used the statue in their *Sujet*. And it's in this encounter that everything happens. In that sense, *Le Sujet des sujets* will contain a sort of different "mini-*Sujet*" every night. The general form of the show will be that of a sort of conference, a celebration to show people what has been happening in that place for the past twenty years. I calculated that if I wanted to talk about every project, I'd have twenty-two seconds to spend on each one of them. So I didn't choose that option. But explaining why I didn't, and the reason behind my choice, it's necessarily going to take me some time.

Was your creative process modelled on the "history" of the show?

Probably. What's an anniversary that's supposed to talk about the first twenty years of something? You can of course talk about what happened, but there's also the specific context of the place—and many of the artists who took part in the programme explored its architecture, its surroundings, etc. What's this building? What's happening here when the Festival isn't on? I'm fascinated by all those questions. Why does the biogeography of this tower keep changing? I'd already questioned, in my own *Sujet à vif* created with Simon Tanguy, *Allonger les toits [Lengthening the Roofs]*, the disappearance of the palm tree—why was it replaced by magnolia? Why did the tree disappear altogether at some point? There were some beautiful trees in this courtyard, and now they're gone... Why were the walls originally bare, and are now covered in vines? What happened, who made that choice? When the *Sujets à vif* started, twenty years ago, there was no Virgin. It was called the Jardin de la Vierge, but without a Virgin. Why? Where does that story come from...? I went there to investigate, I met the people who work in that Jesuit secondary school: the archivist, the careers counsellor, the people in charge of pastoral activity. I found another Virgin, in a broom closet behind a small chapel that overlooks the garden, and about which you

don't know when you're watching a *Sujet*. You'd think it was the windows to an office, or a house. What I'm proposing is a "counter history" or an "alternative history" of the Jardin.

As the master of ceremony, do you have any specific wishes for this event?

Any anniversary asks the question of the future. What are we celebrating? Why do we study perspectives: to encourage development, to continue the same way? Shouldn't the celebration also explore new avenues—however harebrained they are—that would allow us to imagine an evolution within the programme? I have no legitimacy to influence its future, no one's saying that. So it won't take itself too seriously. But if we consider that this event is the combination of an encounter between two artists and an unexpected form, then this is what it brings to my mind: we live in a time where we absolutely need, as a matter of necessity, to come up with new narratives about the world in order to escape the deceptive narratives that are leading us straight to disaster. We are witness to a rapid disappearance of all living things around us, which threatens the future of our own species. This analysis is shared by many scientists throughout the world, who describe in their work this sixth massive extinction we're currently going through. To fight against it, anthropologists, philosophers—Bruno Latour, Philippe Descola, and all those working on those questions—have shown that we have no other solution than to come up with new narratives that would allow us to project ourselves differently into the world. If you think about it within the framework of the Festival, the one event that tries the most to come up with new narratives is the *Sujets à vif*. Could this small thing in the Jardin de la Vierge in the lycée Saint-Joseph be the spark, the beam to light a new path? Wouldn't its exceptional longevity within the Festival d'Avignon be a sign of its hyper-relevance in the world? And if the *Sujets à vif* are at the heart of this new history of the world we have to come up with, then we need to share them with the audience a lot more, so why confine them to a tiny space? It's them that should be in the Cour d'honneur! Alright, I might be pushing the idea past its breaking point, but it's a way to imagine a different future for this event.

Is it that absurd, when the opportunity to create a stable understanding with one's neighbours seems to have been weakened so?

Maybe not, you're right. The other, who when talking about the *Sujets à vif* is an artist, comes with his art, his form of expression, he is somewhere else and yet you're going to have to create together. My idea is this: the *Sujets à vif*, which are a place of encounter between two artists, could later be a place of encounter between an artist and another human being, regardless of whether they are an artist, or maybe even something non-human, in order to come up with new perspectives.

Interview conducted by Marion Canelas and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach