

AND...

SUB-SAHARAN
AFRICA

SHOWS FOCUS ON SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

THE WORKSHOPS OF THOUGHT

What cultural diversity on european stages with in particular Seydou Boro, Kettly Noël, Salia Sanou, *Alternatives théâtrales*, July 14 at 11:00

CINEMATIC TERRITORIES

Timbuktu, by Abderrahmane Sissako / Q&A with Kettly Noël / July 13 at 11:00

LE SUJET DES SUJETS – 20 years of *Sujets à vif*

Conception Frédéric Ferrer, with Nadia Beugré, July 23 at 20:30, Jardin de la Vierge du lycée Saint-Joseph

NAVE OF IMAGES (projections) – 20 years of *Sujets à vif*

Tapis rouge by Nadia Beugré and Seb Martel (2014), July 24 at 11:00, Église des Célestins

AFTER THE FESTIVAL

Tichèlbè on February 7-8, 2018, Halles de Schaerbeek, Brussels

Since the 1990s, contemporary dance has become a fixture of the African cultural landscape, to the point of becoming a real part of the continent's cultural heritage. The transmission of works from this repertoire by a new generation of dancers is at the heart of this programme; its three shows have all left a mark on their era and won the Prix Découverte RFI at the Choreographic Encounters of Africa and the Indian Ocean, an itinerant biennale dedicated to creation from the continent.

TICHÈLBÈ

A woman tries to find balance between her two personalities. A man enters, seeming determined: what does he want, and will he let himself be caught up in her problems? Between the protagonists then begins a constant game that brings them closer together, sometimes in surreal ways.

KETTLY NOËL

Dancer, choreographer, and actress born in Haiti and working in Bamako, she is the director of the Festival Dense Bamako Danse and of the cultural centre Donko Seko, a space for training, choreographic creation, and for the development of contemporary dance as a tool for socialisation in Mali.

LOST AT SEA

With their reinterpretation of this piece influenced by urban culture and which questions the order of the world, Nina Kipré and Nadia Beugré, who also perform in the show, pay homage to the late choreographer Béatrice Kombé, the politically-active founder of the Tché-Tché company.

NADIA BEUGRÉ AND NINA KIPRÉ

Nadia Beugré studied dance at the Dante Théâtre, where she explored traditional Ivorian dances. She then worked with Seydo Boro and Dorothee Munyaneza, and created her own shows. In 1997, she accompanied Béatrice Kombé in the creation of the Tché-Tché company, where she met Nina Kipré, a dancer and choreographer, and the director of the DanceRaum festival, who as a child learnt traditional dances and began her career with the Djolem Artistic Ensemble and the Lakimado company.

FIGNINTO - THE PIERCED EYE

Figinto (blind man in Bambara) reflects on the condition of the modern man, always in a hurry, vulnerable, torn by accumulation, obsessed with the passage of time to the point that he no longer knows how to take the time to meet new people, make friends, or love...

SEYDOU BORO AND SALIA SANOU

Trained in Ouagadougou, they started dancing together in creations by Mathilde Monnier and created their first show in 1996. In 2006, they founded La Termitière in Burkina Faso, the first centre for choreographic development in Africa, and organised the Dialogues du corps festival. They parted ways in 2010, but continue to regularly come together to work on common projects.

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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INTERVIEW WITH SEYDOU BORO AND SALIA SANOU, NADIA BEUGRÉ AND NINA KIPRÉ, KETTLY NOËL

Seydou Boro and Salia Sanou, what was the context for the creation of *The Pierced Eye*?

Seydou Boro and Salia Sanou: *The Pierced Eye*, or *Figninto* in Bambara, symbolically refers to the blind spot, to what is visible and what isn't... *Figninto* is tied to light, to the imagination, to the real and the unreal. After a friend passed away while there was no indication he was about to, we felt an urgency to leave a trace of the emotion that loss caused us, of how we missed him, maybe to give his absence substance again. Faced with the pierced eye, it is important to give meaning back to light. It wasn't about telling a story for us, but to look into our astonishment for the very essence of the other's return, to make his presence felt even in absence. We wanted our bodies to be the raw material to tackle all the questions pertaining to disappearance, to death, and more generally to what makes a relationship, with its mysterious, secret, and unpredictable part. The energy, the movement at once powerful and fragile, all that contributes to a vocabulary of urgency, at least that's how we built a discourse that doubtless reflects a state, an essential stage of reflection in our creative process.

What does it mean to you to perform this show again today?

S.B. and S.S.: The theme for the triennale Danse l'Afrique Danse, which we organised in December 2016 in Ouagadougou, was memory and transmission. In contemporary dance, the question of the repertoire seems to us to be a major topic for the young generations. To transmit a piece like *Figninto – The Pierced Eye* doesn't mean to draw a historical portrait of our work, but rather to explore its meaning, or at least to state the hypothesis that there is still a trace of it left that time hasn't erased... *Figninto* is part of its time, of its context; of course we tried, beyond movement and gesture, to transmit a state of feeling and poetry, so as not to empty the project of all its substance. It is obviously a risk both for us as choreographers and for the young performers, who feel a great artistic responsibility... It seems however that to stage a show again is also part of a struggle against oblivion, it's probably in that regard that the project makes complete sense as part of a programme that brings together the present and the past, and who knows, it might be a most unpredictable way to project ourselves into the future. We might then be able to play with the sequence of tenses, to produce a contemporary form very aware of its filiation... Paying homage to memory is also an expression of our individual and collective experiences.

Nadia Beugré and Nina Kipré, you are staging *Sans repères (Lost at Sea)* again with young dancers, an iconic piece from Béatrice Kombé's repertoire. Who was she?

Nadia Beugré and Nina Kipré: Born in 1972 in Diégonéfla, in central Ivory Coast, the daughter of a dance teacher, Béatrice Kombé-Gnapa didn't receive any particular training, but she became a member of several local troupes as soon as 1984. In 1997, with another young Ivorian talent, Jeety Lebri Bridgi, she created one of the first all-women troupes in Africa. Jeety was its artistic director for three years. She called the company *TchéTché*, "the eagle" in Bété. Her most important work, *Dimi (Douleur)*, created in 1998, is a hymn to female solidarity. In 2006, Béatrice Kombé performed, with Nadja Bengré, *Geeme (Union)* during the 6th Choreographic Encounters of Africa and the Indian Ocean in Paris. A sublime duet that married African energy and contemporary abstraction. International recognition soon followed. *Dimi* and

Sans repères have received numerous awards: the Prix Découverte RFI in 2000, the Unesco Prize during the 1999 Masa (the African Performing Arts Market), 2nd prize at the Hanover (Germany) International Competition for Choreographers, first prize at the 2001 Choreographic Encounters of Africa and the Indian Ocean... Her practice of dance and her company's ballets were the subject of many documentaries, including Ken Glazebrook and Alla Kovgan's *African Dance: Sand, Drum and Shostakovich* in 2002—the same year TchéTché met the all-male Burkinabé company Kongo Ba Téria for the ballet *Nagtaba*. From 2001 to her death, she taught at the drama and dance department of the University of Florida, with African dance specialist Joan Frosch, who filmed her for her documentary *Movement (R) Evolution Africa* (2006). This exceptional dancer lived her art like a total engagement.

How would you define her dance?

N.B. and N.K.: It is contemporary because it belongs to the new African avant-garde, which refused to define itself exclusively in relationship to traditional norms and strived to be part of a worldwide urban culture. Overcoming borders to meet different worlds and scenographic practices was a major axis of all her creations.

What does it mean to you to perform this show today?

N.B. and N.K.: It means bringing Béatrice Kombé's soul back to life, after she left us too early. Performing this show again allows us to share with young artists the experiences we enjoyed with Béatrice. She left us a rich and powerful artistic vision which we want to transmit in turn. It's important to note that *Sans repères*, created in 1999, is the expression of a young generation of Africans looking for identity and values. This show denounces the pressure of family and of the patriarchal society, social injustice, and intergenerational conflicts.

Ketty Noël, you are staging one of your own key pieces, *Tichèlbè*. What was the context of its creation?

Ketty Noël: I'd been living in Bamako for two years already when I had an idea for a show about male chauvinism. In Bamako, there's an everyday violence in the relationships between men and women, mainly due to a lack of attentiveness and communication. To talk about it, I staged a show in a closed environment to bring out the violence in the relationships between the genders. I wanted to expose them, to let the audience see and think about them like in a short story, by dancing the details of those relationships. I wanted to open windows of conversation about the relationships we have. I wanted to do my part in the complex quest for harmony. How should we see the other? How can we be the other's other? This show is a societal face-off, like a news item.

What does it mean to you to perform this show again today?

K.N.: It's giving it a new lease of life while still feeding it. Paradoxically, it's about taking a step back to make it a full-fledged work. My goal is also for it to find its place in time, to offer a more current reading of it. I've often danced this role, while the male character has often been performed by different dancers. It'll be the first time another artist dances my role. It allowed me to take a step back, to put the necessary distance between the show and me in order to explore it under a new angle. This rebirth also means the show has a long life ahead of it. It's also a way to say, to shout that African dance today wants to find its place in time and leave traces. I want to think that opening up our worlds of research and creation to younger generations will lead to the development of a larger space of re-creation and—maybe it's a crazy dream—will contribute to the young posterity of the great African Dance, with its diverse influences and evolutions.

Interview conducted by Francis Cossu and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach