

AND...

SHOW

Lewis versus Alice, Macha Makeïeff, July 14 to 22 at 18:00, La FabricA
Live broadcast on ARTE on July 17 at 22:40

PRESS CONFERENCE with Macha Makeïeff,
July 14 at 11:00, cour du Cloître Saint-Louis

PEDAGOGICAL FILE

Pièce (dé)montée produced by Canopé, available on festival-avignon.com

CONVERSATIONS À LA MAISON, LE FESTIVAL CÔTÉ LIVRE

Encounter with Macha Makeïeff, July 12 at 11:30, Maison Jean Vilar

LE TEMPS DES REVUES

Encounter with Macha Makeïeff, July 17 at 15:00, Maison Jean Vilar

THOUGHT WORKSHOPS with Macha Makeïeff,

Site Louis Pasteur Supramuros - Avignon Université

The Triumph of emotions, July 11 at 14:30

Discussions artists-spectators, July 19 at 11:00

AFTER THE FESTIVAL

The exhibition *Curious Collections and Disquieting Things* continues after the Festival at the Maison Jean Vilar from September 1st, 2018 to April 13, 2019.

SPOILSPORT CURIOUS COLLECTIONS AND DISQUIETING THINGS

Do inanimate objects have a soul, a part of humanity locked inside them? The primal terror or the familiar feeling of strangeness we sometimes experience upon encountering them unveil an unconscious part of us: the one we meet in our dreams. That's what *Spoilsport* is about. A reminder of our *unconscious* and its malfunctions... In this installation conceived as the last part of a triptych, after her show *Lewis versus Alice* and her book *Zone Céleste*, Macha Makeïeff displays the words of her brother Georges. Like Lewis Carroll, Georges would invent stories featuring little girls trapped in imaginary worlds. His own wonderland had been built during an interrupted, stupefied childhood. In the hallways and rooms of the Maison Jean Vilar, their words echo each other in a concert of strange beasts, distended sounds, and reflecting mirrors. A stroll through sensations in a house haunted by benevolent objects salvaged from workshops and found forgotten in drawers, museum storerooms, and by the side of stages.

MACHA MAKEÏEFF

A writer, plastic artist, and director of La Criée, Théâtre national de Marseille, **Macha Makeïeff** loves to explore the pleasure of the eyes as much as that of words and bodies. At the theatre and the opera, and in museums, she creates sets and costumes, and acts as director. Lewis Carroll was the ideal author to venture into the pleasure brought by the contradictions of language and to explore dreams and the supernatural. During the Festival d'Avignon, Macha Makeïeff will present, at the Maison Jean Vilar, *Spoilsport*, *Curious Collections and Disquieting Things*, an echo to the creation of *Lewis versus Alice*.

73rd
EDITION

In order to bring you this edition, over 1,700 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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#FDA19



FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON 73RD

JULY 5-23 | MAISON JEAN VILAR

INTERVIEW WITH MACHA MAKEÏEFF

You're presenting both a show and an exhibition this year at the Festival d'Avignon. What's the link between them?

Macha Makeïeff : They're pretty much inseparable. Artistically speaking, they're tied together, and there's a book as well, a sort of third phase, called *Zone Céleste* (*Celestial Zone*). By the way, *Spoilsport* isn't so much an exhibition as immobile theatre, or rather theatre which the audience moves through according to their own imagination. And I like this *here and there*, to be in two places at once. In thi house, I can really show things in their intimacy and their uncertainty in a different timeframe.

Better than at the theatre?

Differently, precisely because it is a *house*, a singular space we open to others, into which we invite others, where something will at some point close on us. With the contrasts between the different rooms: some are colourful and bright, others are gloomy, gothic, in a way almost more joyful, their darkness encouraging you to come closer, recognise, and experience the celebration in them. When it comes down to it, it's this particular space that convinced me. It's inhabited by presences, and I add ghosts to the ghosts already there. I liked the somewhat crazy proposition the Maison Jean Vilar made me: creating an exhibition at the same time as a show, it's not entirely reasonable; it's this madness which allowed me, I think, to turn eccentricity and the dread and wonder of childhood into a spectacular other world.

And you inspire this dread by gathering strange objects, stuffed animals, fragments of stories, excerpts from Lewis Carroll's diary...

In the house, I invite people on a journey among things lost and found again, welcomed and celebrated, the kind of abandoned objects people leave on the edge of the stage. I've spent my whole life collecting those neglected props that live in workshops or stock rooms. You just have to put them out! When you do, they start telling us about who we are, they make surprising confessions.

Inanimate objects?

Objects have grace. Sometimes I think I can see them move just a tiny bit. I think they bear the poetic trace of what they've been through, and hold fragments of humanity better than anybody. I'm always on the lookout for this *trouble*, which in French means both a strange state of being and the ripples on the surface of water when you throw a rock in it, and this absence which is also a presence. Like at the theatre, it's both an embodiment and an artifice, which are the conditions for art to appear.

You're bringing together a tiger, ostriches, dozens of birds... Where do those stuffed animals come from, and what do they tell us?

Some come from my workshop, and I know them, others were borrowed from the Natural History Museum in Aix-en-Provence, and I have to tame them. There are more than eighty of them. An entire tribe. They're silent and eloquent. There's a great aviary and a wall of birds. In a dark corner, there's *The Concert of the Beasts*.

Christian Sebillé created the soundtrack for this journey, the strange voices of beasts and things. François Menou did the lights and, in some places, the night, and Clémence Bezat was my constant companion on this adventure.

By why are you filling the rooms of the house with so many animals?

What I'm actually doing is opening the house, and since those beasts have always been with me, they find their place in it and start to listen closely. Beasts mischievously force us to face our human condition. They seem to know Heaven better than us. Ours should be the superior species? Because of questions of soul and metaphysics? If you make the effort to observe those beasts, here immobile and sacred, you'll see how they look at us, and something will open up.

But those animals aren't alive...

I see and I show a long-gone presence. Nature intimidates me in its invasiveness, I can't let it enter the house. Those animals are like suspended. Now inert, they're like magical objects. I often walk among the mummified animals of the Louvre; those animal relics are as beautiful as gods.

And what is this dread you speak of?

At the theatre, there's the far wall, and perhaps beyond this wall is dread. Primordial dread, the dread of childhood. So theatre escapes this deception and invents a different, salutary world and a few artifices which are a celebration. Something haunts me for sure, something I'd like to share. Perception comes before understanding, and it is through perception that we can reach the zone of imagination. My intent is to touch those who'll enter the house, whether by chance or because they want to, and to see them walk on that path for a while.

So you'll be telling a ghost story in that house?

Yes, *Spoilsport* tells a story, way beyond words—those written on the walls, those you can hear. I created a sort of immobile fiction. I know full well that only fiction makes reality bearable. I'd want everyone to think, during this journey: "What's the supernatural for me? Where are my ghosts? What is the absent I carry within me?"

What's the link between *Spoilsport* and Lewis Carroll's Wonderland?

Lewis Carroll's world is cruel and extravagant, enigmatic and absurd like childhood. He first told the story of *Alice in Wonderland* to young Alice Liddell, then wrote it; but the whole thing is unsettling because he is *her*. There are beings who carry a young girl within themselves. Charles Dodgson, aka Lewis Carroll, was one of them. So is my brother Georges. I imagined *Spoilsport* based on Lewis Carroll's diary and of Georges's journals, on fragments from my childhood, on our inventions as little astonished mortals, on the memories of rituals we shared in a house too big for us. *Spoilsport* opens up a landscape where we can meet again, a funny refuge for those who have trouble dealing with the noise of the world. A fragile journey where enchantment is permitted, even wished for, just for a little while.

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Interview conducted by Agnès Freschel and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach