

AND...

PRESS CONFERENCE with Alexandra Badea,
July 7 at 11:00, cour du Cloître Saint-Louis

ELECTRONIC GLASSES 

Personalised service of English surtitles from July 8 to 12

Other shows with personalised surtitles on electronic glasses :
Architecture (English), *Love Triumphant* (French and English),
We, Europe, Feast of the peoples (English et Polish),
Teahouse (English)

READING

Celle qui regarde le monde by Alexandra Badea
within the RFI programme *How's it going, world!*
July 14 at 11:00, jardin de la rue de Mons

THOUGHT WORKSHOPS with Alexandra Badea

Encounter Reseach and creation - Crossing worlds
Stories: creating a society, July 10 at 9:30, Cloître Saint-Louis

Our odysseys today, July 10 at 14:30,

site Louis Pasteur Supramuros - Avignon Université

Duo - The Poet and the Scholar - Extremophile by Alexandra Badea,
July 10 at 17:30, jardin d'Avignon Université

CINEMATIC TERRITORIES

Encounter with Alexandra Badea after the movie *Octobre à Paris*
by Jacques Panijel, July 11 at 14:00, cinéma Utopia-Manutention

CONVERSATIONS À LA MAISON, LE FESTIVAL CÔTÉ LIVRE

Encounter with Alexandra Badea, July 13 at 17:30, Maison Jean Vilar

TOUR DATES AFTER THE FESTIVAL

- November 7 to December 1st, 2019, La Colline Théâtre national, Paris
- December 4 to 7, La Comédie de Béthune Centre dramatique national
- January 22 and 23, 2020, Le Lieu Unique, Nantes
- February 3, Gallia Théâtre, Saintes
- February 6, Scène Nationale d'Aubusson
- May 12 to 14, La Comédie de Saint-Etienne
- June 2020, Festival international de théâtre de Sibiu (Romania)

73rd
EDITION

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



#FDA19

POINTS OF NO RETURN [QUAIS DE SEINE]

Written and directed by Alexandra Badea, *Quais de Seine* is an immersion into three generations of lives broken by the weight of things left unsaid. A journalist goes looking for the history of her family, for an unknown heritage. Pieces of story start to appear... Her absent, uprooted father, her grandparents fighting for their choices, their ideas, and their mixed marriage... The political and the human intertwined. Onstage, space and time come together: past and present are face to face, gauge each other, and enter into a dialogue with testimonies, dreams, and fragments of utopia. Diving into the troubled waters of the massacre of Algerians on 17 October 1961 in Paris, the play explores personal history and collective memory. Because, as the young Romanian-born French director says: "*Everything in life is political, even love (...). You love the same way you think about the world.*" *Points of no return* questions our relationship to the world when the past isn't enough, and gives us hope for resilience.

ALEXANDRA BADEA

Born in Romania, **Alexandra Badea** is a writer and director for theatre and cinema. She started studying drama in Bucharest before moving to Paris in 2003 and finishing her studies there. She writes her plays in French and has directed some of them herself. *Quais de Seine* is the second part of her *Points of no return* trilogy. She has also written a novel, *Zone d'amour prioritaire* (*Priority Love Zone*), which was adapted in 2013 for the Festival d'Avignon, as well as radio dramas and short films. She has received several awards for her work, in particular for her play *Pulvérisés* (*Pulverised*). In her work, she explores the personal and the universal, lending her voice to those we usually don't hear.

Points de non-retour [Quais de Seine] by Alexandra Badea, published by L'Arche éditeur, is on sale at the bookshop in the Maison Jean Vilar.



FESTIVAL D'AVIGNON 73RD

JULY 5 6 | 8 9 10 11 12
THÉÂTRE BENOÎT-XII

INTERVIEW WITH ALEXANDRA BADEA

Can you describe the genesis of your trilogy, *Points of no return*, and its second part, which you'll present at the Festival d'Avignon?

Alexandra Badea : The idea came from my personal history. I've lived in France since 2003, and applied for citizenship ten years later to be able to vote but also because I was afraid I would not be able to stay in France because of the rise of extremisms... I write in French, and I had a hard time wrapping my mind around the idea of having to leave the country in whose language I work. During the naturalisation ceremony, we were told: "From now on, you'll have to own the history of this country, with its moments of grandeur but also of darkness." I started wondering about my choice to belong to a country with a colonial past, and I felt almost more concerned and responsible than a French person born in France would. I'd chosen to be here knowingly. So I started working on the stories missing from the history of France, those stories people don't tell in their families and which don't appear in history textbooks or in the public discourse, those stories that have been forgotten. I wanted to associate the actors to this research, to know what they wanted to get up on a stage to say these days. Actors add one more layer to my writing. We started talking about the colonisation of sub-Saharan Africa, the massacre of Senegalese infantrymen in Thiaroye, and the victims of the demonstration of 17 October 1961, a still-hazy episode of the Algerian War. The massacre of the Algerians adds to the work we did on *Thiaroye*—the first part of the trilogy—and supplements the issues it raises. I focused on points of no-return, those moments where something closed down, where things veered off the path, both in personal histories and in the History we tell. They are also moments of encounter, where a new wound reopens an old one, or helps close it. The figure of the disappeared has always been at the heart of my writing. What moves me deeply is to know how people build their identities around a missing story, a story in which a member of the family constellation was erased. How we can invent and give an identity to someone who couldn't pass on the history of their origins. For *Quais de Seine*, I wanted to meet actors and witnesses of the Algerian War. In addition to the rich literature, the books and archives I'd already accessed on the subject, I sent a letter to the spectators of the Théâtre de la Colline, asking for testimonies. This allowed me to meet about ten people with very diverse stories; pieds-noirs, Algerians, children and grandchildren of French soldiers who retreated into silence... I was looking for lived experiences. I paid particularly close attention to the contradictions between the different discourses, to see if there would maybe be a way to bring about reconciliation with the other party, with family, with memory. I didn't want to create an overview of the war, but rather to take two people trapped in that particular moment of History, and to watch how they manage to overcome the limits imposed on them and heal the wound they were inflicted.

What is it that you like about the language you use, with its many voices? How does fiction enrich those complex narratives?

Having many voices brings complexity. I don't want people to hear just one voice, one reality. When talking about those themes, the situations are so complex, the audience so diverse. We can't all identify with the same life trajectory. I try to make people see that complexity. I didn't want to create a documentary play, or one that would denounce something in a frontal manner; I used to do that back when I first started directing. The world we live in has become too violent for that. There are fewer and fewer spaces in which thought can unfold. It was time for me to change the way I occupy the space and to focus on the dialogue, rather than on the monologue, as I used to. To write dialogue today is also a political statement. We're getting more and more locked into our respective subjectivities, in a world of screens, in which we can choose when to let the real world in and when to "turn it off." It's a way to protect yourself, but also to refuse to hear what the other has to say. It's important to make some space for exchanges again in theatre, for this mirror of realities clashing together. Fiction is what allows me to present those realities. It is built around fragments of true stories, which each have their forgotten parts. I had to fill those holes with my imagination. Fiction gives me the opportunity to express all that I heard, and at the same time to try to calm things down, to heal ancient wounds. In theatre, you have to move the characters, have them transform. It's what we try to do in our lives, without always succeeding. It's an attempt to control the uncontrollable world that surrounds us. Writing is a tool of understanding, and imagination is a way to order this chaos.

What do you see as the next step for those *Points of no return*?

The common theme for the whole trilogy is the idea of the transmission of this questioning, of the search for the past so we can feel free to speak. I didn't want to write an epic about post-colonisation, I really wanted to focus on those missing stories. For the last part of the trilogy, I looked into the history of Réunion and the story of the children of Creuse. All my research with the actors, with historians, with sociologists, and with the students I met while working on this project, made me think that the idea I had that one character could pass on his quest for memory to another was the right one. *Thiaroye* inspired *Quais de Seine*, which will in turn inspire this last part.

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Interview conducted by Malika Baaziz and translated by Gaël Schmidt-Cléach