

Choreographic creation
Performance
Installation


Marcel Gbeffa
Multicorps Company





Multicorps Company / Marcel Gbeffa

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Bastien Capela pp. 4, 5, 6, 7.

Sarah Fischer pp. 18, 19.

Joseph Gbeffa pp. 36, 37, 38, 39.

Léa Laumière pp. 12, 13.

Michel Matte pp. 2, 3.

Adrien Michel pp 16, 23, 24, 25.

Sophie Négrier pp. 14, 15, 22, 32, 33, 34, 35.

Julian et Jorge Perez, pp. 20, 21.

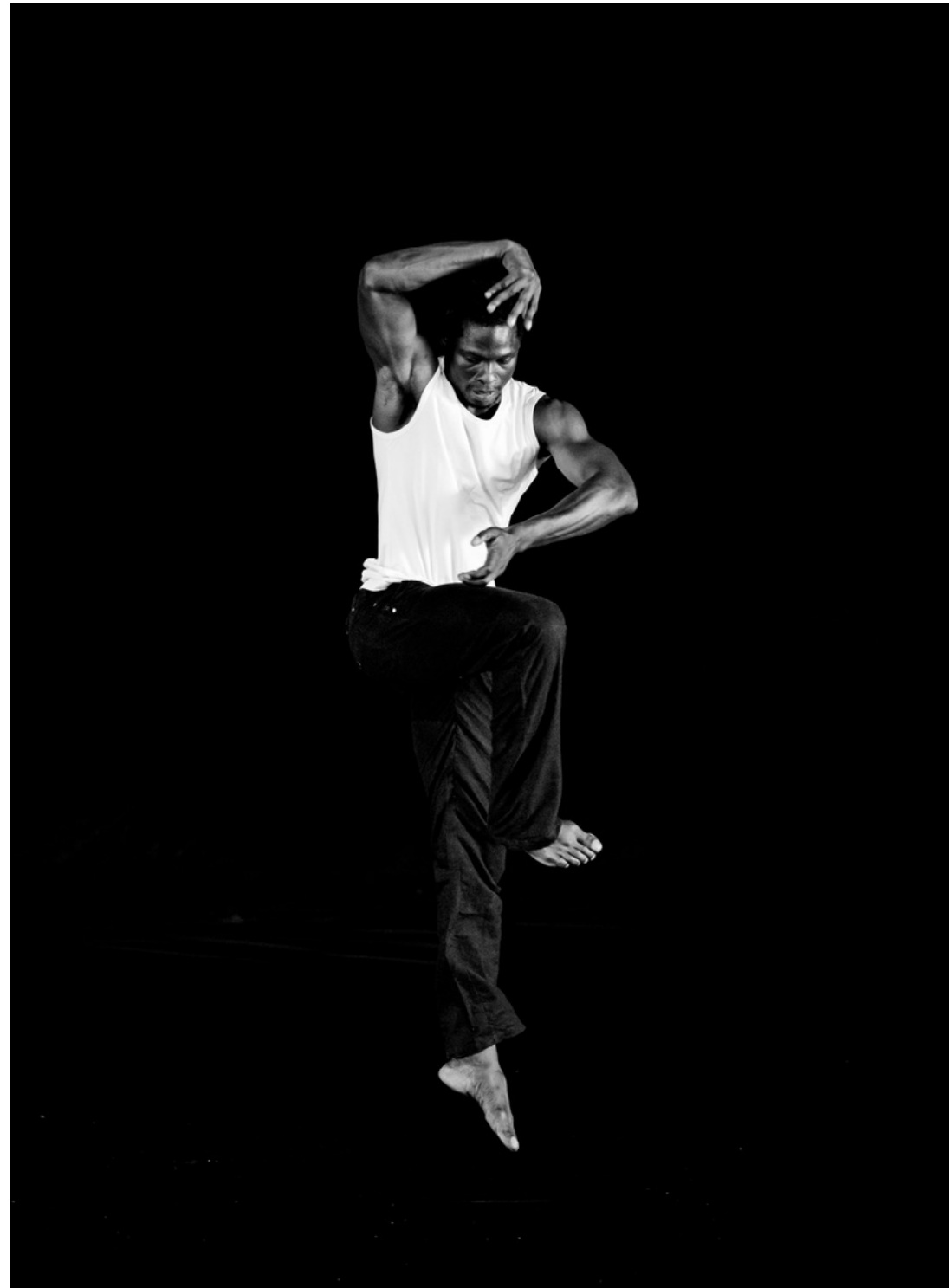
Andreia Salame p 26.

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Rachael Woodson p 1, 27, 28, 29.



Marcel Gbeffa, dancer and choreographer from Benin, has lived between France and Benin since 2021. Founder and artistic director of the Multicorps Choreographic Center in Cotonou, Benin, he campaigns for the accessibility and circulation of contemporary dance in Africa. After training at the École des Sables in Senegal in 2008, Marcel Gbeffa launched his career the same year with his solo *Et si*, propelling him onto the international scene.

As a performer and assistant choreographer, he has collaborated with artists such as Andreyra Ouamba (Congo-Brazzaville) and Reggie Wilson / Fist and Heel Performance Group (USA). Since 2010, he has taken part in several creations and collaborations in Benin, Africa, Brazil, Europe and the United States. His choreographic piece *Dide*, co-written with visual artist Sarah Trouche and supported by CDCN Atelier de Paris, CDCN Rennes and CCN Nantes, was selected for the Biennale de la Danse as part of the Afrique 2020 season. In 2021, he will take part in artistic residencies at CCN Nantes and at the contemporary art space Le Centre (Benin).

Winner of a Fulbright grant from the U.S. government in 2022/23, he directs research and teaching projects at several academic institutions in New York, including the *Awakening* project with the Purchase College, Conservatory of Dance, SUNY in New York. In 2024, he created the piece *Chthuluchene* with saxophonist Clément Duthoit and the support of the Institut Français, Alliance Française and CCN Nantes. In Benin, he also

organizes transdisciplinary workshops, promoting international collaborations. In 2019, he creates the *Connexion* festival, for which he is artistic director. Marcel Gbeffa's artistic approach draws inspiration from his immaterial heritage, evolving through collaborations with other disciplines such as video, digital, visual art and music. Although the question of identity and gender remains central to his work, he also explores the question of the being's contribution to humanity. In particular, with performance artist Violaine Lochu, he questions notions of offerings, initiations and twinship, the place of women in contemporary society with visual artist Sarah Trouche, and mankind's relationship with his terrestrial cohabitants through the climate emergency with saxophonist Clément Duthoit.



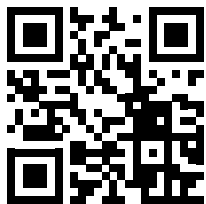
CHTHULUCENE - 2024 -

A dance-saxophone duet initiated in 2019 in collaboration with French saxophonist Clément Duthoit, the two artists are freely inspired by the *Chthulucene* era, thought and theorized by American biologist and philosopher of science Donna Haraway. Haraway questions the predominance of humans over other forms of life on earth. By exploring soundscapes, the duo formulate their response to planetary issues: in the course of this ritual, they reach out to the audience in an invitation to rethink their relationship to each other and to the world. The piece *Chthulucene* explores the urgency of climate change and the relationship between human beings and the earth's co-inhabitants. Today, scientific reports are sounding the alarm at an ever-accelerating rate: many of mankind's actions are endangering life on planet Earth. In addition to the colossal ecological challenges facing all living beings on the planet in the short to long term, political tensions are further undermining life in certain geographical areas, making it even more difficult to find solutions to these intertwined problems.



CHTHULUCENE - 2024 -

The duo's artistic aim is to put into movement and sound the need to find answers to environmental and social issues. On stage, the two artists are at once alter-ego and conqueror for each other, intertwining sounds and bodies. The duo's energy is driven by aerial, instinctive dance, blended with the electric, warm, minimalist sound of the baritone saxophone. The piece consists of 4 successive tableaux : Contemplation, Acceptance, Reconstruction and Resilience. From the first tableau, which calls on dancers from local organizations, to the last tableau, in which the audience participates, *Chthulucene* is co-constructed with local residents and the public of a theater, cultural space or festival.



Choreographic creation

CHTHULUCENE - 2024 -

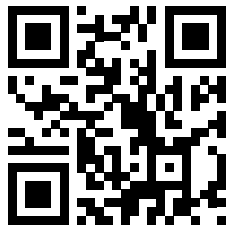


CHTHULUCENE - 2024 -



DIDĚ - 2021 -

Didė is a piece inspired by the *Guèlèdé* tradition, whose ceremonies pay homage to the primordial mother, *Iyà Nlà*. *Guèlèdé* is the tribute to be paid to the mystical powers of women, which must be protected from and appeased in order to transform them into a beneficial power for society". *Didė* goes beyond community issues, inviting us into a sincere and frank encounter with bodies that will be traversed by states, happenings that will write a singular story that questions gender. To introduce ourselves, to state... Who you are... Then bodies become the place where the intimate and the political become entangled, between the expression of feelings and the incorporation of oppressions.



DIDĘ - 2021 -



DIDĖ - 2021 -

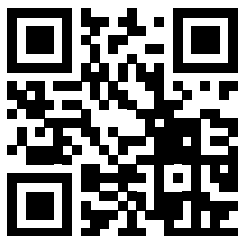


DIDĘ - 2021 -



EMPOIGNÉ(E)S - GRABBED - 2018 -

This creation was born of an encounter between three individuals: Marcel Gbeffa, Céline Coyac Atindehou and Vincent Fritschi. Three individuals, three bodies, three identities, each with their own flaws, weaknesses and strengths, but between them, a "commonality": a desire to meet, a desire to live and surpass one's own limits, a thirst to sublimate one's own handicap. It's a choreographic piece that transcends the social boundaries we all construct. Creating links, relationships, inducing, surmounting and surpassing ourselves.



EMPOIGNÉ(E)S - GRABBED - 2018 -



ILLUSIONS - 2016 -

In collaboration with Senegalese choreographer-dancer Fatou Cissé, saxophonist Magloire Ahouandjinou and bassist Carlos Dosseh, the quartet explores the memories and highlights of a life, a moment of oneself, of another, of a nation. They delve into the power of human memory, recreating significant moments in order to relive them. The aim is to fill gaps or maintain inseparable links, both physically and psychologically. The paths taken can lead to states such as mythomania, daydreaming, reclusion, or even becoming a danger to others. Between childhood, love, war and death, people goes through experiences that touch on different bodily states or the very essence of their "beings". Who hasn't observed how the body plunges into solitude or goes through a crisis when someone loses a loved one, a friend, a companion, a husband, a wife, a lover or a child?



ILLUSIONS - 2016 -



ROOT'IN- 2015 -

In recent years, many young Africans, particularly in Benin, have become aware of the richness of their cults and cultures, but many are in contempt of these traditions by selling their values. Is this a dialogue between the visible and the invisible, or a state where reason has lost its «raison d'être»? The play takes a critical look at the clothing "from France" that turns some people into slaves to fashion, ultimately damaging and destroying the existence of a generation, or even a nation.



ROOT'IN- 2015 -



LES ENTRAILLES DE L'IDENTITÉ - THE ENTRIES OF IDENTITY - 2014 -

In collaboration with dancer Horten Adjovi and guitarist and singer John Arcadius, the trio questions identity, whether at home or elsewhere, and places an exclamation mark behind "self" and "living-together" as existential processes of openness. Does belonging to a land determine who we are, or who we will become?

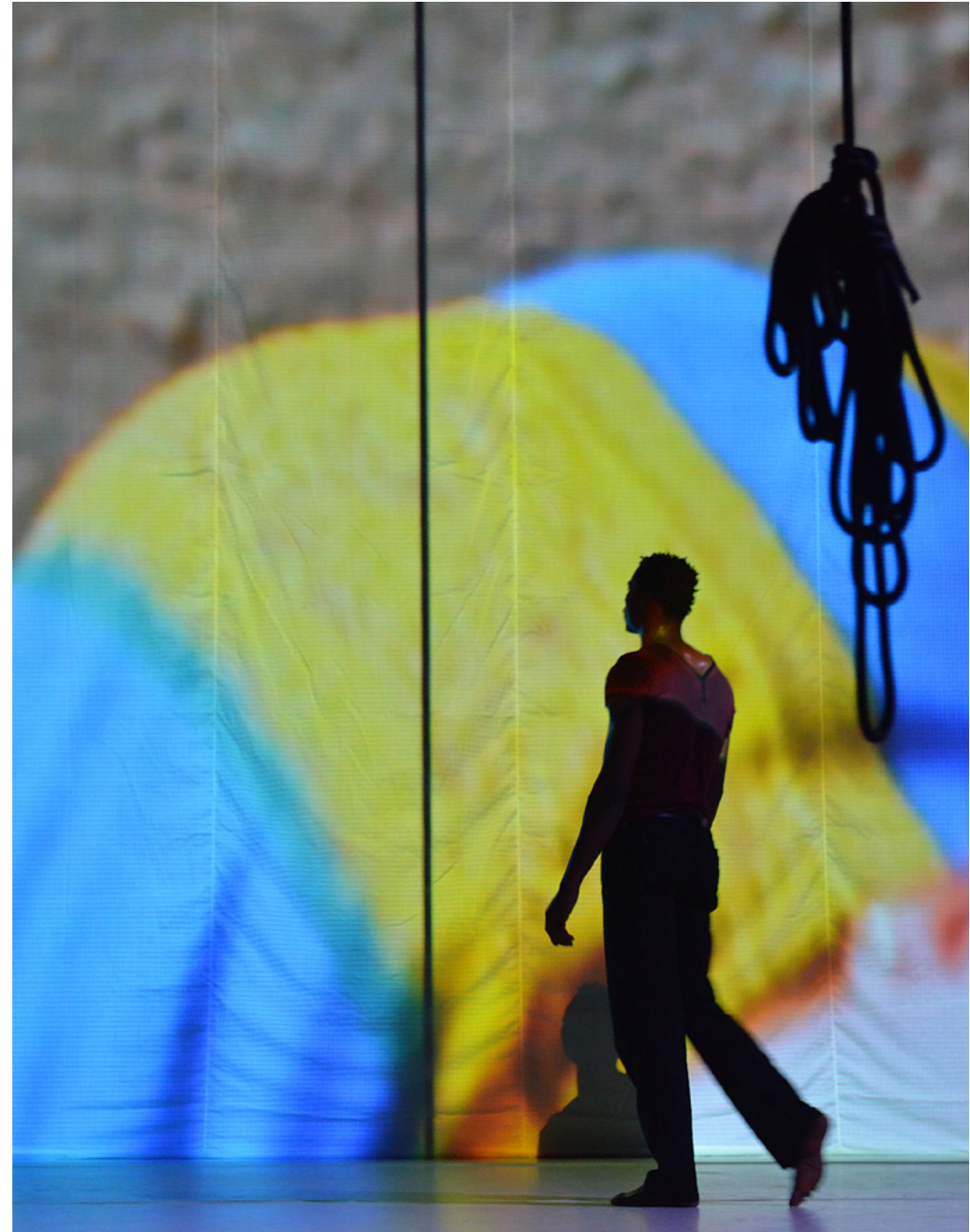


LES ENTRAILLES DE L'IDENTITÉ - THE ENTRIES OF IDENTITY - 2014 -



DERRIÈRE LE RIDEAU - BEHIND THE CURTAIN - 2013 -

This solo explores dancers' creative processes. From the first idea to the final choreographic work, they face physical, emotional and even administrative challenges : total commitment and the temptation to give up, passionate desire and deep despair, fierce determination and the wish to disappear. Inspired by his daily life, the artist reveals the emotions, panics, absences, disappointments and feelings that populate his inner artistic space... memory loss in the middle of a presentation ... unaware audience ... sudden improvisation ... audience disappointment ...

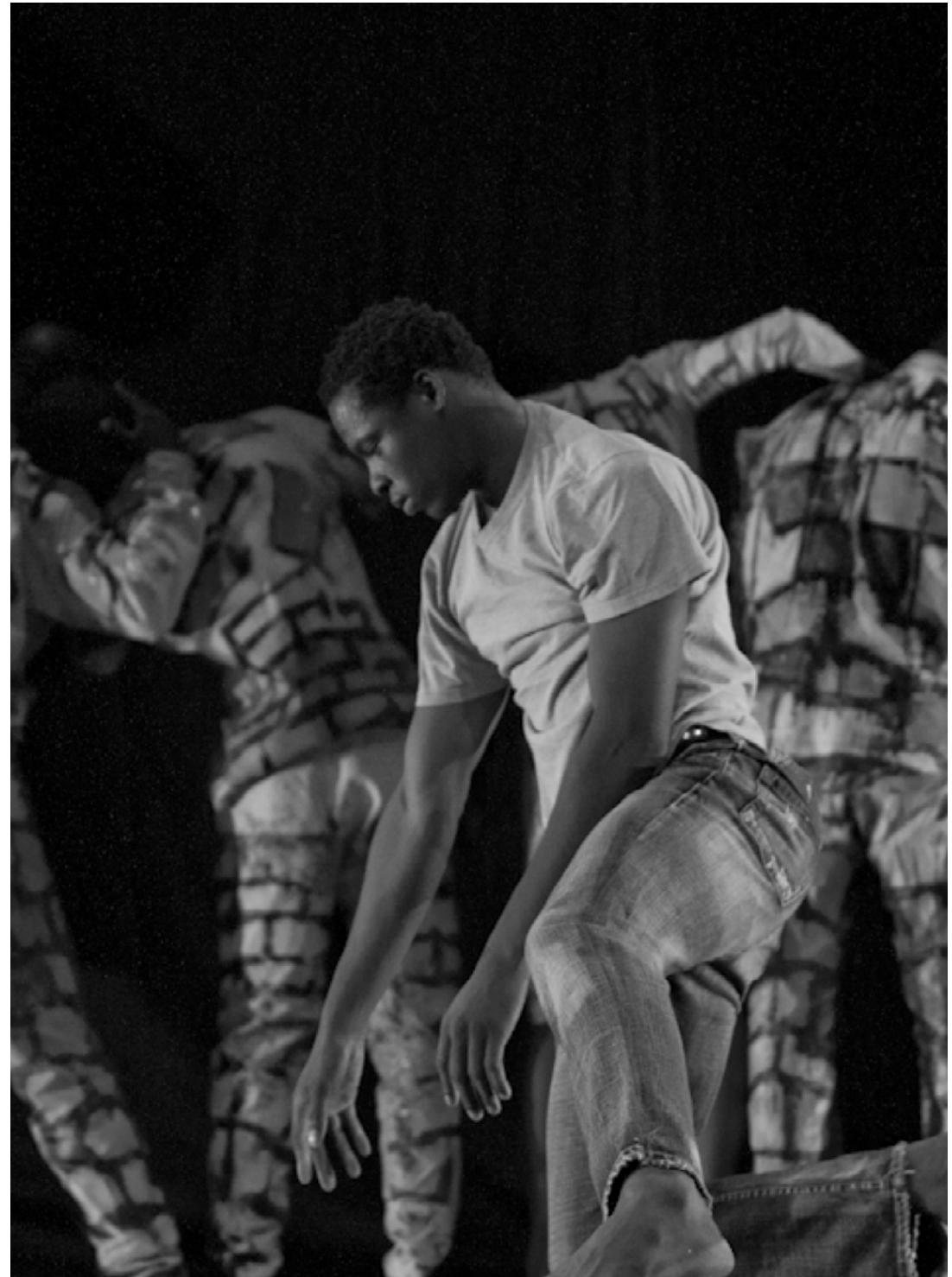


DERRIÈRE LE RIDEAU - BEHIND THE CURTAIN - 2013 -



NOIR MIRAGE - MIRAGE BLACK - 2011 -

It's often at the moment of loss that our conscience recalls our memory. There's a void, and while alive, we didn't always live up to their expectations. We aspire to correct our mistakes, pay tribute, organize a memorable celebration and fulfill our social obligations... So we go into debt as if to erase the debt... The loss of a loved one becomes a double burden that now pushes us into our own decline. Yet this is a singular, almost sacred moment, when two worlds coexist: what remains of the person whose remains we are now observing? Are they watching us too? Do they have a final message for us? What do they think of our rituals to celebrate their departure? Does it help them to leave? Where are they going? So many unanswered questions, but one thing is for sure: they won't be coming back, carried off by the funeral procession into the next world on the wind and rain. And we remain in the present, more helpless than ever, like the headlights of a procession rolling through the night, barely lighting our way, our responses still insoluble enigmas.



NOIR MIRAGE - MIRAGE BLACK - 2011 -



NOIR MIRAGE - MIRAGE BLACK - 2011 -

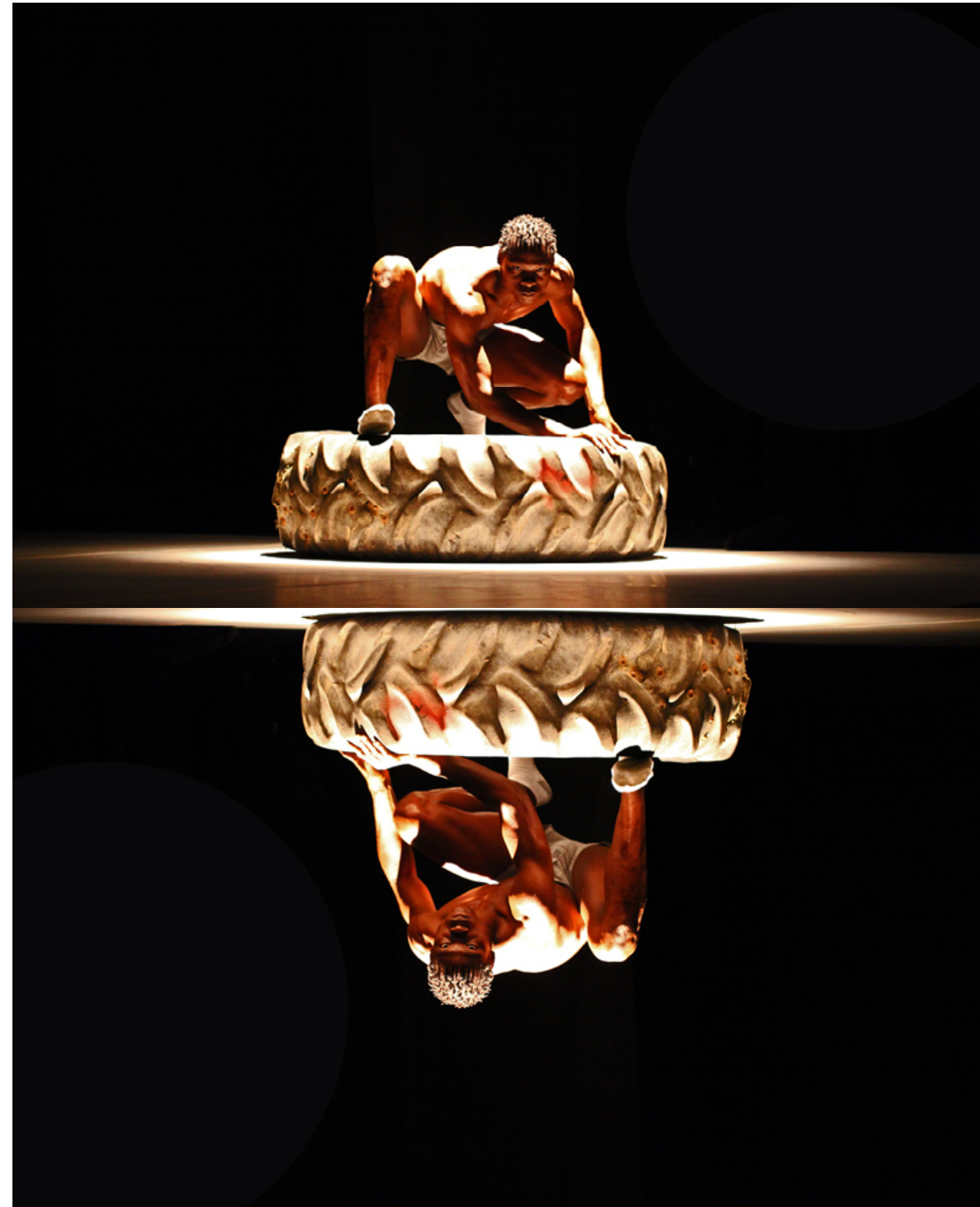
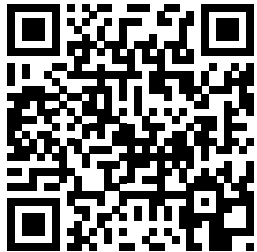


NOIR MIRAGE - MIRAGE BLACK - 2011 -



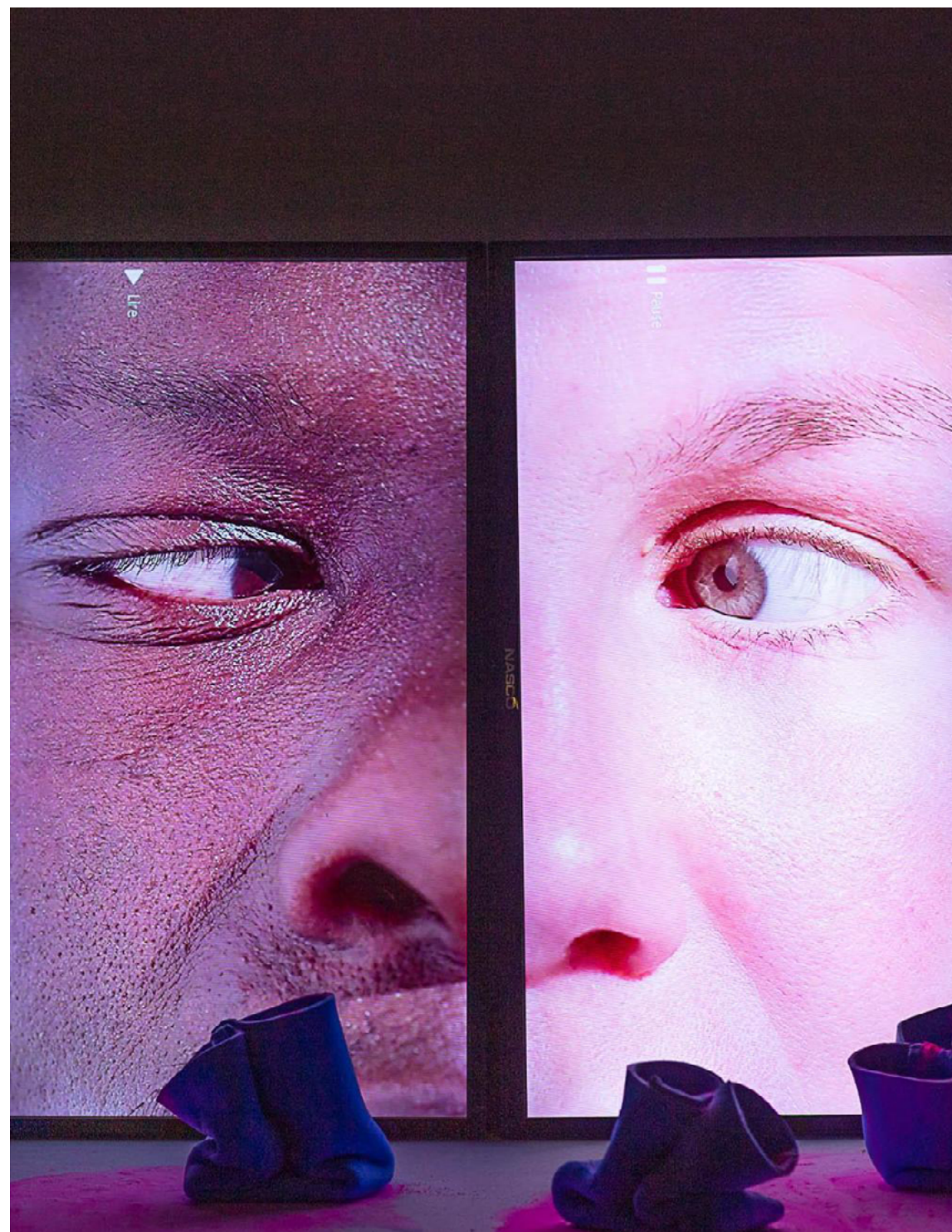
ET SI ... - WHAT IF... - 2008 -

What if our inner self came into conflict with ourselves ? What if the inner self decided to play a disobedient act ? And what if the superego befriended the unconscious to combine consciousness, id and ego in a vicious cycle... A sterile dance. A musculature formed to play the fool, inseparable tics, barely dissociable. We discuss ideas with no follow-up. We leave and return to meditate. A disorder, a repetitive and captivating chaos. A jumbo jet tire and a bench: it's the outside world that gives birth to decadence and delicious cadence.



HÒXÓ - 2023 -

The installation *Hòxó*, twins en Fongbé brings together two cultural, spiritual and human realities through the performance of artists Violaine Lochu and Marcel Gbeffa : twins, history and the colonial past. Bypassing the pitfall of a singular history, the artists bring together fragments of memory, speech, language and tradition, creating a polyphonic, subjective memorial space in perpetual construction. Through this hybrid body of work, the artists elaborate a fictional twinship, taking us into an imaginary space of dialogue and resilience. By exploring this painful shared history, oscillating between slavery and colonization, the artists propose the writing of an inclusive and complex, albeit partial, history. Beyond the physical dissimilarities of the two artists, between Beninese cosmogony and Greek and Roman mythology, *Hòxo* questions the reality of this twinship and its inextricable, indestructible links.



HÒXÓ - 2023 -



HÒXÓ - 2023 -



AWÒLI - 2021 -

A collaboration with performance artist Violaine Lochu, *Awòli* is a performance and installation that explores the notions of initiations and offerings. Dressed in costumes inspired by *Egungun* masks and *Zangbéto* made from clothes donated by Cotonou residents and others found in local thrift shops, an artistic wandering is undertaken through the streets of the Lobozonekpa district. At each crossroads, a place where physical and spiritual paths intersect, the artists soak up the energies and vibrations of passers-by, which are then passed on by way of offering, through the donation of fragments of their costumes. The stroll is likened to a journey of initiation, soaking up the energies and vibrations generated by the interaction of objects deposited at crossroads : a place for encounters and exchanges.



AWÒLI - 2021 -

This performance establishes a link between the visible and the invisible, exploring how elements can be activated to create a connection conducive to the flow of positive energy in the material world. The *Awòli* installation retraces the journey of this wandering through the video projection of the performance, offering an immersive experience in which visitors are invited to share this journey by lying down on a mattress on the floor. The suspended video work, the centerpiece of this ensemble, is surrounded and wrapped in the same clothes worn by the artists.



AWÒLI - 2021 -



AWÒLI - 2021 -



MEMOIRE D'OCEAN - MEMORY OF OCEAN - 2021 -

Memory of Ocean is both a performance and an installation developed by Marcel Gbeffa. The artist invites us to reflect on extra-continental illegal immigration. He establishes a dialogue between the souls of slaves who perished during the triangular trade and those of young Africans who died crossing the oceans to reach Europe. *Memory of Ocean* questions politics in Africa and European politics in Africa. The work explores the roots and ramifications of illegal immigration, highlighting the underlying causes and complex consequences of this phenomenon.



MEMOIRE D'OCEAN - MEMORY OF OCEAN - 2021 -



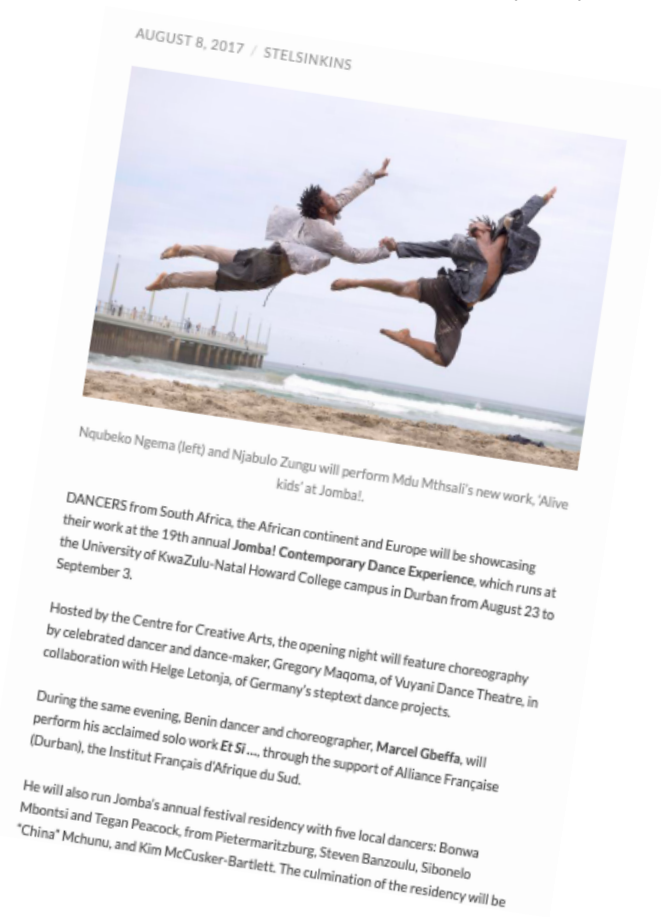
<https://www.humanite.fr/culture-et-savoir/benin/marcel-gbeffa-il-danse-pour-depasser-lanthropocene>

« Based on the work of an American biologist, the Beninese dancer and choreographer transforms his fears and anger, dancing to call for interspecies living together. » - l'Humanité - April 15th, 2024 -

« Visual artist Sarah Trouche and choreographer Marcel Gbeffa combine their differences to create a feminist manifesto that reinterprets the Beninese Gèlèdè ceremony. » - La terrasse - May 10th 2024 -

« The alliance of contemporary and traditional practices, the meeting between European and African artists finds a fitting expression here. » - Théâtre du blog - June 1st, 2021 -

« Dide is an artistic manifesto more than a choreographic piece. » - MACULTURE - May 13th 2020 -



MULTICORPS CHOREOGRAPHIC CENTER

To work on his artistic expression and carry out his research, Marcel Gbeffa, founded in 2012 in Cotonou, the first contemporary dance choreographic center in Benin : the Multicorps Center.

The Center promotes dance in all disciplines. Not only does it offer dance classes, it also hosts creation residencies, master classes and organizes dance events.



MULTICORPS CHOREOGRAPHIC CENTER



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