

#LeClairObscur presents

GØL4M

Creation 2014



GøL4M

[Performance Dance/ Digital Arts]

[running time: 1 hour 15 mn approximately]

GøL4M may be an anthropomorphic form vectored by computer – which comes to life ... It borrows this prototype from science fiction, projecting into the dancer's presence the essence of a synthetic being ...

GøL4M could then prefigure in successive stages, a hybrid form of Man, in a technological laboratory, a strange ritual ...

GøL4M thus designates this “alchemical” project, a global designation including the being and its environment, the search for a formula and its balance, digital, geometric and biometric.

Electricity is the central medium of this work. It is the bridge between the flesh and silicon, the spark of life and magnetism: an invisible force field which we will render sensitive and/or palpable through the body of the dancer.

GøL4M is thus both a laboratory choreographic work on the amplification and the mediatization of the recorded movement, and conversely, the execution of that movement in a field of external forces experienced by the dancer.

GøL4M is a mutant form which brings together the digital body and the real, physical, organic being.

Here all the elements harmonize progressively to form something indissociable and tragic ...

Credits

Direction:	Frédéric DESLIAS
Assisted by:	Gael L.
Choreographer/Performer:	Matthew MORRIS
Assisted by:	Christine CARADEC
Designers:	Elisabeth BIKOND NKOMA Rafaël GUIAVARC
Original music:	Jean-Noël FRANCOISE
Lighting Design:	Simon DESPLEBIN
Video:	Dimitri BLIN
Software/Hardware development:	Olivier GUILLERMINET Gael L.
Stage management:	Pierre André GOURSOLAS
Sets:	Salem Ben BELKACEM Pierre André GOURSOLAS

Production : Le Clair Obscur

Coproducers and partners:

Le Triangle - Cité de la Danse (Rennes), South East Dance (UK), Take Art (UK), ODIA Normandie, Région Basse-Normandie, Conseil Général du Calvados, City of Caen, DICRéAM / CNC, CDN of Haute-Normandie, Ménagerie de Verre of Paris, Les Ateliers Intermédiaires of Caen, Festival Automne en Normandie, Hippocampe of Caen.

This piece is a product of the European program DANS-CE DIALOGUE 2.

What we are trying to do is to construct an augmented form of humanity, we build machines to help individuals do the things they cannot do by themselves ...

Eric Schmidt
PDG de Google, 2010

Preamble

Let us take Eric Schmidt at his word and experiment with that which could be *the body of tomorrow*, an “augmented body,” or how the technological tools of today, marketed to us with the doubtful hope of improving our lives, shape our collective imagination, building our future bodies by following an essentially commercial premise, with no going backward allowed.

Our entire system is built to bring us closer to machines.

In communication and daily applications, the digital machine “assists” us and becomes indispensable in all the moving parts of our society. Beginning with the smartphone, — a fusion of the telephone, a datebook, an address book, a watch, a calculator, a game player, music, film, and the internet — **the computer has been grafted onto our ears and has become** integral to us, its objective being principally to *optimize* our time, then to influence our entire organization. This tactile excrescence which we claim is *non-intrusive*, has nonetheless attached itself to us from the outside. And the small screen is there, everywhere, continuously grabbing our attention and altering forever our imagination and our relationship to the world, in fact everything, or almost everything, goes through it. Developed first for use in the office, these *applications* of ours lead us insidiously to rethink our daily individualism from this perspective, making it a potential object of productivity.

We capitalize our own bodies.

Our physical and neuronal capacities are now completely quantifiable, and therefore are subject to improvement. All sorts of tools of computer *coaching*, some cerebral, some physical, have been developed and promoted to the public, with success, which is the sign of a change in our mentality.

The “post-human” is not far now ...

This emblematic concept of the 21st century shapes engineering. The logical next step: after 20th century mechanical industry has created an exponential mechanical force, the evolution of Man now focuses on the brain and technology. Our ideal body, at once optimized and tentacular, is becoming a computerized, digital *corpus*.

Let us explore how today, without our knowledge, science, industry and mass advertising insidiously shape and transform us to assist us more, to *simplify* us in the end, as we delegate more and more tasks to them, freeing ourselves from them. Under the pretext of increasing our physical and intellectual faculties, machines now have made us — in all parts of our lives — dependent and docile when relating to them; we willingly accord them an intermediary place between men and other men (social networks, telephonic labyrinths, *dematerialized* relationships, etc.). In the end we don’t know how and whom to lash out at — the devices are anonymous and render any real contact impossible. We use them to dial down the relationships between people. The computer systematizes our behavior in predetermined situations, a perpetual form of adaptation so that we may get where we are going.

The digital interface modifies our relationship to our own brain by progressively altering its neuronal functions ... Our synaptic networks, constantly reconnecting, modify their structures to adapt themselves naturally to the network (the internet), which now thinks *better* and *faster* than we do, and it accompanies us everywhere. We practice every day, without being aware of it, at each request, to extrapolate our brain. On the contrary, we behave like excrescences of the network. We are in the line of interfaces of the digitization of reality. With every key that is pressed, every document that is scanned, each photo uploaded, every message recorded, ... we feed into Big Data and the *meta* internet machine.

Thanks to the internet, the smartphone has become an essential prosthesis, non invasive, but absolutely interactive, with real time access to all the data in the world, all its tricks. The smartphone is one of our best peepholes on the great all-powerful internet ... Our understanding of the world has changed and it is irrevocable. Geolocalization has increased our relationship to space, the keyboard has changed the way we write.

If we continue in the same line of optimization, glasses will replace the smartphone, then the earpiece, and finally the ability to see.

We knew what it was like Before.

Our generation knew Before Big Data, which separates us from the natives, our little brothers. They have begun to think “inside,” they were born with these interfaces already in place. In a rare distancing, our generation has observed this particular mutation. And there is its critical role.

Things change.

The Web is experiencing its revolution: Facebook®, Youtube® and others have become our new boulevards, our public spaces, absorbing our activity on line, our participation, our personal data, our socializing, our principal brain time in fact ... The web is progressively absorbing all the other broadcast media (newspapers, tv, radio). It becomes both the medium which responds to everything and the siren which tempts us and disperses us at the same time, in a great entropy.

Now that we are dealing with *big data* and the exponential development of the *meta* machine internet, what human behavior should we adopt, from our little screens and peepholes staring out at it all?

Maybe it is the structure of the internet itself which absorbs us into its breast. The internet, this collective world brain, the real Babel, this infinite, insatiable cultural tool responds progressively better than we do to our own preoccupations. The collective fills many IRL ("in real life") gaps. But this *virtual* media is only a medium between disparate realities, the *virtual* doesn't really exist.

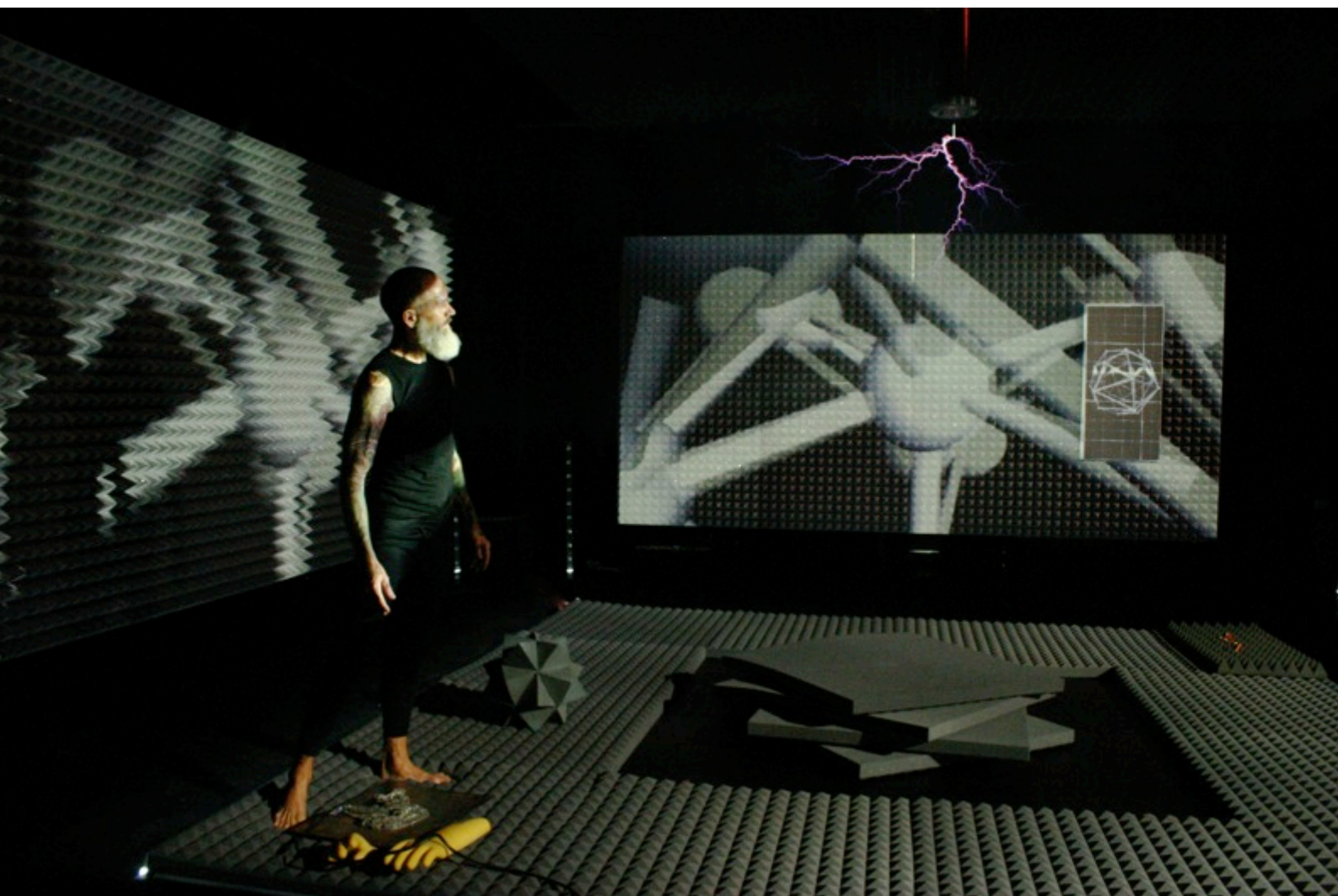
The internet constrains reality.

Like all systems, computer programming reflects a very precise mode of interaction. Each page, each application is a language (HTML, JAVA, C). Even the structure of the code: *(if(...), then(...), else(...))* conditions the user to enter its functional logic; the user has no other choice than to use that which has been predefined for him beforehand.

The code is the law. Each program has been laid out and conceived by someone (as have other objects, of course), often by a company whose agenda is neither revealed nor explicit. What is hidden? Who is being sold?

G ø L 4 M starts from this point, these facts. But to close the circle, as it were, it proposes a more allegorical reflection on this emerging contemporary being, or on this mutant being, this displaced post-human, a *post-human being* mutating in us at a time of *technological singularity*.

Without making direct references to *transhumanism*, **G ø L 4 M** is a free form gently mocking our contemporaneity, projecting itself forward based on tangible signs from the future.



Sources

The **G o L 4 M** refers also to a being from the Jewish *Talmud*, a pre-being made of earth, a Promethean myth of humanity.

The Talmud tells us that God, when He made Adam, first made a *golem*, lifting it from the earth to the firmament before giving it a soul. He creates a man, but seeing that this “man” is not responding, he understands its nature and orders him to return to the dust.

The *golem* appears in several esoteric books in the Jewish tradition. The Sefer Yetsira was studied in the Middle Ages in order to create and bring to life a Golem, following an ecstatic experience triggered by the ritual use of certain letters of the Hebrew alphabet which form the names of God ...

“All the problems we have on Earth can be attributed to our refusal to accept our changes ... We should embrace the beauty of this state. It is our intrinsic value.”

Philippe Starck

Four million years separate us from the first living organism, and the scientists promise us four million years until the Earth will become extinct, absorbed by the Sun. Are we half-way through life?

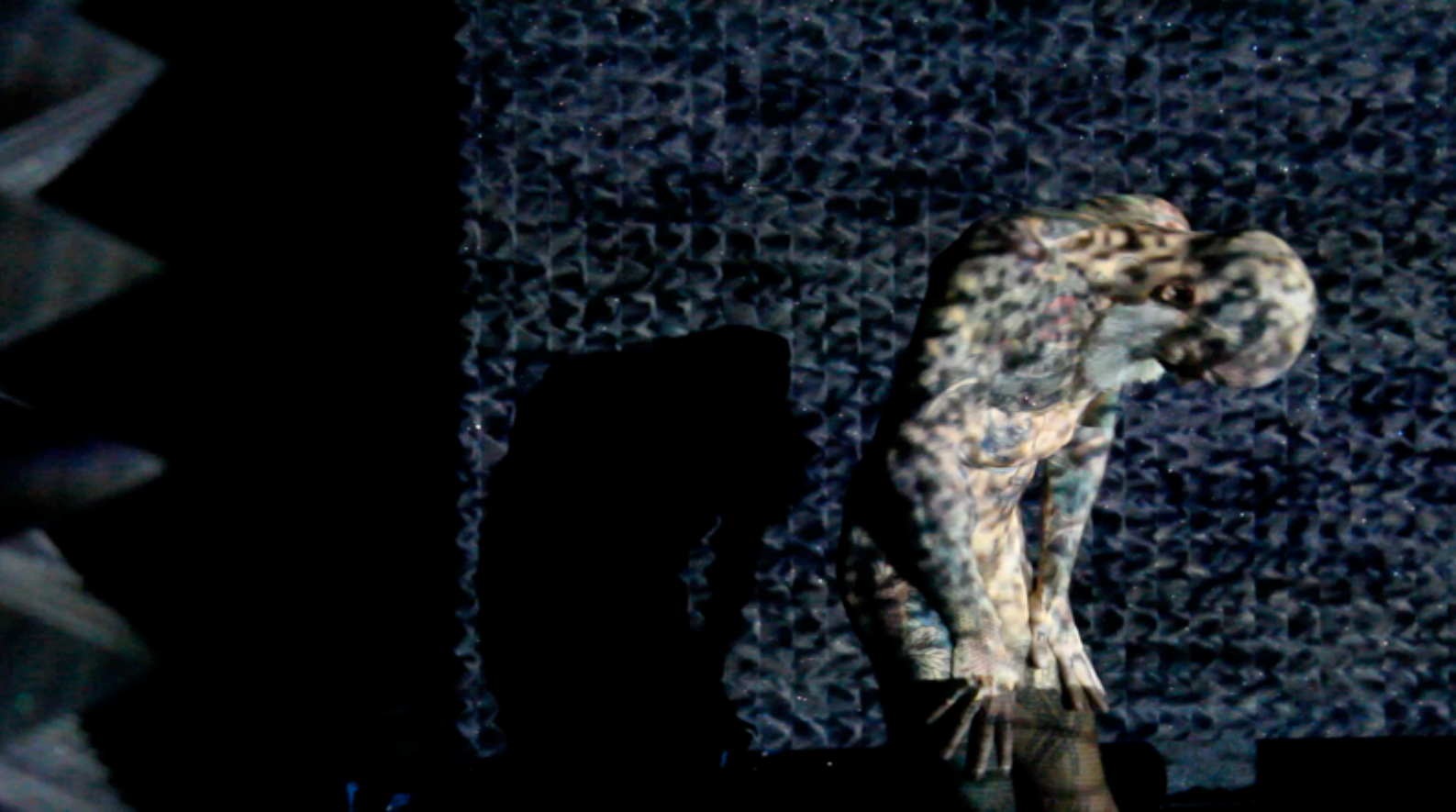
Looking forward, we see that we are in a state of perpetual mutation.

As we experience this technological “boom,” the mutation of the bodies accelerates and is strangely palpable today, including our brains, from one year to the next.

Can this synthetic Golem predict our future? We can at least, working with a laboratory form, a jerry-built mishmash and a theatre work based on the relationships between the body/machine, re-invent a different form which can introduce us to this abysmal perspective on our evolution.



© Xavier Veihan - Richard Rogers 2009



Notes from the director

Presentation

#LeClairObscur, at the intersection of the performing arts and the digital arts, examines the place of the human being in synthetic and omniscient environments. This media work consists of balancing perfectly the techniques of performance (sound, lighting, video) in order to create synesthesia and a nearly surgical precision in interaction.

Our stage spaces develop from laboratories with one or more human beings in them. They are dancers or actors; they neither “dance” nor “act” in the strictest sense of the word, but are placed in a situation which is imposed by the structure. A part of their humanity is enhanced, in contrast to the demands of the *milieu* in which they are evolving.

Little by little a stage dramaturgy evolves, in a collective, horizontal creative process.

In @.1:PROLOG, Sandra is like a bubble child, cloistered in a large cylindrical machine which is meant to make her dance, but via scanning and digitizing she disappears, leaving behind only her avatar – of smoke.

In @.2:SleepingBeauty, the same Sandra, cut off from the world in a glass sarcophagus, only communicates with the outside world via her emotional, cardiac and cerebral states, which are captured and mediatized in response via the social networks.

In @.3:PU_P3TS, Lucia and Julien, through a video interface, allow the computer to direct their dancers’ bodies via muscular contractions.

In @.4:GøL4M, a conclusion, the idea is to use prototypes of the living, and to create a totalitarian fantasy of the *augmented body* ...

Live performing arts, unlike film, allow us to *present*, to render active in reality, things which may derive more from science-fiction and the future. To that end we are choosing to do more installations and performances than stories and narration.

These performances divert certain technological tools from the market in order to spotlight them (Facebook®, Sportelec®, Emotiv EEG®, LightstoneIOM®, Microsoft Kinect®), testing the range of mainstream technological movements in the near future. And we then have a new perspective on our own technophile enterprise.

Our pieces should not however be interpreted entirely at face value, even if they are generally both spectacular and immersive. We often find great empathy from our spectators. What we seek is an experience of the senses, which speaks more to the body and the emotions than the intellect, and leaves behind more than a single conceptual speech.

Matthew Morris

GøL4M came about because of my encounter with the dancer/performer Matthew Morris during a trip to Brighton, England, under the auspices of the European program *Dans-ce Dialogue*. I was immediately attracted by Matthew's physique and strong personality: he is English and Australian, 45 years old, with a long career as a professional dancer (including DV8) and as a solo performer. He says he is a technological "virgin," with a healthy, uninhibited sense of curiosity. As we are all used to working with improv, we easily developed a collective vocabulary onstage, composing music, choreography and dramaturgy in the moment, live, and as a group. GøL4M is the result of this powerful collaboration and the desire to blend our universes. Which in my opinion is more important than any discourse or statement.

We do not use a pre-written story, instead we have an open plot which is the template for a collective experience. There is a certain kind of freedom in the project at its outset, followed by the close association of forms and media. If GøL4M is the conclusion of a cycle, it is the result of all our experiences and the tools developed for the performances of @, as well as the novelty of experiencing new elements, and pushing our latent energies to their peak, being able to manipulate raw electricity.

Matthew is onstage as a sort of *ready-made*. The desire of the Golem, of the mutant, is a personal way of dealing with his personality, such that Matthew does not act onstage. His body projects something else. His beard, his age, the signs he has tattooed on his entire body: Matthew is an absolutely *singular being* onstage, a form of wisdom and clairvoyance. He can become a kind of alchemist who can give a more allegorical meaning to our research on the media. *The machine* had lived as an autonomous entity confronting Man, or as a possibly demiurgic intermediary between man (a technician) and Man. But now it becomes the object of a quest which develops onstage. Matthew also has a benevolent form of humor and self-mockery, allowing us to go beyond this slightly too mystical and simplistic discourse.

In our previous creations, the time-consuming machinery took up a lot of space, both in creative timing and onstage, with the bodies of the guinea pig dancers, often passive, being crushed, sometimes voluntarily, by the structure.

In order to balance things, I would like Matthew, at the center of this particular structure, to be able to take over and bring out his character, as a human being, as a central part of the process.

Recording

Here we return to a more classical method of biometrical recording, which we have already used in our previous pieces, but we are trying to use it to mature a living form of another order. It is about transmitting or transferring life (its data), by the flow of data, giving it consistency.

From a transfer of fluids, of Matthew's electric flow -- to *everything*.

The recording is not finality, but it becomes the key to a globalizing, indissociable melding of the body and of the media. An absolute form of the augmented body.

GøL4M follows in the logical continuity of @: a laboratory, a dancer, a performer recorded and analyzed, and electricity as the principal aesthetic element.

GøL4M does seem to be channeling science fiction, something we were trying to avoid. This commitment changes how we approach the stage. We would prefer a more direct, concrete relationship and presence, which would defuse any tendency toward narrative.

However, our human *heroes* find themselves metaphorical prisoners of a structure or interface and must figure out a way to free themselves. Here our *golem* is born in a symmetrical, specialized chamber, filled with acoustic and electromagnetic insulation, a chamber lined with bumpy foam padding. How will he deal with all this?

Our space imposes our line of thinking, still a technological laboratory, the pretext for all our experiments, as well as a thematic examination of the post-human inevitable conclusion to our @ cycle.

Teaser :



<http://vimeo.com/leclairobcur/golem>

CALENDAR OF CREATION

September 9- 19, 2013

Residency in Hextable and Brighton (UK) with South East Dance
(+ Post-residency showing September 19, 2013)

February 24 - March 3, 2014

Technical Residency at Les Ateliers Intermédiaires de Caen

March 4- 17, 2014

Residency at Le Triangle, scène conventionnée Danse de Rennes
(+ Post-residency showing March 17, 2014)

June 4 – 13, 2014

Artistic residency at La Ménagerie de Verre (Paris)

September 8 – 21, 2014

Residency at Le Manège de la Guérinière (Caen)
with the support of the town of Caen

Thursday September 23, 2014

PREVIEW at the Brighton Dome with ODIA Normandie and South East Dance
as part of the Brighton Digital Festival

November 24 – 28, 2014

Residency at the CDN of Haute Normandie

Saturday November 29, 2014

World Premiere at the Théâtre des Deux Rives/ CDN de Haute-Normandie
as part of the Festival Autumn in Normandy

LE CLAIR OBSCUR

Established in Caen, Le Clair Obscur under the direction of Frédéric DESLIAS, brings together a group of artists all seeking to intersect the performing arts with the digital arts.

The experiment began in 2001 at the University of Performing Arts of Caen, with a first creation, **Entre Intérieurs**, based on Maeterlinck's *Les Aveugles*. It was remarked upon by the CDN de Normandie, then by the Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski (Pontedera - Italy). The CDN - Comédie de Caen followed the company from 2004 to 2006 with training, then Laboratories.

A first attempt was made: **Panser/Agir – 1^{er} attempt – 12 sorts des rams**. This Laboratory set up an exchange between those in attendance at *La Boussole* (a center for daytime hosting of the homeless in Caen) and the team, using writing, video testimony and active and collective participation onstage in a theatre/ multimedia structure. Two of the attendees, employed by the company would then be followed until they rejoined society.

Since 2006 le Clair-Obscur has worked on small experimental and multimedia scenic forms.

Three *Prototypes* – specific performances were created, based on the text *MANQUE* by Sarah Kane: **ORATORIO, FAKE and HERMSELF**.

This work was then successively accompanied by the D.M.D.T.S. (Aide à la maquette) and the CDN of Normandie; La Ferme du Buisson (in coproduction for *Labomatics Théâtres* 2007 and 2008); the CCN de Caen Basse-Normandie (in the *accueil studio* program - 18H60); La Tannerie (Barjols-83). The different modules fused in 2008 for the creation of **MANQUE (SARAH KANE) - ORATORIO ÉLECTRONIQUE** at the *Ferme du Buisson*.

At the same time, from 2007 to 2010, **HERMSELF** benefited from residencies at the Tannerie (Barjols), at the CDN of Normandie, at the CCN of Caen/Basse Normandie, at the Panta Théâtre (Caen) and at the ÉSAM (Caen).

It was also presented in stages at the Panta, at the ésam (Caen), then at the Colombier in Bagnolet in November, 2009.

HERMSELF was awarded the **Dance and New Technology Grand Prize** at the **LES BAINS NUMERIQUES FESTIVAL** in 2010 and was granted residencies and co-productions at the Centre des Arts in Enghien-les-Bains as well as at [Ars]Numerica/ Montbelliard and received production support from DICREAM.

The final version of **HERMSELF** was presented at the Centre des Arts in Enghien-les-Bains on November 18, 2011.

@, the new modular works project of the collective (2011/2013) examines *the place of the body in the era of the internet and of everything digital*. Co-produced by the Ménagerie de Verre and by the ODACC in 2011, it received *aide à la maquette* from DICREAM in 2010 and was hosted in residency at the Chartreuse (CNES Villeneuve-les-Avignons).

@.1:Prolog is presented at the Ménagerie de Verre, as part of the **Étrange Cargo Festival** in March 2011, then in Caen in the **Nordik Impakt Festival** in October, 2011.

@.2:SleepingBeauty was created in April 2012 for the **]Interstice[Festival** in Caen, and was also hosted by the **OSOSPHERE Festival** (Strasbourg) in December 2012, then in 2013 at the Théâtre de Caen (Festival Répliques), at the Brighton Digital Festival as part of the Dansce Dialogue 2 program, the *Nuit Blanche* in Charleville-Mézières, and *Transnomades* (Brussels) where it received the **Mobile Award for Arts & Networks**.

@.3:PU_PETS was hosted successively in residencies at the Cargö (Caen), at the Ateliers Intermédiaires (Caen), the ÉSAM (Caen), 2angles (Vire), the CDN de Caen, at the CCNBN, at the Ménagerie de Verre (Paris) and at the CdA of Enghien les Bains in June 2014. It was presented as a *work in progress* from 2012 to 2014, at the ÉSAM for Nordik Impakt 2012, then in the OSOSPHERE Festival (Strasbourg) in 2012. It was then presented in 2013 at the MAL of Laon, "Nous n'irons pas à Avignon" (Vitry/s), Souterrain porte VI (Nancy), then in 2014 at the Festival Etrange Cargo (at the Ménagerie de Verre, Paris), and finalized its creation for the Festivals Les Bains Numériques (Enghien-les-Bains) in 2014 and ELEKTRA (Montréal) 2015 (TBA).

LE CLAIR-OBSCUR IS A COMPANY REGISTERED IN THE BASSE-NORMANDIE REGION AND IS ALSO SUPPORTED BY THE CNC/DICREAM, THE DRAC DE BASSE NORMANDIE, THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF CALVADOS, THE CITY OF CAEN, AND L'ODIA NORMANDIE.

(more information: <http://www.leclairobscur.net>)

THE COMPANY

Frédéric Deslias :: director :: musician

<http://leclairobcur.net>

He was born in 1978. After studying electronics he attended the University of Caen in the Performing Arts department and founded Le Clair Obscur which he has directed since 2002. He worked in both theatre and dance as a composer and acoustic creator, for *David Bobée*, *Eric Lacascade*, *Héla Fatoumi & Eric Lamoureux* and *Médéric Legros* ... he also created several soundtracks for film and created several musical projects with the collective *Purée Noire*.

Trained in the digital arts and programming under MAX/MSP, his research soon moved toward interactive installations and sensitive pathways: *Décadage* 2009 and 2010 at the Beaux Arts Museum in Caen – Interactive Route and Remixes *in situ*, in video tableaux. HERMSELF was awarded the *Dance and New Technologies Grand Prize* at the *Les Bains Numériques Festival* 2010. He has also created musical therapy multimedia installations to develop the senses of autistic patients. His work with Clair Obscur has received many awards and tours both nationally and internationally.

Matthew Morris :: Dancer :: Choreographer

He has been an independent artist and dancer for more than 25 years. Matthew has worked internationally as a dancer with, among others, DV8 Physical Theatre, Siobhan Davies Dance, Fevered Sleep, Fearghus O'Conchuir, Random Scream, Didier Theron Co., Ballet du Grand Théâtre de Genève, Australian Dance Theatre and Clod Ensemble.

Since 2010 Matthew has developed a choreographic process creating works which are somewhere between dance and performance. This creative process explores through personal storytelling the human condition and the world in which we live, with the hope of inviting the audience to imagine other possibilities. Often incorporating poetic texts, theatrical processes and a complex movement vocabulary, his work is expressed in an abstract, nonlinear context.

Matthew teaches internationally, working with professionals and students, and he assists the photographer Aaron Rose in New York on archival projects.

Gaël L. :: Associate Artist :: developer

<http://gael-l.com>

He does research into intimacy, ranging from the study of sexuality to madness, from pleasure to pain. His company uses many disciplines, including photography, video and performance, all with a central theme: the body. Between body art (*In proxima altera* 2009 – recreated for the Borderline Biennial 2011) and black poetry (*Le Nécrophile* 2011), his creations involve primal elements (sex, blood, death), to construct charged, powerful images, reaching into the deepest layers of our being.

He is an active participant in the @ Project of Clair Obscur as both an Associate Artist and a developer.

Olivier Guillerminet :: multimedia developer

<http://www.olivierguillerminet.com/>

Having earned a degree from the ESME Sudria (Paris), he began his career as an engineer on several projects, including the famous *Guitar Pro*. Beginning in 2008, he joined the Collectif Mu as a computer developer on the research project Sound Delta. Since then he has collaborated with many artists, among them Thierry Fournier, le Clair Obscur, Myriam Gourfink and Kasper Toeplitz, on multimedia installations and performance pieces as well as on applications for smartphones. He also worked with the Grame (National Centre of Musical Creation in Lyon) on the research project *Faust*.

A student of the SCAO class (synthesis and computer assisted composition) at the Conservatoire Georges Bizet (Paris), he also developed a musical and visual process, aesthetically experimental and noise-centric, presented as an interactive installation or live performance.

Jean-Noël Françoise :: Composer

He was born in 1968. He is a multi-instrumentalist and composer, working for fifteen years in the Basse-Normandie region, working in theatre, dance and film: David Bobée/Groupe Rictus, Le Panta Théâtre, the CCN de Caen (Fatoumi-Lamoureux), Silenda, Le Théâtre des Furies, L'Elan Bleu, Compagnie du Phoenix, Mathieu Chatelier, and the Congolese company Banninga/DeLaVallet Bidiefono, which will be performing at the main Avignon Festival in the summer of 2014. He plays in diverse musical formats, including improv, cinemix, performances, acoustic installations), among them the Confédération du Bricolage and the Purée Noire Collective. A historical member of the company, he has been an Associate Composer for Clair-Obscur since 2006.

CONTACT

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