

LA BELLE au bois

une pièce en 3 actes de Jules Supervielle
par le Collectif Quatre Ailes

ENGLISH VERSION



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La Belle au bois

Created by Collectif Quatre Ailes

Cast

Sleeping Beauty: **Valentine Carette**

Bluebeard: **François Kergourlay**

Fairy godmother / Wicked fairy godmother: **Catherine Mongodin**

Puss in Boots: **Damien Saugeon**

Cook / Lady Mayor: **Claire Corlier**

Prince de Beauval: **Mathieu Boulet**

Directed by: **Michaël Dusautoy**

Video : **Annabelle Brunet**

Assisted by **Mathieu Fayette** (drawing)

Scenography: **Perrine Leclere-Bailly**

Assisted by **Mathieu Bianchi** (construction)

Creation light : **Bruno Rudtmann**

Original music: **S Petit Nico**

Air acrobatics: **Damien Saugeon**

Acting coach: **Catherine Mongodin**

Costumes: **Gwenn Tillenon**

Assisted by **Coline Drenaux** and **Marthe Dumas**

Knitting : **Collectif France Tricot**

Hair and make-up: **Nathy Polak**

General state control : **Anne-Marie Gerrero** and **Willy Connell**

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Delegated production : Théâtre des Quartiers d'Ivry. Coproduction : Collectif Quatre Ailes, Scène Watteau - Théâtre de Nogent-sur-Marne, Pôle Culturel d'Alfortville and ARCADI (Action Régionale pour la Création Artistique et la Diffusion en Île-de-France). With the help of DRAC Île-de-France for the production and the support of Lilas en Scène.

The story

Since the 1932 edition I have often dreamed of this play. It kept living inside of me, that is to say it kept changing. In the present version, the scenes at the beginning were rewritten and the third act contains entire new passages: it underwent changes which are not all due to the evolution of the play after the various representations but also to the events of a period, the cruelties of which could not fail to have an effect on this fairy tale.

La Belle au Bois by Jules Supervielle, exergue, NRF Gallimard, Paris 1947

In Jules Supervielle's play the plot is set in the middle of an enchanting forest. **Sleeping Beauty** is the beating heart of this poetic, delicate, carefully hidden universe. At the centre of a round and cyclic universe, that of the legend, she is self-sufficient. The animals talk. Graceful, obliging, mischievous and accomplice of pure spirits, Puss in Boots puts the whole of an imaginary France at the service of Sleeping Beauty and the other inhabitants of the castle: the fairy godmother of Sleeping Beauty and the cook. The play opens with the birthday celebrations for Sleeping Beauty, who is turning fifteen. She yearns for the event, which will pull her out of her tranquillity. She is waiting for this 'other', elsewhere, the world out there. She dreams of violence, of energy, of storm, of an adventurous love, absolute and fierce. And then the incarnation of her desires appears in the form of **Bluebeard**, who arrives by chance, on his galloping horse in the vicinity of the castle...

The fairy godmother is devastated by this amoral encounter. Her recommendations and her sinister premonitions fail to discourage the lovers. Sleeping Beauty is taken by Bluebeard, who in turn swears to amend. They decide to take their lives in their own hands and escape their destiny. The fairy godmother, who feels her powers weakening, decides to use desperate measures and sets Sleeping Beauty and **Puss in Boots** asleep to protect them from themselves. Bluebeard, in turn, calls upon his own fairy godmother to set him asleep as well, to join his beloved.

Centuries later, **in our days**, in 2010, they are awoken by **Prince charming**, not charming at all, knocking at the door like a deaf and battering the walls with great noise. The Prince imperiously demands from Sleeping Beauty the fulfilment of the legend, the official wedding, while a furious mob wants to lynch Bluebeard for his past crimes. Puss in Boots has lost the magical powers of his boots. What else is new in this world? Electricity replaced fairies. The art of healing and the art of killing in warfare made great progress.

The real world and the world of legends gauge each other: which one is the other's dream?

Extract

BLUEBEARD

In your imagination, love is something delicate, like the plucking of rose petals. Lies! Love, the way I impose it, is a fierce affaire.

SLEEPING BEAUTY, *abruptly jumping on his neck*

And I, I fear you so little, that I will start by kissing you with all my might

She is kissing him several times, he rests petrified in her arms.

BLUEBEARD, *frightened by himself, pushing her back*

Off me! Don't be so trusting!

SLEEPING BEAUTY, *taking his hands and shaking them.*

I don't fear you any more than if you had both your hands amputated. Look, I don't tremble and I'm laughing at the defence that I can feel within you and around me. You are afraid because you really love me. (Grasping his body by his hand and shaking him) I fear you so little, you hear me, that I would twist your fingers if I had to, I would bite your hand with all my might, I would scratch your face and smear it with your blood.

BLUEBEARD, *his face lighting up more and more.*

Angel from heaven, clear-sighted girl! That's it, bite my hand and cover my face with blood. I will not move, even if all the knives in the world were at my disposal, they will not frighten me any more than little silverfish in running water. Up until now, the air has always been poisoned for me, by the mere proximity of a single woman. And of this proximity, you made a crystal and a sun. Day and night I was in iron armour...

SLEEPING BEAUTY, *taking his hands.*

And now you are dressed all in feathers.

BLUEBEARD

How can I ask forgiveness?

SLEEPING BEAUTY

I have nothing to forgive you, I love you.

BLUEBEARD

Life is beautiful...

SLEEPING BEAUTY

You see. So?

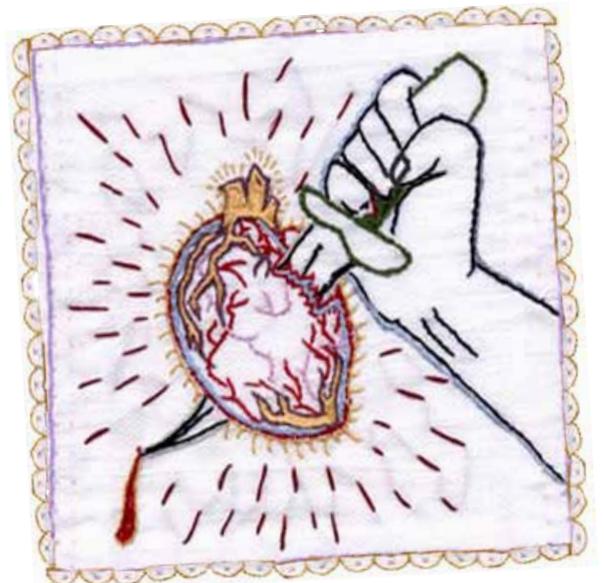
BLUEBEARD

So?

He laughs

SLEEPING BEAUTY

So, we will get married?



Jenny Hart, Knife

Jules Supervielle, stage poet

The tale of his life...

Jules Supervielle was born in Montevideo on 16 January 1884. Montevideo was the city of dreams and of good fortune for his father from Béarn and his mother from the Basque country. After their immigration to Uruguay they founded a bank. His parents undertake the long journey back to present the child to their family. Shortly after their arrival in Oloron-Sainte-Marie they both die suddenly and mysteriously, practically at the same time – of water poisoning. Orphaned at eight months, the newborn is at first taken in by his grand-mother and then taken back to Uruguay where he spends a happy childhood with his uncle and aunt, who he believes to be his parents. At age nine, he learns that his parents are not his biological parents and that his brothers and sisters are in fact his cousins. In 1894 he returns to France alone to study literature at the Lycée Janson-de-Sailly in Paris. He already composes some poems. Every year he is eager to return to South America. In 1900 he publishes his first book of poetry, *Brumes du passé*. He obtains his bachelor's degree, studies law and languages, but chooses to write. The income from the family bank allows him to fully devote himself to writing. At twenty-three he marries Pilar Saavendra in Uruguay. They stay together all his life and have six children. On fill-in forms he stated under 'profession': father of six children.

In 1910 he publishes a second collection of poems, *Comme des voiliers*. He regularly returns to Uruguay, to visit his property, his estancia. In 1919 he publishes *Les poèmes de l'humour triste*, and in 1922 *Débarcadères*. He becomes a good friend of Henri Michaux. They go on travel together on several occasions and Supervielle shows him South America. He is read, admired and noted by Gide, Rilke, Valéry, Rivière and Paulhan. From 1925 his works are published by NRF. The poetry collections *Gravitations*, then *Le Forçat innocent* and *La Fable du monde* take turns with the novels and tales *Le Voleur d'enfant*, *L'enfant de la haute-mer* and *L'Arche de Noé* and the plays: *La Belle au Bois* for the Pitoëffs in 1931, *La première famille*, for Michel Saint Denis, *Bolivar*, produced at the Comédie Française in 1936 with a set design by Fernand Léger. Supervielle is in Uruguay when war breaks out in 1939. He stays there until 1946, writing resistance poems and participating actively in journals published by the Free France Forces. Director Louis Juvet successfully produces *La Belle au Bois* for his grand tour of Latin America.

When Supervielle returns to France after seven years, he receives many honours – he is awarded the Prix des critiques and the Grand prix de littérature de l'Académie française – without it affecting the meticulous intensity of his work (his manuscripts reveal an uninterrupted work in order to attain the highest degree of simplicity) or his family life. New collections of poetry: *Oublieuse mémoire*, *Naissance*, *L'escalier* and *Le Corps tragique* the narrative *Boire à la source* and more plays: *Robinson*, staged at the Théâtre de l'oeuvre, *Shéhérazade*, staged by Vilar in Avignon in 1948 with original music by Darius Milhaud. *La Belle au Bois* is shown again in a new version in 1953. *Bolivar* is shown at the Opera in Paris. A stage version of *Voleurs d'enfants* has great success in the theatre and later in a movie version. Just after being elected 'prince of poets' by his peers on 30 April, Supervielle dies 17 May 1960.

Direction lines

by Michaël Dusautoy



Restoring

Jules Supervielle revised *La Belle au Bois* several times. Three versions were successively published by Gallimard in 1932, 1947 and 1953. The numerous manuscripts at the French National Library prove that he kept working on the entire play and in particular on the third act for more than 20 years to keep it as contemporary and up to date as possible. In the introduction to the 1947 edition, in which the tale is strongly impregnated by the cruelties of the events of the second world war, he says **'It kept living inside of me'**.

Since with *La Belle au Bois* Jules Supervielle wanted to provoke **an encounter between a poetic and the contemporary world**, I have the intention, together with the artistic team, to 'polish' the text, in order to get rid of the few outdated elements it contains. This intention should not be viewed as a radical gesture, but rather as a work of restoration, a painter about to restore the brilliance of a picture's original colours. In the course of production and creation we will make some cuts and modifications in order to allow Supervielle's poetry to be heard in all its brilliance.

Far from traditionalist, naive images

La Belle au Bois is a unique fairy tale because it unites in one story 'stock characters' from different tales by Perrault which do not a priori have a shared destiny. But for the author it is not about mixing different characters and tales, which have nothing to do with one another, together in a sort of big jumble. It is not a playful excuse to tell a new story like the DreamWorks studio film Shrek. **Jules Supervielle was touched by each the characters (Sleeping Beauty, Bluebeard, Puss in Boots...)** and he brings about their encounter so as to bring them alive. The protagonists' feelings go astray and make them get off the beaten track of their fates, which the fairy tale traced for them. **Each of them struggles to escape their destiny.** The Manichean aspect, i.e. that of a simple opposition between good and evil of the 'stock characters' is eliminated. Sleeping Beauty falls wholeheartedly and knowingly in love with her murderer. Bluebeard, upset by this love, discovers his sensitive side, previously unknown to himself. Puss in Boots dreams of becoming human to be able to carnally love Sleeping Beauty.

To bring this fairy tale, with all its aspects of a profound humanity, to life, we will take some distance from traditionalist, naive images, without losing sight of the origin of each of the characters. The plot will be set in a pure and unpredictable universe, in order to come as close as possible to the truth that inhabits Jules Supervielle's poetry.

Sleeping Beauty

The character of *Sleeping Beauty* is often associated with the 1959 Disney animated film of the same name. Long curly blond hair, excessively tall, fair skin and with her head held high and— the image of the Slavic or Germanic peasant girl seems to persist in our collective memory.

I would like our Sleeping Beauty not to be reduced to a commercial image. She is a girl of 15, made of flesh and blood, her physical appearance and the colour of her skin of little importance, one among the thousands that attend the schools all over the country. She should have the feel of **a rebel, who stands up against parental authority**. The authority is represented by the fairy godmother, who understands all too well the awakening of desire in the young woman, but also the fragile little girl who still needs protection and the idealistic girl who has faith in the future and cannot accept injustice.

The age difference between Bluebeard and Sleeping Beauty is very important, it should be **reason for unease and incomprehension**. In fact, the audience should wonder, how and why a young girl can be attracted by a violent man, at least twenty years her senior.

Incarnation

Jules Supervielle's work is characterised by the idea that thoughts can create life. The novel *L'enfant de la haute mer* is a nice example. A 12 year-old girl is the sole inhabitant of a village, which mysteriously floats in the middle of the ocean. Endowed with all human senses, yet she can neither live, nor die or love. She is born out of the thoughts of a sailor who lost his daughter during one of his voyages and who, one night thought of her with great intensity.

This idea is our guiding thread for linking Sleeping Beauty with Bluebeard. Like with the sailor, it is out of the thoughts of Sleeping Beauty, out of her desire, that Bluebeard is born. She is his creator.



L. Gabrielli, P. Marteel, M. Renoux et M. Tourret, *L'enfant de la haute mer*, animated movie, 2000

Bluebeard my love

Sleeping beauty awaits but one thing: that Bluebeard stabs his knife into her heart. That's why he must represent the worst nightmare for 21st century parents. Unlike prince charming, longstanding ancestral of the ideal son in law, he represents everything that could make a mother or a father worry about their 15 year-old daughter. There is the age difference, the hairy and virile appearance, a brutal and dark side of him, the violence, a very impulsive character, blood on his clothes and scratch marks from women on his face

and arms. But unlike Gustave Doré's illustrations of Charles Perrault's tales, where he is represented as a big ogre, ugly and libidinous, our Bluebeard will be of a terrifyingly humane beauty. This aspect is essential, because it is important to show that Sleeping Beauty created a very real character.



Laura Neuvonen, *The last knit*, animated movie, 2005

The fairy godmother: knitting until the end

As the plot unfolds in Supervielle's play, the fairy godmother is losing her magical powers and eventually dies. In an act of despair, to protect Sleeping Beauty from Bluebeard, she gathers her remaining force and dies of exhaustion as she casts her last spell.

For the role of the fairy godmother I will choose an actress reminiscent of Delphine Seyrig who played the fairy godmother in *Peau d'Ane* (Donkey Skin) by Jacques Demy, but aged by twenty years. I would like the audience to have the feeling that the fairy godmother was very beautiful in her youth. But as Sleeping Beauty turns into a beautiful young woman, she is gradually losing her beauty and her magical powers.

The popular image of a fairy shows her with a magical wand. In *La Belle au Bois*, instead of a wand, **the fairy godmother will be using knitting needles, which will directly act on the décor and on the world surrounding Sleeping Beauty.** In order to hold back time, stop it from flowing and to keep the world of legends intact, **she frenetically keeps knitting until her death.**

Knitted images, embroidered images

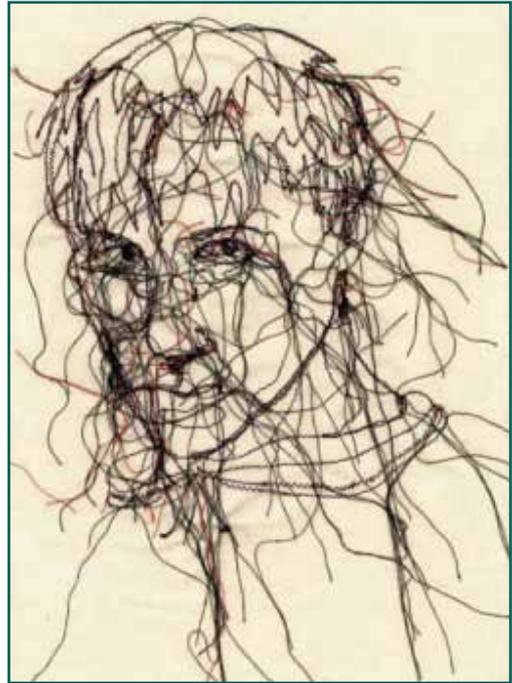
The images of a thread, pins and needles are often found in tales and legends. They are generally associated with different stages of the lives of women. In Perrault's tale *Sleeping Beauty*, the eponymous title character pricks her finger on a spindle, which symbolises her transformation of an adolescent into a young girl. Similar symbolism can be found in the tales of the brothers Grimm, H.-C. Andersen and well before them in Homer's Penelope.

In *La Belle au Bois*, Jules Supervielle puts a spinning wheel at the centre of the stage. It is at once a pledge for the fairy tale Sleeping Beauty, a symbol for the flow of time and the destiny of Sleeping Beauty. Without trying to illustrate the psychoanalytic theories (like the one expounded by Bruno Bettelheim in *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*) which investigate the symbolism of needlework, I would like to make use of **the crafts of knitting, embroidering, and lacework to create animated films which will be projected around Sleeping Beauty.**

In a world dominated by exclusively feminine tasks, the fairy godmother knits the trees and the animals of the forest, Sleeping Beauty embroidering and animating the faces of Prince charming and Puss in Boots spinning wool in his claws to create images that would make Sleeping Beauty dream.

In terms of plastic realisation, we will be working with **traditional models**, like the ones made by little girls aged 7 to 12

in red cross-stitch. But we are also interested in **more modern work, like the incredible creations of the Swiss artist Sandrine Pelletier**, who makes all sorts of embroidered and lacework images, or the British Sarah Cox, who made an astonishing animated film that shows a tapestry, forming an unraveling world.



Sandrine Pelletier, Untitled (back), série Wildboys, 2002

Projection boundaries and surfaces

The whole plot in Jules Supervielle's play is set within a grand castle, hidden from view by a high and majestic forest.

On the stage, **a big bed, covered in cotton sheets**. It evokes the castle where Sleeping Beauty is kept, the room of an adolescent who stays locked up all day, and the fulfilment of her destiny. **The sheets covering the bed will be mobile and can be lifted into the air**. Animated like a puppet on strings by the fairy godmother and her knitting needles, they perform veritable choreographies. As Sleeping Beauty is trying to escape and to see what is hidden beyond the forest which keeps her prisoner, they draw up vertically like guards to keep her from leaving her room and seeing any further.

The sheets will also be used as surfaces for projections, they will make images appear that are in resonance with the most intimate feelings of the characters. They will thus show the image of Bluebeard forming, before the desire of Sleeping Beauty makes him appear in flesh and blood underneath the sheets, and also the projections of the fairy godmother's anxiety, nourished by the dark legends that shroud Bluebeard and evoke the terrible fate that awaits her protégé.



Studies for a scenography, *La Belle au Bois* (Perrine Leclere-Bailly)

Behind the bed, in the extension of the sheets, **the image of a dense and majestic forest fills the stage.** Woven, embroidered, knitted and sewn by the fairy godmother, it symbolises time standing still. With the contribution of all the inhabitants of the castle, including Puss in Boots, she frantically stitches and creates plant patterns in order to keep Sleeping Beauty prisoner, like an image in the middle of a forest where leaves no longer fall off trees. The young girl refuses to accept her condition and dreams of seeing what is hidden beyond the image of the forest. **She will overcome her boredom by unravelling and undoing the work of the fairy godmother's needles.**



Study for a scenography, *La Belle au Bois*
(Perrine Leclere-Bailly)

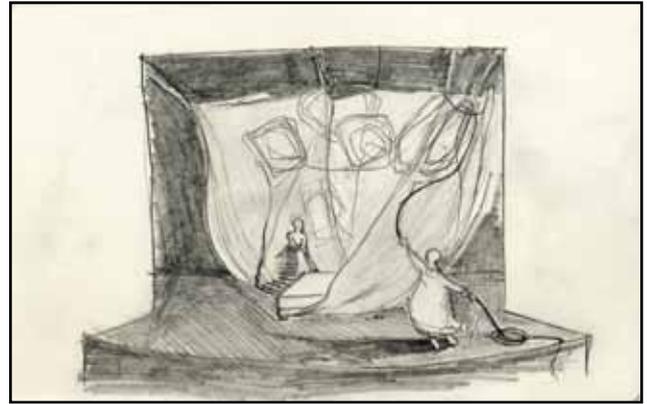
Yet this forest is magical because as the fairy godmother loses her powers, the patterns will become animated and transformed. Puss in Boots will bounce off the bed to go on his missions and use the patterns as gateways to the outside world. To watch over Sleeping Beauty, the fairy godmother will blend into the foliage. This magical function of the forest is made possible by animated videos and optical illusions.

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The Godmother is knitting



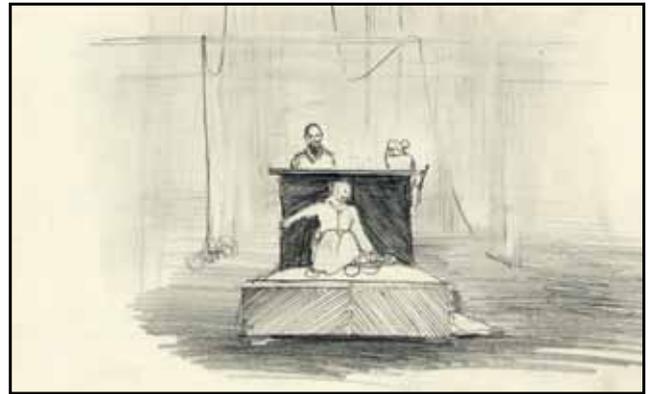
The Beauty is unravelling



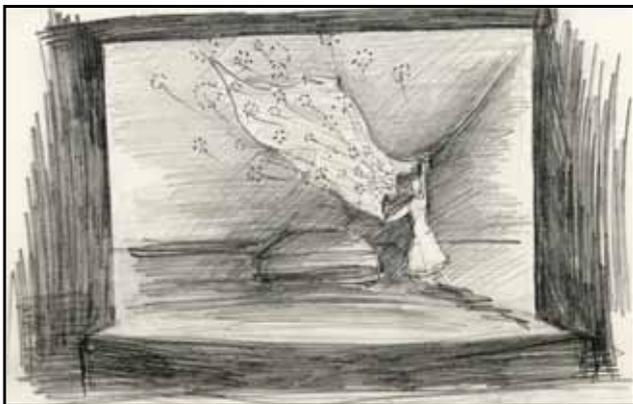
Puss travels



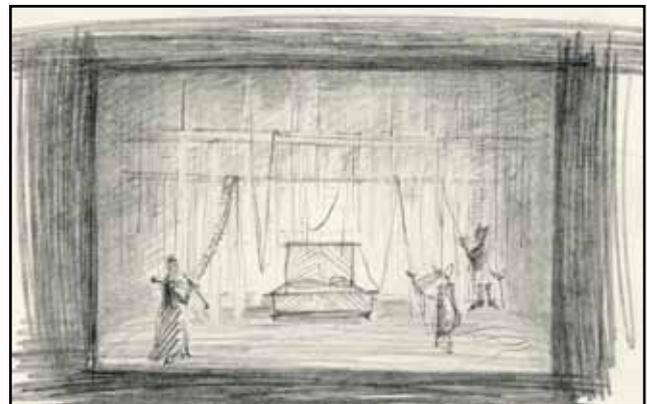
The Beauty is awaiting



Flowers throwing



Everyone at work



Ultrasound

'Under my tranquil eyes, you turn into music. I see with my ears, like with a gaze.'

(Jules Supervielle, *Oublieuse Mémoire*)

The work of Jules Supervielle is full of musical scenes. The poet sees "whispered words gleaming", he perceives "the sounds of a face". Whereas for Paul Claudel the eye can hear, for Jules Supervielle, the ear can see.

In *La Belle au Bois*, projected images and sound images will therefore be intricately connected. There will be no duality or conflict between them. It will be enough to lend an ear as the eyes close and to open the eyes wide as the silence can be heard. The images of the animated videos will be born of the beating of a heart, of the rustling of an eyelash, of the clattering of the fairy godmother's knitting needles or of the thread that passes through the eye of a needle. From the sound, from the soul of a character flows the light of the projection like an ultrasound. In turn, as the night falls between each act (first night at the castle of Bluebeard, thousand year sleep of Sleeping Beauty) the images will go quiet and let the sound of the dreams of the inhabitants of the castle of Sleeping Beauty be heard. Anabelle Brunet, who works on the video animations, will collaborate to this intent with the composer S Petit Nico.

Music

For *La Belle au Bois* we will continue our collaboration with the composer S Petit Nico, who already worked with us for all of our past productions. Like with the previous creations, S Petit Nico will create a theme, around which the music will be centred and which will give a rhythm to the whole play. The reflections, or rather the echo of her inner concerns, of which Sleeping Beauty is telling Prince charming at the end of the third act are organic, sensual and intimate. The musical style will preferentially be pop or electronic; with inspirations taken from groups such as Air, Gorillaz, Massive Attack and the works of Hans Petter Dahl and Maarten Seghers, who composed the music of *La chambre d'Isabelle* and *La maison des Cerfs*, directed by Jan Lauwers. S Petit Nico will also write the music for some passages of the play, which are in verse form.

From each side of the forest

Poetry and imagination ready for consumption

by Annabelle Brunet

The **Collectif Quatre Ailes** tinkers with images and set designs using video art, exploiting its magical and poetic potential. Devices such as shadows, light, appearance ...create a plastic universe for the audience which might well be called enchanting. In the 2008 production *The RW Project* (after *La Promenade* by Robert Walser, adapted by Evelyne Loew) circus elements featured prominently in the creation of this universe. A dreamlike world appeared on stage, in which the characters moved and flew off into the air.

With stage directions and actors who are mindful of the role of images in the play, the poetic texts can be presented in all of their dimensions. Space and characters, be they real or fantasy, evolve together, with the ease of a child's imagination. With *La Belle au Bois*, the **Collectif Quatre Ailes** demonstrates again an interest in this kind of artistic craftsmanship, in these poets who create **enchanting images, full of asperity, in stark contrast to the sleek images of our society.**



Agnès Caffier, diapositive, Salle des Religieuses, Abbaye de Maubuisson, 1998

Defending the imaginative

How to react to the drift of our society, which seeks to annihilate our imagination by providing us with ubiquitous, fake, ready-made dreams? When amusement parks, package holidays, fake historic monuments and other guided tours are consumed in the same way as the flux of televised images; without effort and ultimately without imagination? And it is easy to succumb to this desire to consume dreams, and everyone does

it more or less consciously and with more or less pleasure...Yet in this society of visual consumerism, the image is endangered, as the philosopher Marie-José Mondazin puts it. There is less and less room for an imaginative participation of the audience.

We therefore assert that the imaginary is not a consumer object, that art is not an amusement park! But it is not enough to say that an image is something other than a commodity, we have to create poetic images. So in *La Belle au Bois*, Jules Supervielle denounces the killings of his time by sending his audience off into a fairy tale, a universe full of candour, which speaks to the child in all of us. It offers a universal, humane and sensitive point of view. Rather than denouncing it brutally or provocatively, the **Collectif Quatre Ailes** creates the images on stage with an emphasis on the emotional aspect, and gives them to the audience in all of their plasticity and sensitivity. **We defend an image which touches more than it informs,** and ultimately, the message is nothing less than the poetic act itself.

Confrontation

The not-so-charming prince in the play represents the aspect of our society, which is impoverished in imagination. As he passes through the forest to get into the castle of Sleeping Beauty, she desperately wants to escape this consumer of fairy tales, who, because he is the prince believes to be destined to marry her. And he goes about it in a serious way, waking her with great thunder! But he does not so much go for poetry. In the fairy tales, the prince has to fight fierce wolves or wicked witches, has to climb thorn bushes or defeat a fire breathing dragon to win his Beauty. **For our modern prince, there is no rite of passage!** Used to effortless and pre-paid commodities, the possibility of having to fight doesn't even occur to him.

Sleeping Beauty rejects the prince and prefers Bluebeard instead. With her hunger for freedom, her feministic struggle, how could she accept to live in this "real" world, in which, just because it is written that way, she is left with no other destiny than that of the fairy tale, which in effect turns her into a commodity?

Bluebeard turns out to have the same sentiment as Sleeping Beauty. If there is no other way here to escape his destiny of mass murderer, **rather return to the magical universe of fairy tales to be able to dream again.**



Study for Bluebeard (Laurence Tuot)

Living Poetry

'Rest assured, the wind of dreams is blowing a little'

(Jules Supervielle, Collection of handwritten manuscripts, French National Library),



At the source of Jules Supervielle's prose and of his delicate poetry, which keep the reader at the brink of dreams, are water, air, mist and clouds, malleable forms and material imagination. Fragility is a characteristic of the poet's imagination, the 'wide awake sleeper' as Gaston Bachelard called him. The same is true for the audience's imagination, who are abducted to live the dream or the nightmare that materialise before their very eyes, far from the sheepish and realistic representations of the world.

A dreamscape will be woven around the bed of ***Sleeping Beauty***. The audience will witness its appearance, and be invited to sink into the double placenta of the anonymous community of the theatre and the obscurity around them so as to open the locks of dreams and magic. In the same way as

music guides us into an internal space, inside ourselves, **video will embroider the patterns of an enchanted universe, creating and unravelling to the rhythm of the characters' fantasies and to the sound of the fairy godmother's knitting needles.** Like in a doze, the sounds are deaf, amplified, unsettling even; the images are fleeting, both airy and concise.

Just like the sleeping Beauty in our story, in front of the entangled images projected and embroidered on the fabrics around her, the audience's imagination can ultimately add or take away from the imaginary world, which rests happily incomplete. It certainly shouldn't be a delivery of some form of prefabricated dream. No tinned images ready for consumption will be projected! No images, which force themselves on the viewer and which would only be some form of distraction. Rather, **an assembly of images which imitate the process of imagination and onto which are grafted our imaginations, which, in short, keeps us alive.**

The artists

Michaël Dusautoy - Director, plastic artist

A founding member of the Collectif Quatre Ailes; he directed *The RW Project* and acted in *Suzanne* and *Sir Semolina*, for which he also created the décor and the videos. He was assistant director of Xavier Marchand for *Le Bois Lacté* by Dylan Thomas and Eric Garmirian. He also directed *Yvonne, Princess de Bourgogne* by Witold Gombrowitz with the theatre group Le Zèbre à Bascule. He recently directed with Youlia Zimina *La Fiancée Prussienne* de Youri Bourida. As a plastic artist he created the scenographic images for *L'illusion comique* by Corneille, *Hilda* de Marie N'Diaye and *Inconnu à cette adresse* by Kathrine Kressmann Taylor, directed by Elisabeth Chailloux, *Pantagleize* by Michel de Ghelderode, directed by Philippe Awat and *La Poche Parmentier* by Georges Perec, directed by Karen Fichelson.

Annabelle Brunet - Video and plastic artist

A member of the Collectif Quatre Ailes since 2005, she created the videos for *The RW Project* and co-produced the videos for *Suzanne* with Michaël Dusautoy and *Sir Semolina*. On the tour of *Sir Semolina* she was video technician in the role of Marmiton. She has realised the videos in *Désirée*, by Benoit Fourchard, directed by Jean-Charles Maricot ; she's also realised the videos and has been video-manager in *La Poche Parmentier*, written by Georges Perec, directed by Karen Fichelson. She taught classes in plastic art at the university of Rennes for 3 years and exhibited her video installations in Paris, other parts of France and abroad. Her doctoral thesis, which she submitted in 2007, was prepared under the supervision of Anne-Marie Duguet. The subject was the connection between video art and expressionist cinema and theatre. She is teaching workshops on artistic techniques for children and adults.

Perrine Leclerc-Bailly - Set designer

Trained at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts et Techniques du Théâtre under the supervision of Claire Dehove, for the last 12 years she created the sets for contemporary dance groups (Stanislaw Wisniewski) and theatre groups (Anadyomène/Opale and Charles Dullin). She also worked for the theatre groups Arpa-Tact-t and the 3/8 and for the opera *Don Pasquale* by Donizetti at the Festival des Nuits romantiques at Lac du Bourget. Since 2006 she has worked as set designer with Yves Collet for the directors E. Demarcy-Mota (*Casimir et Caroline* by O. von Horvath at the Théâtre de la Ville, *Wanted Petula* by F. Melquiot at the CND La Comédie in Reims ...), A. Hakim (*La Cagnotte* by E. Labiche and Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* at the Fêtes Nocturnes at Château de Grignan), B. Jacques-Wejeman, J.P. Garnier, T. Stepantchenko, E. Chailloux, Ph. Lanton and Ph. Adrien. She has also worked with Rudy Sabounghi, Alain Lagarde and Gouri. She has worked on set design and computer-aided design for the Théâtre des Quartiers d'Ivry since 2006 and worked for the Théâtre National De l'Odeon/Théâtre de l'Europe between 2002 and 2004, notably on the restoration of the Ateliers Berthier with Alain Wending.

S Petit Nico - Author, composer, musician

S Petit Nico became known to a larger audience in 2006 with the release of the Grand Corps Malade album *Midi 20*, which he composed and produced. They performed together nearly 150 times. A self-educated musician, he starts out in rap music, which leads him to write and compose his own music. He tours the music festivals around Paris with his group *Energu-Men Posse*, before releasing his first solo album *Petit Nico* in 2002. A multi-instrumentalist, he meets young film-makers in search of original film music. After 30 short movies, he becomes the composer of the *Collectif La Famille*, directed by the producer and actor Jacky Ido. As for theatre, S Petit Nico composed the music for the last two productions of the *Collectif Quatre Ailes*, which he joined in 2002 when he participated in the creation of the music for *Suzanne*. He composes and produces for the albums of numerous artists (*Les Slammeurs*, Souleymane Diamanka, Ami Karim, Rouda, the singer Amel Bent) and he is preparing his new album.

Cast

Valentine Carette - Actress

After training in contemporary dance at the County Conservatory of Montpellier, she joined the Superior School of Dramatic Arts Conservatory of Montpellier directed by actor Ariel Garcia-Valdes, which she is graduated in 2005. In theater, she starred in *Famille d'artistes et autres portraits* by Alfredo Arias (directed by Jean Claude Fall), in *La Folle Journée* by Beaumarchais (directed by Gilbert Rouvière), in *Des fins, épilogue de Molière* and *Manège* by Alain Behar (staged by Alain Behar), in *Les Illusions Vagues* from *La Mouette* by Tchekhov, *Des Batailles* from *Pylade* written by Pasolini, in *Chez les Nôtres* from Gorky's *Mother* (staged by Olivier Coulon-Jablonka) in *Il était une fois Germaine Tillion* (directed by Xavier Marchand) and *Les Vagues* by Virginia Woolf (directed by Marie-Christine Soma). In movies, she starred in *Mr. Morimoto* by Nicola Sornaga (selected at the Quinzaine des Réalisateurs) and the short-film by Jonathan Desoindre *Shirley* and *Virginie ou la capitale* of Nicolas Maury. She also worked with the choreographer Mathilde Monnier for the event Area 1. She sings in the rock band Frank Williams & The Ghost Dance.

François Kergourlay - Actor

François Kergourlay is actor and director. He has a degree from the Conservatoire Nationale Supérieur d'Art Dramatique and played many classic and modern roles with the directors Daniel Mesguich, Jean-Pierre Miquel, Catherine Dasté, Pierre Debauche, Christian Schiaretti, Stuart Seide, Philippe Adrien, Christophe Rauck, Agathe Alexis, Guy-Pierre Couleau, Frédéric Maragnani, Lucio Mad, Julia Zimina, Paul Golub, François Leclère et Gwenhaël De Gouvello to name but a few. He filmed for television and cinema with Francis Girod, Bertrand Van Effenterre, Olivier Lorelle, Alain Choquard and Renan Delaroche. He frequently works with Michael Sideroff for narrations in Radio France. He directed plays by Molière, Marivaux, Tchekhov, Goldoni, Gogol, Feydeau, Prévot, Maeterlinck, Yeats, Valle-Inclán, De Filippo, as well as Potocki, Kohout, Harms, Haïm, Atay and Andréiev amongst others, in productions in Paris, elsewhere in France and abroad. A long time teacher at different theatre schools, notably at the state run CNSAD, he is currently teaching at the theatre school Cours in the 19th arrondissement in Paris. He was director of the theatre Firmin Gémier at Antony from 1995 to 2000 and has his own theatre group, which was formed in 1991.

Catherine Mongodin - Actress, acting coach

From 1985, Catherine Mongodin studied theatre with John Strasberg. She attended the courses of Niels Arestrup (theatre, acrobatics, dance, song), Oleg Koudriatchof (on musical acting), Michel Lopez (improvisation), Mario Gonzales (mask and clown) and Alain Gautré (jester and clowns). She played in several films, such as *Le Sourire* by Claude Miller, *Rive droite Rive gauche* by Philippe Labro and in some films for television. In the theatre she has notably played in Shakespeare's *Measure for measure*, *Les Princes de la foi* by Benjamin Galemiri, (directed by Adel Hakim), *C'est beau* by Nathalie Sarraute, *L'Île des esclaves* by Marivaux (directed by Elisabeth Chailloux), *Le Seducteur* by Benjamin Galimeri (directed by Raül Osorio), *Les contes drolatiques* by Balzac, *La Mouette* by Tchekhov (directed by Virgil Tanase), *Les gens déraisonnables sont en voie de disparition* by Peter Handke (directed by Jean-Philippe Montéfiore), *Le long voyage vers la nuit d'O'Neil* (directed by Sarah Eygerman). She organises workshops and teaches Strasberg's method (Actors Studios) together with John Strasberg Studios as well as Clown workshops in Paris and other parts of France. In 2009 she directed *Cosmopolitain* by Philippe Nicolitch and she coached the actors in *The RW project* for the Collectif Quatre Ailes.

Damien Saugeon - Actor, aerial acrobat

A founding member of the Collectif Quatre Ailes, he played in *Sir Semolina*, which he also directed, and *Suzanne*. In *The RW project* he plays the role of the poet. He does trapeze and aerial acrobatics on drapery with Penelope Hausermann. He participated in the plays *Cabaret suspendu*, *Paresse* and in the 2nd Nuit Blanc in Paris with the group 2r2c. He appeared in *Andromaque*, *Sur les pas d'Hölderlin*, *Sept couronnes pour Goethe*, *Elvire Jouvot 40* and *Les Nègres* directed by Jacques Albert-Canque. He teaches workshops for artistic techniques for adults and children. He has been trained with the International School of Theatre Jacques Lecoq and from Catherine Mongodin its approach to the theater of the realist school (John Strasberg).

Claire Corlier - Actress

For the Collectif Quatre Ailes she co-supervised the direction of actors for *Suzanne* and played Moritz in *Sir Semolina*. She plays Madame Aebi and the tax inspector in *The RW Project*. She played in *Croisements, divagations* by Eugène Durif and *Notes de cuisine* by Rodrigo Garcia, both directed by Jean-Pierre De Giorgio and in *La Maison de Poupée* by Hendrik Ibsen, directed by Jean-Marc Fick. After attending several courses and workshops on interpretation, improvisation, voice, Commedia dell'arte and clown, she studied the creation of characters and Jacques Lecoq's technique of the neutral mask of.

Mathieu Boulet - Actor

After having practised dance, he met Nicolai Karpov, professor at the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts (GITIS Moscow) in 2001. After that, he concentrated his development as an actor on the Russian school: he studied Meyerhold's principles of biomechanics and Stanislavski's system with Vladimir Granov (movement on stage), Boris Rabey (Direction of Actors) and Tatiana Stepanchenko (director) and musical theatre with Tatiana Agéeva (song), Iréna Promptova (spoken voice). In the theatre he played in *La vie est un songe* by Calderon and directed by Toni Cafiero, *La Trilogie de Belgrade* by Biljana Sribljanovic, Shakespeare's *Julius Cesar*. Also in *La Noce* and *La Demande en mariage* by Tchekhov (directed by Micha Cotte), *J'ai plus pied* (directed by Elsa Granat). As actor and dramaturgical assistant he collaborated several times with T. Stepanchenko, notably in *La cuisine* by Arnold Wesker, *Démons* by Lars Noren, *Kilda* (modern opera), *Fleurs Tardives* (a Tchekhov musical) and recently in *Britannicus* by Racine. He directed *En Fanfare... Monsieur Lapointe!* (musical theatre in which he sings). He recently wrote a theatrical monologue (*Evènements*), with a choreography by Marie Lorent. He teaches courses on acting at the university of Arras as well as workshops.

The theatre group's fourth play

Thanks to a collaboration of artists with backgrounds in performing, plastic and video arts, the Collectif Quatre Ailes turns the theatrical stage into an enchanting place. With shadow plays and aerial theatre, tinkered videos, poetic texts, staged cooking and puppets made of sugar, the performances of the group play with unlikely blends and show a poetic as well as critical vision of the contemporary world. Following Robert Walser's example, whose literary composition inspired **The Project RW**, which is on tour since 2008, it seems essential to us to show that it is still possible to be moved by a slug crawling on the tarmac, a signboard, a pattern on a dress or by a rusty and crooked nail...

An aerial odyssey and dialogue, The RW Project blends circus, theatre, and animation film in a Kraft paper set design. It explores the detours and corners of *The Walk*, a poetic diary written by the Swiss author Robert Walser in 1907, by guiding the audience into the dreamlike and enchanted world of the poet and his walk. Created in La Grange Dimière at Fresnes, Paris suburb, it has gathered more than 9.000 spectators and has been played 66 times, in France and abroad (Switzerland, Russia).

Coproduction of Collectif Quatre Ailes, Grange Dimiere - Town of Fresne, Théâtre des Quartier d'Ivry and ARCADI (Action régionale pour la création artistique et la diffusion in Ile-de-France). With help for the production by the Conseil Général du Val-de-Marne and the support of CNAC (Centre National des Arts du Cirque). With the support of the Théâtre de la Commune, CDN d'Aubervillier. Recipient of funds to support the distribution at the theatre festival Avignon OFF.

Founded in 2002, the Collectif Quatre Ailes lays the foundation for their theatrical and plastic work with **Suzanne**, their first play in the form of an absurd quest, which tells the story of the dreamlike trip of two men in search of an old lady, of whom they know only the first name (35 representations). In 2005, inspired by the "New Man" ideologies of the first half of the 20th century,

Sir Semolina or L'Homme revé is created. It is a culinary and musical tale, in which the grand visions of the last century and of our days meet the evanescent dreams of childhood. The play toured in France and abroad (Argentina, Tunisia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia), with a total of more than 70 representations.

Soon thereafter, the group was joined by the author and dramaturge Evelyne Loew and the musician S Petit Nico (producer of the album *Midi 20* by Grand Corps Malade), the core of the Collectif Quatre Ailes is formed by the director Michaël Dusautoy, the video artist Annabelle Brunet, the actor and trapeze artist Damien Saugeon and the actress Claire Corlier, who together are responsible for the artistic identity of the group and the esprit of the joint creations. They also work with other theatre groups (Cie du Feu Follet, Théâtre des Quartier d'Ivry, Le Masque Calao...) and teach **workshops on artistic techniques** for all audiences – adult or children (at PAC artistic and cultural projects, in collaboration with the town of Denain for an urban social cohesion project...) In the workshops, like in all of the Collectif Quatre Ailes creations, their approach to theatre is intricately linked with plastic arts and forms an extension of the theatrical experience of their plays.



The Project RW
photo by Yolande Garcia



Magdalena Bors, Woodland Scene

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