

HATE

A duet between a woman and a horse

An original work by Laetitia Dosch
In collaboration with Judith Zagury and Fantoche the horse

Creation in 2018

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THE ARTISTIC PROJECT

Gandhi said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." Given the horrors that surround us, I think nowadays we could add, "The animality of a nation can be judged by way it treats its civilizations."

Our epoch worries me. I decided to keep a diary to try to make sense of it all. To do this, I set about travelling: to Rome, to Calais, to political rallies for Marine Le Pen... making connections with my personal life, picking up bits of dialogue here, observing behaviors on the street there. From all of this, a text will be produced.

I decided the text would be the onstage pretext for a duet between a naked woman and a horse.

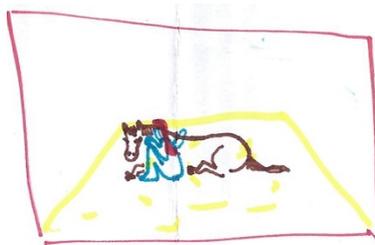
We have a lot to learn from animals. Firstly, for the simple fact that Gandhi never could have said, "The greatness of an animal and its moral progress can be judged by the way its humans are treated." Also, because we still have a lot to learn about the way we treat them. These are questions in the air these days. We love them and we eat them. We are so taken with them that we castrate them and make them our companions; we love them as objects, to master and possess.

Behind the theme of the man-animal relationship, there is more broadly that of the relationship with the other. An animal represents absolute otherness for the human subject. What creates this feeling of otherness? Does it awaken suspicion, even a will towards the other's destruction, or, on the contrary, does it provoke admiration, fantasy, and a desire to dominate? Can we really see the other without apprehension or aversion?

However, I think the principal theme of the work is the flipside of all that: the trust between two species. This is the relationship I most want to address because of its promise of hope and lesson of respect. How does one represent trust on stage? By living it. A lengthy process of mutual familiarization between Fantoche the horse and myself takes place ahead of the performances.

I needed to find the right person to work with, and the right horse. On her stud farm near Rennes, Judith Zagury of the Shanju Equestrian Circus and Theatre Company has developed a way of working built on communication, with the well being of the human and the animal at the center of her practice. She has devised a common vocabulary that allows understanding without domination. The next step is mutual acceptance and the disappearance of reciprocal fears.

HATE is a journey toward the other, toward the animal. It is an attempt to give the animal a space that it hasn't yet had onstage, beyond the well-executed circus routine or as image-metaphor: that of an accomplice, an equal.



PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

Working with a horse requires a lengthy period of training and preparation and we have already begun our collaboration with Judith.

It is essential to understand early on that the choreography depends entirely on the relationship established between the two actors. A horse won't react to every human the same way, and vice versa. To this end, we are not preparing a duet between a woman and a horse, but between Laetitia and Fantoche. The methods Shanju have developed over the years, mixed with my own attempts to construct a shared space with the animal, have led us to different experimental approaches:

- MIMETISM

To cultivate mutual familiarization and build a choreographic vocabulary, I spend a great deal of time with Fantoche, acting and reacting with him. This can mean spending time on the farm with the other horses, behaving as if I were a horse. The goal is to learn how to think like a horse, see what they see, understand their fears, the significance of the placement of their ears, etc.

It is especially enriching when we graze together. We each have our own personal space, rather close to one another, and Fantoche comes to graze near me, thinking that my space is more attractive, or on the contrary tries to prevent me from grazing in his zone, or sometimes offers to share his grass with me. Through grazing together, a complex relationship is created.

- COMMUNICATION

The second major step in the learning process is to establish a common language using different codes of communication. Shanju horses are "trained" meaning they understand a certain vocabulary to which they respond with precise movements: sit, rear up, or walk while lifting the knees, for example. We are working with Fantoche to hone his response to these exterior signs so as to render them as invisible as possible.

- RIDING BAREBACK

It is another lengthy apprenticeship: learning to grab hold of the mane without fear of hurting the horse, follow its movements with the hips, and mount and dismount without losing balance. Once the basics have been acquired, we play with the codes, rearing up, galloping, and mounting facing backwards or on the knees, to develop a choreographic vocabulary to deploy in the most spectacular parts of HATE.



SPECIFIC INTENTIONS REGARDING MOVEMENT

The creation of the work and rehearsals are spread over three months between September 2017 and May 2018, working off the written text in a spirit of either illustration or contradict. The order and progression of movements depends on the textual dramaturgy currently under development. But different relationships, and thus movements, are already beginning to appear:

THE TEAM

It is important to create an onstage relationship of complicity with the horse. The spectator shouldn't know if the woman has returned to an animal state or if the horse has become human; the border between the two species should be blurred.

MAN-ANIMAL PROXIMITY

To create this complicity and move beyond mimetics, we call on certain corporeal relationships requiring, but also communicating, great trust between the players. These positions are static and precise. Sitting between the horse's legs or lying on its back, for example, are images that communicate tranquility, necessary for me in order to recite a text dealing with disorder and chaos.



WORKING WITH THE HORSE AS SYMBOL

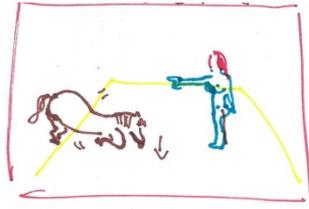
The piece works on two levels: as a portrait of the intimate relationship between a horse and a woman, but also as a joint performance by two collaborators for an audience. The horse accompanies the woman's text and sometimes they speak together. I plan to call on the horse's vast metaphoric dimension, by turns representing time, wisdom, man, nature, even God or the apocalypse, according to the nature and rhythm of his movements. I could have him gallop around me, fall on the ground, or rear as I mount to illustrate the meaning of the spoken text or endow it with a mythical dimension.

THE COUPLE

The action of forcing animal obedience is a motif in and of itself. Through the manner of executing commands, the relative degree of gentleness or violence shown, the dynamic of duo is revealed. Is compliance imposed or desired?

TREATMENT OF THE NUDE FEMALE BODY

The idea is to play with the fantasy of the nude female body, by turns conforming to and contradicting the ideal. Renaissance painting, such as Botticelli's iconic treatment of Venus, as well as Isadora Duncan's graceful choreographic interpretations of Shubert are influences on the work. In my latest piece, I already twisted my body into other shapes and identities, of men, old women and children, bringing complexity to a spectator's initial perception. I continue this exploration with new imitations and transformations, including the animal this time.



ELLE TIRE AVEC SON
DOIGT LE CHEVAL
TDMBE

NOTE ON THE STAGING AND VISUAL PRESENTATION

SCENOGRAPHY

The set is a poetic space. Slightly iridescent sand creates a dream-like atmosphere. There is a large 11 meter by 11 meter square with a 50 centimeter barrier running around it. The woman can enter and exit freely, the horse cannot. Solar-powered garden lights planted in the sand transform the desert into a luminous prairie once the house lights are out.

COSTUMES

The woman is nude; the horse wears neither harness nor saddle. Working with nudity in this space immediately suggests purity and unbridled liberty. It also creates a dialogue with the erotic and pictorial aspects of the female nude by quoting art historical poses and citing the original female, Eve.

MUSIC

HATE is a journey through our epoch and toward the other, as incarnated in an absolute form by the horse. It seems fitting to repetitively make use of the *Gute Nacht* overture from Schubert's *Winterreise*. In this lied, an idea of perpetual forward motion and of an initiation rite is associated with a melancholy melody, capturing the anxiety and solitude of our age.

Sounds from the outside world will be added to the lied. The performance is situated at a distance from the real world, but not completely cut off from it. Snippets of dialogue, sounds of the street, bits of speeches as well as music and contemporary songs could filter into the soundtrack, from afar, like so many distant echoes.

We are currently in discussion with several prospective sound designers.



AUTHORIAL INTENTIONS

HATE's writing is the fruit of a voyage of discovery I undertook this year in an attempt to understand the destructive impulses that I feel around me, both near and far, while trying to envisage potential ways out. I travelled to Calais to attend rallies for Marine le Pen and to Rome; I spent time walking the streets and writing about my life.

To begin with, I create modules of various styles. There are poems by me and by others, tales, imitations, dialogues, as well as bodily positions and choreographic material born of my wanderings, my imagination, the internet, and autobiography.

The idea is to craft a narrative where fantasy, documentary and introspection coexist, using the association of ideas as a structuring principle to generate meaning.

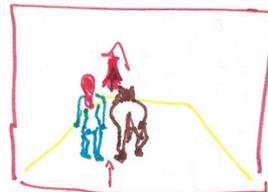
STORYBOARD OF IDEAS



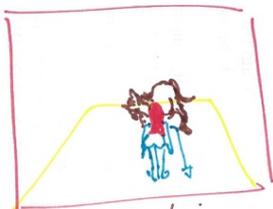
LE CHEVAL que
PUSHÉ par
D'AFFILÉE



LE CHEVAL GALOPE
AVEC UN TEXTE QUI
VA TRÈS VITE



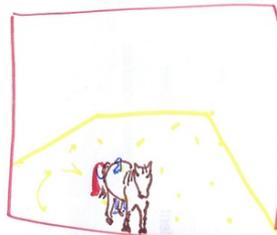
ILS DÉCOUVRENT
LE MONDE



LE CHEVAL lui
BOUFFE LE CERVEAU
PAR LA BOCHE. ELLE SE VIDE



ISABORA
DUNCAN.



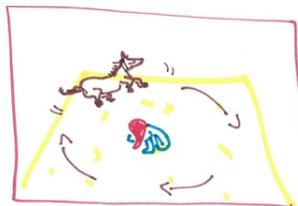
CACHÉE DERRIÈRE LE CHEVAL



? limite



TRARCHEN, comme lui
CÔTÉ À CÔTÉ



TIME

TEAM

artistic director, text, choreography and cast Laetitia Dosch
choreography, artiste collaborator Judith Zagury
writing collaborator in research
lights Jonas Buhler
space designer Philippe Quesne
sound in research

French administration AlterMachine
Camille Hakim Hashemi & Elisabeth Le Coënt

PLANNING

writing and research with the horse: January- July 2017
rehearsing: 3 months between August and June 2018
première: 5th of June in Vidy

BIOGRAPHIES

Laetitia Dosch is a swiss-french actress, dancer, writer, and stage director. As a dancer she has worked with Marco Berrettini, Maria La Ribot, Massimo Furlan in several plays.

She also played Shakespeare with Jean Yves Ruf in *Measure for Measure* in 2008 and with Melanie Le Ray in 2014 in *The Taming of the shrew*.

As a movie actress has mainly played the main part in *La Bataille de Solferino*, and then worked with Christophe Honoré, Portuguese director Gabriel Abrantes, Belgian director Guillaume Senez, Maiwenn and Catherine Corsini, Leonor Seraille for *Jeune Femme*, american director Lev Kalmann, Anthony Cordier.

She has been doing her own stage work since 2010, mainly solos. The first one, *Laetitia fait péter...* was a piece about an entertainer having problems to entertain (in Centre Pompidou in April), and then *Klein* (Ménagerie de Verre, 2014) was about Botho Strauss's text *Big and Small*. *Un Album* is created in *Arsenic* at Lausanne in 2015 and is then presented in France.

In 2016, she creates with Jonathan Capdevielle *Les Corvidés* for Festival d'Avignon in *Sujets à vif*.

She also made a magic dog performance for the Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain, and different works in *actOral*, Marseille.

She writes on actors for the *Cahiers du Cinéma*.

Judith Zagury – Breikers

She has studied as an actress in Diggelman Theater School, and then through workshops with André Engel, Joël Jouanneau.

Her horse and theater experience has made her work on several plays involving animals, with Rland Amstutz, Gérard Desarthe, André Wilms, Emmanuelle Béart, Luc Bondy, Robert Enrico.

She has developed her horse relationship with Michel Henriquet.

She founded in 2002 l'école-atelier Shanju. She directs the school, and provides circus and human/horses relationships courses.