

La Comédie

**Les
productions**

de Valence



Sœur-s, nos forêts aussi ont des épines

(working title)

Penda Diouf / Silvia Costa

Production: La Comédie de Valence, Centre dramatique national Drôme-Ardèche
Avec la MC93 – Maison de la culture de Seine-Saint-Denis, Bobigny (ongoing)

**A new show to open
at La Comédie
in November 2024 as
part of the itinerant
outreach programme**

**Centre dramatique
national
Drôme – Ardèche**

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Direction
Marc Lainé

Sœur·s, nos forêts aussi ont des épines

(working title)

Text: Penda Diouf

Conception, set design, direction: Silvia Costa

Piece for two actresses (casting in progress)

Lighting design: Andrea Sanson

Original music: Tutto Questo Sentire (Sandro Mussida, Olivia

Salvadori, Rebecca Salvadori)

Collaboration on set design: Michele Taborelli

Collaboration on costumes: Ama Tomberli

Production:

La Comédie de Valence Theatre, CDN Drôme-Ardèche

In conjunction with la MC93 – Maison de la culture de Seine-

Saint-Denis, Bobigny (ongoing)

Penda Diouf and Silvia Costa are members of the Artistic Collective of La Comédie de Valence Theatre.

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Artists' statement

They are two. Two sisters emerging from the same belly. They sojourned in this same temporary living space only a few months apart. The mother lived alone, worked long hours. The eldest took her role in the family very seriously. She had to grow up quickly, take care of things at home, learn to look after herself. When her little sister was born, she took her under her wing and cared for her like a little mother, like other children played with their dolls. The days go by happily in the family triangle, right up until the day when the youngest decides to leave, breaking out of the cocoon to study in another city. The hour has arrived for saying goodbye to one's childhood bedroom, packing boxes of souvenirs and imagining a future in the exciting unknown. The eldest is anxious. By her words and her gestures she tries, despite herself, to keep her sister from leaving. For the youngest, this is when the dreams start occurring, troubling and recurrent. They are both very young and are playing on the beach when the tide suddenly engulfs her. Her sister doesn't move. It's possible that she even holds her head under water.

Once the dream has surfaced, whether repressed memory or pure invention, the thread that wove together the lives of the sisters loosened, along with the bonds that tied them to their mother, an absent figure, but an essential side of their family triangle nonetheless.

Where had this dream come from? And why did it surge up precisely at this moment of imminent departure? What hidden violence did it reveal, and was there a link between this half-drowning and a deeper, older experience, when they were still gestating cells in their mother's womb? Or further back still, to the time of choices, when lives are planned, when we listen to the heartbeat of different mothers before choosing the one that chimes with our own? A time when we choose the battles worth fighting, the challenges we can learn and grow from. The sisters who will accompany us. The characters evolve then in three distinct moments or temporalities:

- The present marked by the youngest sister's preparations to leave her childhood and the family home,
- Dreamtime linked to childhood and its attendant traumas, (these temporalities are linked and might end up intertwined during the writing process.)
- And a time before birth when solidarity and love between women is more encompassing, whether it is during the occupation of the same maternal belly or more distant yet, when relations are forged perhaps by cosmic affinity.

This text explores the nature of sisterhood, shared pasts and memory. How does our angle on an event shape our experience and the memory we retain of it? Gestural memory, corporal memory, short-term memory, selective memory. From amniotic fluid to the human body to the whole blue planet, how does water receive and transport this immemorial memory?

Penda Diouf, July 2023

This is a show about two sisters, which itself was sparked by an exchange between two women and a shared necessity to delve deeper into the mystery of sisterhood, which does not always live up to the ideals of fusion and mutual support that are often used to characterise this relationship and even if words like 'sisterhood' and 'sorority' have become commonplace in feminist discourse and solidarity movements more generally.

The main challenge of this new show, aesthetically speaking, lies in the cohabitation of two divergent temporal dimensions: the everydayness of the present and a dreamtime in which the corporal memory and shared origins of the sisters predominates.

Grounded in a one-to-one relationship in which every aspect of their lives appears to be linked, the stage itself becomes that dark cavern where images, like ghosts of past experience, appear, releasing stockpiles of memories and all that has seeped under the skin and spread into their shared DNA.

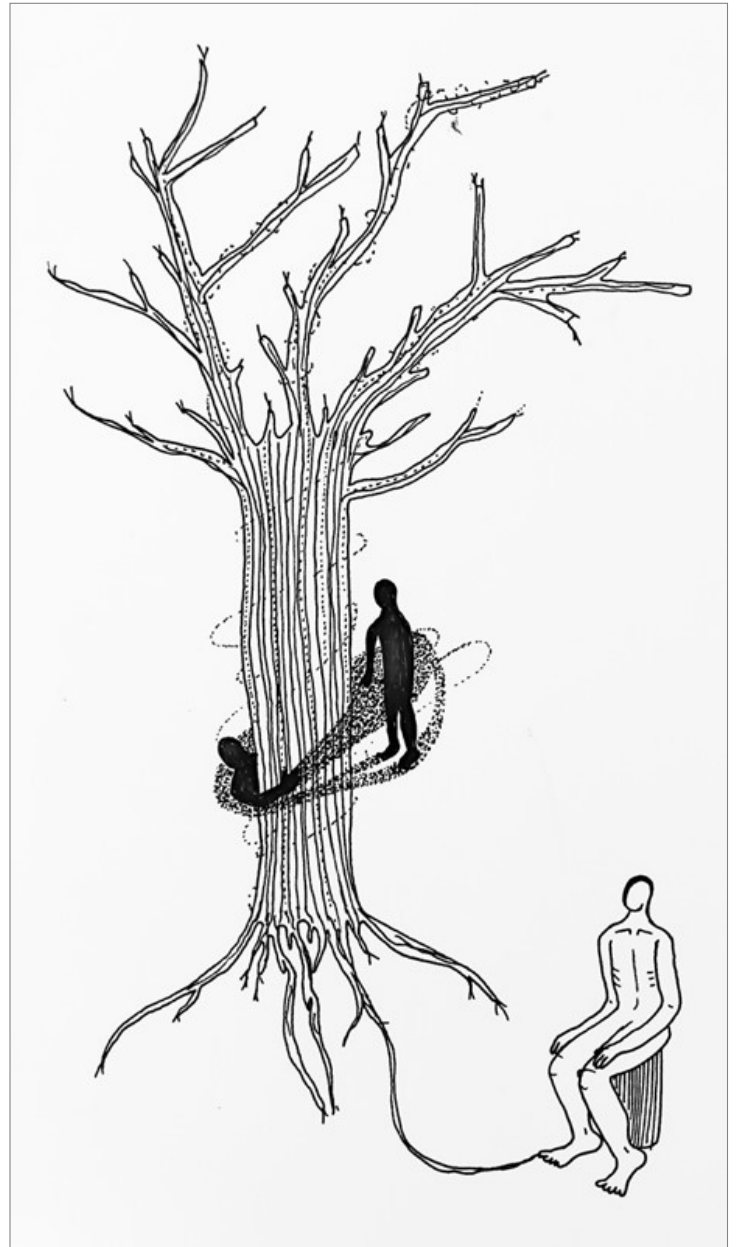
Consequently, the work will focus on what the body can carry – skin, costume, traces – like the material supports of a living installation. To become detached from the on-stage space and lose oneself in the forest of memory. A memory that stirs in the background and that we must forever reconstruct. Unfinished objects appear as markers of this relationship that is bound up in an ongoing tussle, sometimes balanced, sometimes not, between two parts, two realities.

Music will be an essential ally in crossing the different temporal thresholds mentioned by Penda Diouf – reality, dream, origins – and opening up different sensorial dimensions. It is with this in mind that we have conceived of a collaboration with the Italian collective (TQS), founded by Sandro Mussida and two sisters – echoing the subject of our show - Rebecca and Olivia Salvadori. Their work is multidisciplinary by nature, combining sound, voice and video imagery, and is inspired by the research carried out by the French ear, nose and throat specialist, Alfred Tomatis, for whom the development of active listening goes hand-in-hand with self-development. This listening begins in the womb to our parents' voices and has an effect on the birth and personality. TGS will create a score for sound and voice that will help conjure up this interior world of origins. The images projected by Rebecca Salvadori will work like a bridge, helping the spectator cross over from the stage and into a nocturnal womb-space.

Silvia Costa, August 2023



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Penda Diouf

Author

Penda Diouf writes for the theatre. Her plays, including *La grande Ourse* (winner of the jury prize at the text'avril Festival held at the Tête Noire Theatre in 2018, the Collidram prize 2021, and finalist in the Sony Labou Tansi prize in 2022) and *Pistes...* (winner of La Chartreuse reading committee prize, and awarded best German radio fiction in 2022 and broadcast on France Culture) are published by éditions Quartett publishing house.

One of her most recent works, *Noire comme l'or*, written during a residency at Culture Commune, has been shortlisted by the committee of the TQ2A/TQI Theatres and the Tête Noire Theatre.

She wrote *Gorgée d'eau* as a commission for a student-citizen programme co-devised and produced by several theatres including TNS, la Colline, le Grand T and la Comédie de Reims. The text was brought to the stage by Maëlle Dequiedt. Two of her plays for young people, *Le blues des mots* and *L'arbre* were included in collections published by éditions Théâtrales jeunesse in 2022. Her plays have been translated into German, English, Armenian, Czech and Finish.

Penda Diouf has for the last two years collaborated on the "Opéra de-ci de-là" programme hosted by the Lyrical Arts Festival in Aix en Provence.

She has been awarded several writing residencies, at the French Institute in Tunis, the Maison des Écritures at La Rochelle and at the Théâtre National de Strasbourg (TNS).

She runs several writing workshops, for women at the maison des femmes in Saint-Denis, Paris, and others at the MC93 as well as at the Théâtre Auditorium in Poitiers. She has produced a radio documentary, *Voies sensibles ou l'art de marcher* in Seine-Saint-Denis for France Culture following her residency at the MC93 in that district of Paris.

She is the co-founder, along with Anthony Thibault, of a certification label entitled *Jeunes textes en liberté*, which seeks to give support to writers of contemporary theatre, especially promoting greater diversity of voices and stories in today's theatre.

As winner of the "Mondes nouveaux" programme, she will create a new show, *La nuit des reines* to be presented at the Saint-Denis Basilica in 2023. She will be a resident at the Villa Albertine in the United States in 2024.

She was nominated "new theatre talent of 2023" by the Board of the SACD (French body supporting theatre writing).

She is an associate artist with major theatres in Evry, Poitiers and Vire. Since 2020, Penda Diouf has been a member of the Artistic Collective, a permanent body of artists at the heart of La Comédie de Valence Theatre's artistic project. In this capacity, he coordinates an outreach program entitled the Studios d'écriture nomades in the Drôme and Ardèche areas (S.E.N.D.A.).

In 2024, she will direct a show for the first time, of her own play *Pistes...* in a production at the Théâtre du Nord.

A visual arts and theatre graduate of Venice IUAV University (2006), Silvia Costa is known for her visual and poetic theatre. Her work foregrounds images as a vector of reflection in the spectator. She is a multi-faceted artist, regularly working as author, director, actor or set-designer and she makes use of diverse artistic fields in her theatrical work.

She has become an established figure since 2007 through her productions and performances staged at leading Italian and international festivals. In 2013, she was a finalist of the Premio Scenario award, one of the most prestigious theatre competitions in Italy, with *Quello che di più grande l'uomo ha realizzato sulla terra*, which would then go on to be presented in its definitive version at the Festival delle Colline Torinesi in Torino. It is this play that first brought her to France as a director in 2015, at the Théâtre de Gennevilliers.

In 2016 she directed a new adaptation of Jule Renard's novel *Poil de Carotte* at the Nanterre-Amandiers Theatre as part of the Paris International Autumn Festival. From there the show toured, stopping at among others La Villette, La Commune d'Aubervilliers, the Théâtre Louis Aragon in Tremblay-en-France, L'Apostrophe, the principal theatre of the Cergy-Pontoise Val d'Oise region.

Her original work, *Dans le pays d'hiver*, loosely based on Cesare Pavese's *Dialogues with Leuco*, was presented internationally as part of the 2018 Paris Autumn Festival at the MC93-Maison de la Culture de Seine-Saint-Denis in Bobigny, in an international co-production with multiple structures including Le Quai - CDN Angers Pays de la Loire, FOG Triennale Milan Performing Arts, Festival delle Colline Torinesi / TPE Teatro Piemonte Europa, Teatro Metastasio de Prato, Lugano InScena au LAC (Theatre and Culture of Lugano) and the Teatro Stabile del Veneto.

In 2019 she conceived and directed *Spiel / Wry smile Dry sob*, a choreographic and musical installation inspired by Beckett's piece *Comédie*. She then went on to direct a German version at the Landestheater Vorarlberg in Bregenz. In 2020 she recreated the French version of the show composed of Beckett's *Comédie* followed by *Wry smile Dry sob* produced by La Comédie de Valence Theatre, and coproduced with the Théâtre Garonne in Toulouse, the Paris Autumn Festival and the Centre Pompidou, Paris.

In 2021 she made a new show based on Annie Ernaux's *Mémoire de fille* for the Residenztheater in Munich, followed by *La Femme au Marteau*, centred on the figure of the female composer Galina Ustvolskaja, in collaboration with the pianist Marino Formenti - Produced by La Comédie de Valence Theatre, MC93 - Maison de la Culture de Seine-Saint-Denis-Bobigny, Paris Autumn Festival, TNB Rennes, Le Maillon, TNS and De Singel in Antwerp.

Silvia Costa took her first steps in opera in 2019 with the staging of *Hiérophanie* by Claude Vivier and interpreted by the Ensemble intercontemporain at the City of Music in Paris, as part of the Autumn Festival program. Next up, in 2020, a production of *Juditha Triumphans* by Antonio Vivaldi, with the music conducted by Stefano Montanari, at the Staatsoper in Stuttgart. In September of the same year, she directed *Così fan tutte* at the occasion of the reopening of the Palau des las Artes in Valencia. In 2021, at the Aix-en-Provence lyric festival, she presented *Il Combattimento ou la théorie du Cygne Noir*, based on the works of Monteverdi and his contemporaries, with Sébastien Daucé and his Correspondances ensemble.

In October 2021, she renewed her collaboration with the Ensemble intercontemporain to direct *Intérieur*, a musical opera composed by Joan Macrané Figuera for the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

In 2022, she took part in the world premiere of *Like Flesh*, a new chamber opera composed by Sivan Eldar, based on a libretto by Cordelia Lynn and under the musical direction of Maxime Pascal with his ensemble Le Balcon, staged at Lille Opera House and winner of the Fedora Prize for Opera, 2022.

For Lorraine Opera House, she designed the set and directed *Julie* by Philippe Boesmans, shortly before the composer died, under the musical direction of Emilio Pomarico.

In November of the same year, she joined forces once again with Maxime Pascal and his ensemble, directing *Freitag aus Licht* by Karlheinz Stockhausen, a production given at both Lille Opera House and the Philharmonica of Paris.

In January 2023, she directed Benjamin Britten's *Noah's Ark*, one of the few operas sung almost exclusively by a children's choir. It was presented at La Comédie de Valence Theatre and the Théâtre de la Croix-Rousse in Lyon in collaboration with Lyon Opera House.

In April, she directed *L'Orfeo*, favola in Musica by Monteverdi for the Staatsoper Hannover.

In summer 2023, during the 66th edition of the Festival dei Due Mondi de Spoleto in Italy, she was invited to put on *Harawi chant d'amour et de mort*, with the pianist Costanza Principe and the soprano Katrien Baerts.

June 2023 saw the beginning of her collaboration with the Comédie-Française, firstly with the creation of the French version of her adaptation of *Mémoire de fille* by Annie Ernaux (presented on the Vieux-Colombier stage), then, in April 2024, with a production of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (to be presented on the Richelieu stage).

In the years between 2006 and 2019, as both actress and artistic collaborator, she contributed to most of Roméo Castellucci's shows for theatre and opera.

From 2017 to 2019, she was an associate artist at the Teatro dell'Arte / Triennale Milano, then in 2019, at the Quai, Centre of Dramatic Arts in Angers. Since 2020, she has been a member of the Artistic Collective of La Comédie de Valence Theatre.

In July 2022, Silvia Costa was named Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French ministry of culture.

Dea Liane

Actress

The author and actress, Dea Liane, was born into a Syrian-Lebanese family in Damascus in 1990. She spent her childhood years between France and the Lebanon, first inventing comic books while dreaming of becoming a novelist.

But finally theatre was the artform that she chose, entering the prestigious TNS acting school (Théâtre National de Strasbourg) in 2014, but only after completing a Masters in History at Sciences Po. Since then she has performed in the theatre for renowned directors including Stanislas Nordey, Falk Richter and Julien Gosselin. She played Cleopatra for Célie Pauthe, and brought to life Anaïs Nin for Elise Vigier. She has also collaborated with fellow theatre artists of her generation, notably Pauline Haudepin and Mathilde Delahaye.

She took her first steps in film in *L'homme qui a vendu sa peau* by the Tunisian cinema director Kaouther Ben Hania, presented at Venice in 2020. She stars in Meryam Joobeur's first feature length film that will be presented at the 2024 Berlin international film festival as part of the official selection.

Recently, she premiered her first theatre show as author and director, that she also performed in, with the jazz musician Simon Sieger: *Le coeur au bord des lèvres*, a variation on the life of Asmahan, a Syrian-Egyptian diva of the 1940s.

Her first novel, *Georgette*, published by the Éditions de l'Olivier won the French writers' union's, the SGDL, Prix Révélation for works by new writers in autumn 2023.

Pauline Parigot

Actress

Pauline Parigot trained as an actor at the ERACM drama school in the south of France, and has worked both in theatre and film. In her theatrical work, she has notably collaborated with the directors Julie Duclos, Marielle Pinsard and Jean-Pierre Baro.

In parallel, she has been engaged in a long-term investigation into the use of masks under the guidance of Didier Gallas.

Longlisted for the French cinema awards, les Césars, for her performances in the independent films *Les lendemains* and *Frères d'armes*, she has also played recurring characters in the French TV series *Sambre* and also *Sentinelles*.

Tutto questo sentire

Tutto Questo Sentire (TQS) is an artistic collective founded in 2014 by the experimental opera singer Olivia Salvadori, the composer and cellist Sandro Mussida, and the sound and video artist Rebecca Salvadori. TQS's work is at the intersection of the different artistic disciplines that characterise the contemporary international music, visual and performance scene. TQS proposes a series of site specific events that explore the nature of sound and its relation to video, the perception of time and environmental awareness in live performance.

The works of Tutto Questo Sentire can take different forms, from multimedia productions for the stage, live media events or content for online publications.

Sandro Mussida

The work of Sandro Mussida studies the relations between tradition and innovation in music through an ongoing reflection into active listening practices, the identity of languages and musical rituals. His most recent works explore listening systems with differing attention spans, calling into question the positing of a standard Western ear.

Situated at the intersection of acoustic/classic, electric/electronic fields, Sandro composes for orchestras, chamber instruments and soloists, electronic music. His work is published by Sony Classical, Boomkat, Tapeworm, Blume Editions, Metrica, Soave Records, Curl, Die Schachtel

Olivia Salvadori

Olivia Salvadori is a classically trained soprano, an opera soloist and a recording artist.

She has worked with poets, visual artists and musicians from diverse horizons, and has performed internationally in venues such as the Camden Arts Centre in London (United Kingdom), the Serralves Museum in Porto, the town hall in Hong Kong, the botanical gardens in Rome, the Triennale in Milan, the Teatro Donizetti in Bergamo, the Kaaithheater in Brussels, the Palau de Les Arts Reina Sofia in Valencia, the MuseoNovecento in Florence, the WienerFestvochen in Vienna.

Rebecca Salvadori

Rebecca Salvadori is an Italo-Australian videographer.

She has a long experience in film shoots, and a particular interest in non-hierarchical/chronological layering and sequencing of audio and image. Her works defy categorisation, constellations of intimate elements that are deliberately elusive, multifaceted portraits of moments, people and places that can be interpreted from a range of perspectives. When she works on animations, she constantly combines sound and image in a continuous chain using fragments found by chance or through free association. Rebecca Salvadori is one half of Footage, an audiovisual duo she has formed with Leah Walker. She was also the 2022 artistic director of the Norient Film Festival.

LES
ARROIS

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Marc Lainé

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Entre vos mains

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With new works by: Bertrand Belin, Alice Diop (sous réserve), Éric Minh Cuong Castaing, Penda Diouf, Alice Zeniter, Stephan Zimmerli

Opens 1st semester 25

Édène

Alice Zeniter

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Sœur-s, nos forêts aussi ont des épines

(working title)

Penda Diouf / Silvia Costa

Opens November 24

À Sec - chroniques de la fin

Marcos Caramés-Blanco / Sarah Delaby-Rochette

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LOST
IONS

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A fantastical trilogy (2)

Marc Lainé

Opens on 27.09.22

Ladilom

Tünde Deak / Léopoldine Hummel

Opens on 19.07.22

Tünde [tyndɛ]

Tünde Deak

Opens on 09.03.22

Nos paysages mineurs

Marc Lainé

Opens on 21.09.21

Nostalgie Express

Marc Lainé

Opens on 19.01.21 (Premiered for theatre professionals)

Comédie / Wry smile Dry sob

Samuel Beckett / Silvia Costa

Opens on 04.10.20 (Premiered for theatre professionals)

La Vie invisible

Guillaume Poix / Lorraine de Sagazan

Opens on 22.09.20