

# THEATRUM MUNDI



C O M P A G N I E

HOLD UP !

# 1. PRESENTATION

In darkness, we hear a violin tune. The skeleton of a violin lights up and seems to play by itself. Ghostly white images drawn live appear and disappear with the music: the cosmos, the beginnings of life, a cycle. Darkness...

Lights on a pregnant woman in Elizabethan dress. She opens her polyptich belly to reveal a microcosm and tell the story of the being growing inside of her.

The entire cycle of life, from birth to death is foretold in the belly. Is it a story foretold ? A mirror of the society that predefines the destiny of this being ?

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*Theatrum Mundi* is a solo puppet show from the HOLD UP! company. Inspired from Jaques' monologue in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the show is divided into seven vignettes. Like a study of the baroque notion of "theatre world," we invite you to explore our human condition and the notion of free will versus determinism through a singular device: a transformable costume-stage resembling a little baroque theatre within a theatre. It evokes the safe and comforting world of the child in the mother's womb in contrast to the violence of the external world that awaits him. Paying attention to the pregnant belly and this dichotomy allows us to question the notions of femininity, maternity and the biological clockwork of the female body.

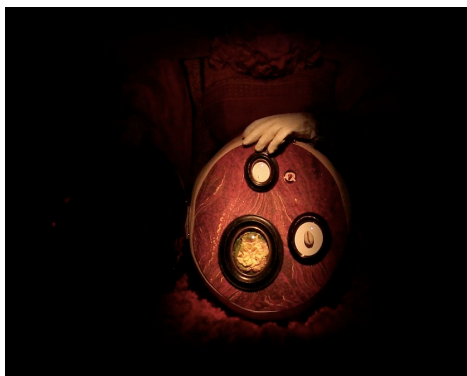
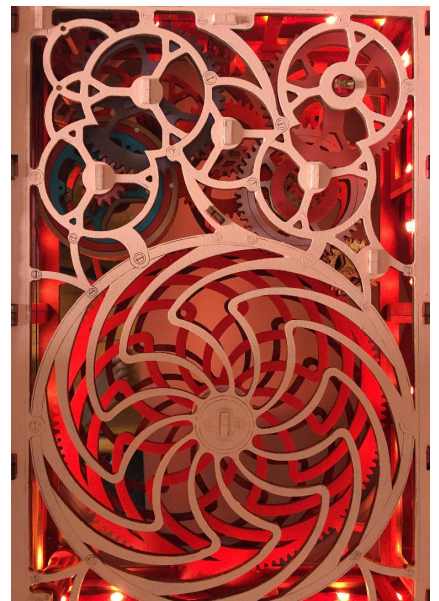


## A) GENESIS

"This show was born from my very personal experience nine years ago. Following my various experiences as a musician, costume designer and puppeteer, my desire to create a live performance encompassing these different art forms blossomed. It was during my first pregnancy that the outlines of this creation appeared. Pregnancy itself and its sensations, the idea of giving birth to a child and bringing him up in today's world, fed numerous reflexions and questionings. To speak of the desire to have a child and educate him in a world always mutating, sometimes violent, and whose future is uncertain is a theme that has never ceased to preoccupy us through the ages. The reinterpretation of Jaques' famous speech in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* and its notion of a theatre-world set me on the track of the themes and the aesthetic I wanted to explore. I wished to set a fresh, contemporary gaze on the mechanics and the conception of the female body through the Elizabethan era in order to evoke our human condition, our modern world, to create a collision between the baroque age and our times in order to access a universal truth about humanity and show the timelessness of Shakespeare."

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Shakespeare's text and the title "Theatrum Mundi" evoke the baroque idea that our world is but a theatre in which we are actors or puppets, manipulated by a "great director" or "clockmaker". This notion questions man's free will and his place in society, a question which still seems contemporary in a world which is constantly moving, in a quest for values, and where newly acquired rights are still threatened. We are all supposed to be equal, and yet we are not all born with the same rights and the same chances, and if some political systems lean towards egalitarianism, reality shows us that we are all victims of the times and societies we live in. The theater-world is not an outdated notion: who are the clockmakers today? How can we detach our strings and become the actors of our own lives?





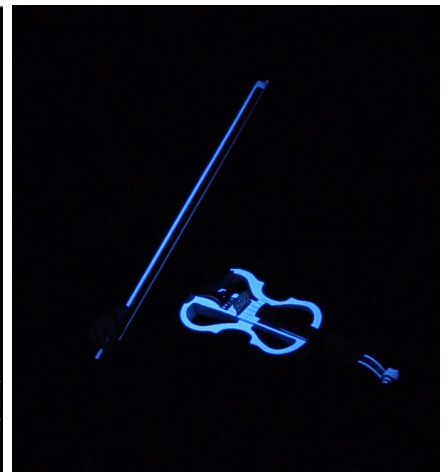
## B) CREATIVE PROCESS AND DEVICE

The scenic space is defined by a giant embroidery frame on which is stretched a reversible sequin piece of fabric. With the help of a UV light, only the white side is visible, and drawings appear like magic in the dark. The show starts with a white electric violin played in black light which, with the help of a loop pedal, gives the impression that it is playing a quartet alone.

Front stage is a costume-puppet stage with a self-supported structure in which the puppeteer can slip into or disappear. The structure is welded like a metal cage on which the polyptych belly hangs. An Elizabethan costume covers it and gives the impression of a simple, slightly oversized dress. This dress **combines** Elizabethan fashion with more contemporary embroidery and symbolizes the various moments and characters of the vignettes, like, for example, the armored arm of "the soldier," the adolescent still "within the folds of his mother's skirt," the heart-shaped headdress that becomes the beard of the now balding "age of reason," or the screen-like "rebato," which offers a surface for "the old man," who's become a shadow of himself.

This evolutive playground allows for simultaneously combining puppetry, acting and live music. Considerable research was made on the costume, which is also a puppet stage, a cage, a surprise box, and a gender study. It allows, with the fusion of several disciplines, the reinterpretation of this traditional monologue in a contemporary and original way. Finally, the text is exclusively Shakespeare's and is recited in both French and English.

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### TEAM :

1 PERFORMER  
1 LIGHT AND SOUND TECHNICIAN  
1 PRODUCTION MANAGER

### TECHNIQUE :

SET: A COSTUME PUPPET-STAGE, A SCREEN  
LENGTH: 50 MINUTES  
ALL AGES 10 AND UP  
TOTAL DARKNESS REQUIRED  
HOUSE SEATING: 100  
BILINGUAL FRENCH/ENGLISH

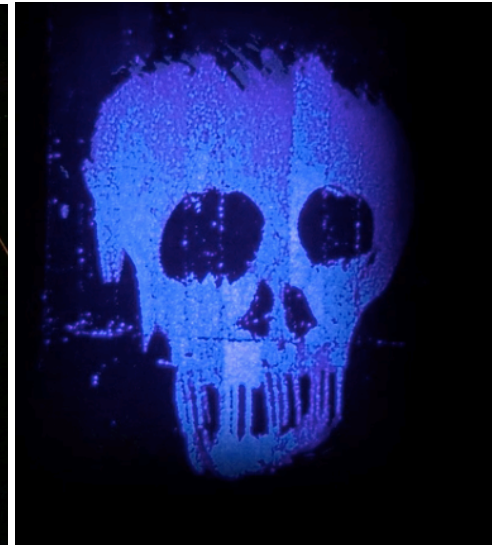


## CORPUS OF IMAGES

### VANITAS



*Miniature Vanitas* Shinji Nakaba





## BAROQUE THEATRE



## ELIZABETHAN COSTUME



PORTRAIT OF A PREGNANT WOMAN FROM THE ELIZABETHAN ERA

E.R.I

## WAR AND ARMORS





## ASTRID HADAD'S TRANSFORMABLE COSTUMES



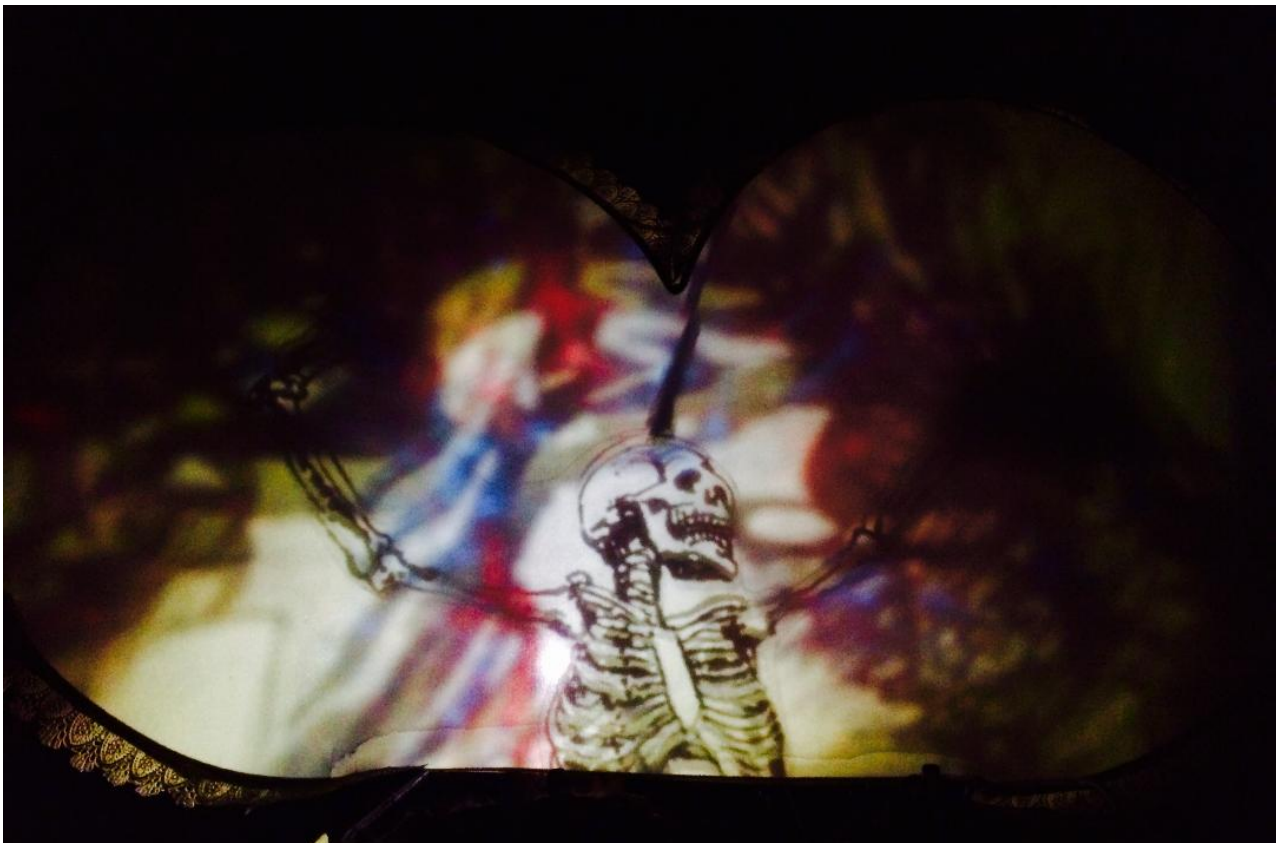
## REBATO SCREEN



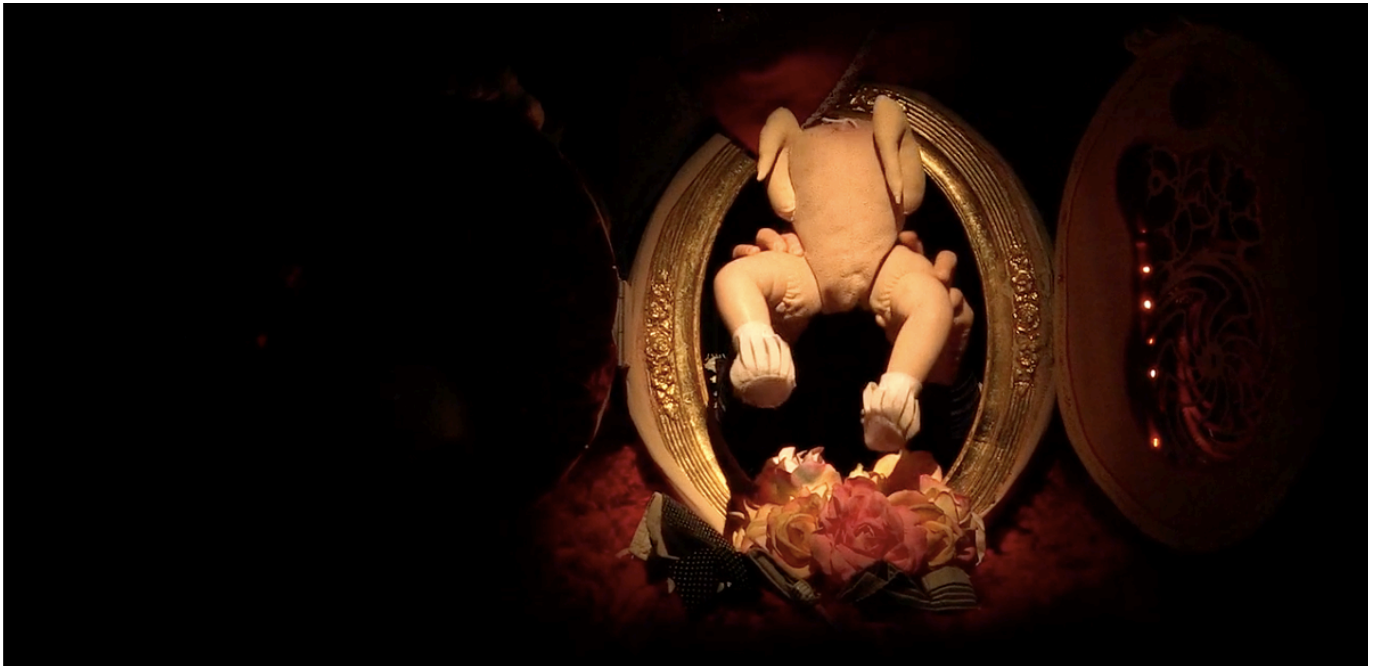
elizabethan rebato



Iris Van Herpen: contemporary rebato







## 2. ARTISTIC TEAM

HOLD UP! Company was created in 2016 in Nancy, France with the goal of promoting puppetry. It is focused mostly on Asian puppetry, specifically Taiwanese glove puppetry and shadow puppetry, and aims to create a dialog between those age-old techniques and the French contemporary stage. Its peculiarity lies in the crossing of several media: costume, puppetry and music, expressive forms dear to the artistic director, who trained first in violin at the Nancy conservatoire, then in theatre design at Central Saint Martin's College of London, and finally with a Taiwanese puppet master in Taiwan. The desire to create a unity between these three passions through live theatre allows the company to find a unique place on the French contemporary scene. All performances are available in French and English.

### Puppeteer and director: Lucie Cunningham

Lucie studied theater design at the renowned Saint Martin's College in London. After graduating in 2003, she remained in London to work as a costume designer. During this time, she discovered puppetry at the Little Angel Theater and fell in love with it. After meeting someone who knew her master to be, Lucie got the opportunity to go learn traditional Taiwanese puppetry. So in 2006, she went to Taipei and ended up staying there six years. During that time, she discovered the culture of this ancient art form and learnt the secrets of manipulating, but also carving, embroidering and painting the beautiful puppets under the watchful eye of her master Chen Xi-Huang. She performed in Taiwan but also toured in Japan, France, Canada and Turkey. Lucie also had a chance to go for an internship in China and learnt shadow puppetry



with the great master Wei in Xi-An, and while in Taipei discovered the unique shadow technique created by the renowned American puppeteer Larry Reed. After meeting her husband in 2011, she moved to Texas. In Austin, she worked as a first hand in the costume shop of the Mary Moody Northern Theater and also performed with the puppet companies "Glass Half Full" and "Trouble Puppet." But after giving birth to two boys, Lucie and her husband decided to go to France and settle there. Lucie now works in Nancy as a costume designer and puppeteer, pursuing these careers simultaneously. *Theatrum Mundi* is her third creation within *HOLD UP!*, and she is in the process of creating a new musical performance planned for late 2022.

### Co-director : Delphine Bardot



A comedian, puppeteer, fine artist and stage director, Delphine Bardot has explored puppetry and its fields of possibilities with several companies in the Grand Est region for over 15 years. Within La S.O.U.P.E. Cie, she has pursued a more personal investigation into the relationship between body and object as seen in her solo works *Vanité* (Vanity), *Sous le Jupon* (Under the Petticoat), and *Body Building*. From that foundation she then began to experiment with and articulate some of the principles inherent to contemporary puppetry, such as "the body as a stage," the dissociation and segmentation of the body, and the metamorphosis somewhere in between illusion and delusion. In 2014 she created *La Mue/tte Cie* with Santiago Moreno, anchoring those different artistic lines and expanding them through a relationship between sound and image, the musicality of gesture, and the choreographed score of a puppet and its puppeteer. She then moved towards a wordless, dreamlike type of writing, tinted with poetic violence, always serving militant subjects. She is a co-director and performer in *L'Un dans l'Autre* (All in All), *Les Folles* (The Madwomen), *Fais-Moi Mâle* (Make Me Male/Hurt Me) and *Battre Encore* (Still Beating), also building the puppets and stage

elements. Additionally, she accompanies Santiago Moreno on his variations around the *One Man Band*, and also continues to collaborate with other companies through building puppets and props, supervising puppet manipulation, and directing and co-directing (Cies Hold up, Pezize, Omnibus, Neige Scariot, Giovanni Zazzera, Paul-Émile Fourny – Opéra de Metz and Scopitone&Cie).

# DISTRIBUTION

Direction, Costume & Construction, Performance: Lucie Cunningham

Co-direction: Delphine Bardot

Sound Creation: Augustin Meyer-Bisch

Lighting and Sound: Nicolas Pierre

Support from Rue de la Casse (at the Cabagnol), The L.E.M. theatre, Grand Est region, Pablo Picasso Cultural Centre in Blénod-lès-Pont-à-Mousson (54), l'ACB National Theatre in Bar-le-Duc



C O M P A G N I E  
**HOLD UP!**

[WWW.COMPAGNIEHOLDUP.COM](http://WWW.COMPAGNIEHOLDUP.COM)

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