

FUKUSHIMA

Terre des cerisiers



affiche : Fabian Foort

D'après « Fukushima, récit d'un désastre » de Mickaël Ferrier© (éditions Gallimard)
mise en scène Brigitte Mounier - chorégraphie Antonia Vitti - lumières Nicolas Bignan - fresque Karine Bracq
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Région
Hauts-de-France
Nord Pas de Calais - Picardie



Nord
le Département

Fukushima, terre des cerisiers

Based on the novel by **Michaël Ferrier**, published by Editions Gallimard

Director

Brigitte Mounier

Choreographer

Antonia Vitti

With

Brigitte Mounier

Lightning, building

Nicolas Bignan

Fresco « Cherry blossoms' wall »

Karine Bracq

Costume

Camille Bigo, designed by Dimitri La Sad

Production

Compagnie des Mers du Nord // City of Grande-Synthe

La Compagnie is artist in residence in Grande-Synthe.

With the support of Conseil regional Hauts de France and Conseil général du Nord

Duration of the show: 1h15



Compagnie des Mers du Nord

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Fukushima, terre des cerisiers

We never know what the past holds for us.

Françoise Sagan

Friday, 11th March 2011. Afternoon, Fukushima, Japan. The earth shakes, the sea roars, and that's a nuclear disaster. The earth. The sea. The sky. Or: how the world goes haywire. Pieces of sky fall on our heads. Everything is upside down. And the sea engulfs it all. An aquarium on stage. The actress is submerged. Puzzling. Surprising. Staggering. A play divided in three parts. Like a haiku we discover verse after verse, or like an unfolding fan.

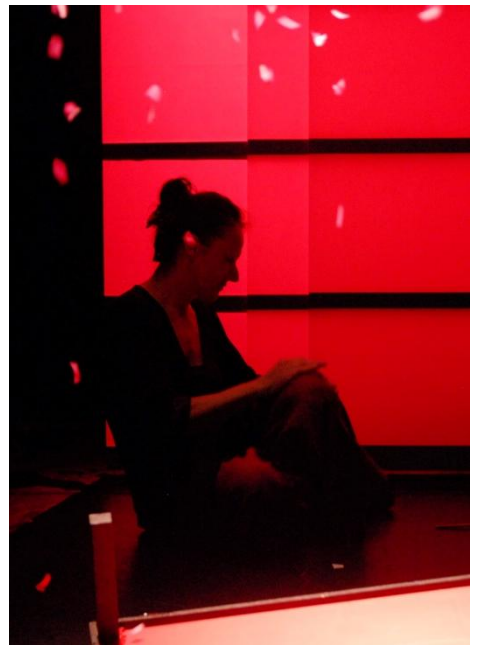
« An outstanding performance, served with a stunning choreography, written by Carolyn Carlson's partner Antonia Vitti. There are some very ingenious technical ideas. Between poetry and rawness, between cherry blossom and caesium-135, Brigitte Mounier moves gracefully and firmly to condemn madness of mankind »
(Xyetz webmag)

Michael Ferrier lives in Tokyo and teaches literature at the University of Chuo. He was there on the 11th March 2011 when the earthquake and the tsunami devastated Northern Japan. The following weeks, he drives to the forbidden area to meet up with Fukushima's nuclear plant employees and to investigate both on the causes of the disaster and on the decision-makers.

Inspired by Paul Claudel's work, **Michaël Ferrier's** novel sways between beauty and chaos, between poetry and investigation. How humanity's genius is being questioned by tectonic shift and leads to apocalypse.

The staging abides to the 3 distinctive parts of the novel. The action sails on from the ancient Japan, from which the author borrows his style and poetry, to the contemporary world and the nuclear error.

The show is divided in 3 parts, as a Haiku:



Earth

It's a choreographic part that deals with the earthquake which happened on the 11th March 2011 on the Pacific coast of the Tohoku district, and was registered 9.0 on the Richter scale.



The earth is shaking. The earth is shaking. Friday 11th March: 78 earthquakes. Saturday 12th: 148 earthquakes. Sunday 13th: 117 earthquakes. I decide to write down the time and magnitude of the aftershocks: 8:51 am: M.5, 9:32 am: M.4.9, 10:42 am: M.5.2, 8:37pm: M.6. I feel like I'm giving scores during a figure skating competition.



Paul Claudel finds the right words to voice it:
"Anytime, at noon, at the theater, during lunch, the mysterious hand intervenes. It grabs Japan by its collar, and reminds it its presence."



There were more than 400 aftershocks within a week. It means one earthquake every seventeen minutes, with a minimum magnitude of 5.0.
And that's the country we built 54 nuclear plants in.



Tsunami is expected to strike in the following areas:
The Pacific coast of Hokkaido, the Pacific coast of Tohoku district, the coastal areas of Hibaraki Prefecture, the coastal areas of Tokushima (...)
Everyone on the coast must evacuate to higher ground.

The sea

This part, played submerged in an aquarium, refers to the history of painting to construct an apocalyptic picture of the tsunami and the drowning bodies.



“No more breathing, lungs cease to work. Screams overlap. We are surrounded by the roar of the dying. Suddenly, we collide with something solid: a wall, a pillar or another human body, dead or alive, we don’t really know anymore. Within the swirl of arms and legs, faces are coming at you.

Do not swallow the water. But it is impossible to resist. It finds its ways, attacking through any openings. We eat large amount of mud, objects, hair, bugs. We suffocate, we throw up. Death comes incredibly slowly.

Many bodies got their clothes torn apart by the power of the tide, undressed by the tsunami and left behind on the shore. The indecency of the wave.”

The Sky

It narrates the story of the disaster. The text is now immediate, journalist-like, and depicts the nuclear disaster precisely.



“The world discovers that pools stands at the top of the reactors, filled with spent fuel. Spent, but still radioactive. Six years of spent fuel, thousands tons of it are stockpiled in a seismic area, near a nuclear plant. “Security is our top priority”, that’s what every nuclear company in the world says, together with the international safety authorities that are supposed to oversee them.”



In the ocean, we find whales full of cesium and sharks with tumorous cancer. A French newspapers headline reads: “concerning situation for the fishes”. All the animals do not drop dead, but all are affected. A new tale is being written.



An idiom spread like wildfire: “half-life”. It is not a brutal extermination; it’s a lethal condition, as from now a legal one. Small doses for a worldwide anesthesia. Our own half-life. With the participation of everyone, without the knowledge of anyone. It has been prepared for long: an anonymous species, submissive, reproducible. The lambda citizen will soon become the gamma citizen. We’ve made the opposite choice Achilles has. Homer told us: Achilles doesn’t want a half-life. He wants a beautiful death, which means a beautiful life.

Michaël Ferrier

Born in Strasbourg in 1967, Michaël Ferrier lives in Tokyo where he teaches literature. He spent his childhood in Africa and in the Indian Ocean, and then moved to Paris to study. He is a former student of the Ecole Nationale Supérieure, agrégé in Literature (highly selective French teaching qualification), and doctorate in French literature at Paris IV-Sorbonne university. He is Professor at Chuo University, Tokyo, where he directs the Research Group *Figures de l'étranger* (In the face of alterity: The image of the other in arts and society)

His work is regularly published in newspapers such as Art Press, l'Infini and la Nouvelle Revue française.

Michaël Ferrier's work belongs both to a novelist and to an essayist. It stands at the crossroads of various cultural universes (French, Japanese, and Creole) and various artistic fields (literature, music, philosophy, art critic).



His writings deal with intercultural exchange, and more precisely with the Japanese culture, referred to not as an essential entity but as the result of complex translation and circulation process, which also conjures others geographical area, especially Creole worlds.

Short bibliography : *Kizu* (ed. Arléa, 2004), *Tokyo, petits portraits de l'aube* (ed. Gallimard, 2004), *Sympathie pour le Fantôme* (ed. Gallimard, 2010, won the Prix littéraire de la Porte Dorée 2011).

Michaël Ferrier's work main theme is intercultural exchange. He also questions memory, violence and time through a reflection on what he calls "half-life", an established concept in our atomic societies.

Antonia Vitti

Antonia Vitti was born in Bari, Italy, and studied dance at the Rome Opera House. She practices both classical and modern dance, looking for a variety of styles. During her studies and her career she met ballet masters and renowned teachers such as E. Terabust, Massimo Moricone, Hans van Manen, Robert Strainer, Aryeh Weiner, Carolyn Carlson, Sighilt Pahl.

She dances with **Carolyn Carlson** in several of her works, including *We were Horses* (Carolyn Carlson and Bartabas), with **Maura de Candia**, and create the **DIEM Dance Image Motion** company together with **Yukata Nakata**.



She was a soloist at the Tanz Theater Munich for choreographers such as **Stephan Thoss, Robert North, Rui Horta, Hans Henning Paar**. She danced at the Internationalen Ballettwettbewerb Hannover, under **Hugo Viera's** direction, at the **Ballet Theater Munich** under **Philip Taylor's** direction and at the **Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe** under **Brigit Keil's** direction. She also performed choreographies written by **Tony Rizzi, Caroline Finn, Cayetano Soto, Richard Alston, William Forsythe, Peter Wright, Richard Wherlock**.

Brigitte Mounier

Former student of the Ecole du Théâtre national de Strasbourg, directed by Jean Pierre Vincent, Brigitte Mounier performed over 4000 times on theater stages or in the air, from the Théâtre nation de l'Odéon to Jean Richard's Circus, before settling in the North of France in 1994.



She creates the **Compagnie des Mers du Nord** with which she directs and performs a contemporary repertoire. To this date, 25 shows have been played in France and in Europe.

On another note, she organizes every year since 2004 “**Le Manifeste**, international gathering for a political theater”, a festival of living art and artistic education in the city of Grande-Synthe and on the coast.



Created in 1996 in Dunkirk by Brigitte Mounier, the Compagnie des Mers du Nord sails on a contemporary repertoire, which leads it on shores where men and women face geographical or geopolitical problems.

Main shows :

- **Guerre, ils ont écrit ton nom** (1998)
- **United Problems of Coût de la Main d'œuvre**
Written by Jean Charles Massera (1999)
- **Transit** *written by Philippe Braz (2001)*
- **Albertine, Marthe, Andrée et les Autres** (2002)
- **Synthe Saga** (2003)
- **Road Movie à Bicyclette** (2005)
- **Another Way Now pourrait supprimer 2800 villages d'ici 5 ans**, *written by Jean Charles Massera (2006)*
- **Fantaisie économique et musicale pour Pokémon, Jordan, sa mère et l'Education nationale** *written by Jean Charles Massera (2008)*
- **Eve contre Lucy, l'Autre cauchemar de Darwin** (2008)
- **Yes, peut-être** *written by Marguerite Duras (2010)*
- **Hair Mundo Frei** (2011)
- **Hors catégorie** *based on Jean de la Ciotat confirme written by Jean Charles Massera (2012)*
- **Democratia Participativa** (2013)
- **D'un retournement l'autre** *written by Frédéric Lordon (2013)*
- **Fukushima, terre des cerisiers** *written by Michaël Ferrier (2014)*
- **Lola, Bachir, Gretel et Knut, générations X, Y, Z** (2016)
- **La Sextape de Darwin** (2018)

On another note, Brigitte Mounier creates « Le Manifeste, Rassemblement international pour un théâtre motivé » (Le Manifeste, international gathering for an engaged theater) in Grande-Synthe, where actors, intellectuals, troublemakers, artists and stargazers meet every summer since 2004.

The festival is both politically and artistically engaged, and gathers international artists from every living arts forms every summer in order to work with the inhabitants.

Apart from its task to create and promote contemporary texts, the company is also invested in artistic training with the inhabitants on a local area, and on a broader scope in the Hauts-de-France region, in schools and colleges.

Press (*extracts*)

An outstanding performance, served with a stunning choreography, written by Carolyn Carlson's partner Antonia Vitti. There are some very ingenious technical ideas. Between poetry and rawness, between cherry blossom and caesium-135, Brigitte Mounier moves gracefully and firmly to condemn madness of mankind.

(xyzMag)

The show is a poetic but radical denunciation of the madness that has led Japan into apocalypse in March 2011.

(*La Voix du Nord / Sébastien Leroy*)

Brigitte Mounier believes in a political theater that deals with contemporary stakes. *Fukushima, terre des cerisiers* depicts in three parts the tragic events that stroke Japan, on a physical level first but also on an intellectual level, that compels us to rethink nuclear dependency.

(*La Terrasse / Eric Demey*)

Hopeless apocalyptic brutality. Why is this poetic and political show the only one in Avignon 2016 to raise awareness on the horror that knocks at our door?

(*Art moderne / Jean Mathon*)

The actress, corporal witness of the earthquake, shake by her choreography, offers us a powerful performance without empathic seriousness. Submerged in an aquarium, the actress starts to slowly drown, and suddenly dances in a hypnotic choreography that goes beyond words. This one-woman-show denounces the nuclear dictatorship and reminds us that the disaster has only started.

(*Arkult / Marianne Guernet-Mouton*)

An upside-down Japan dealing with nuclear error, that's the plot of the amazing play Brigitte Mounier offers. With its perfect aesthetic direction, this magnificent show based on the superb novel by Michaël Ferrier, blends theater and dance exquisitely.

(Alice Beguet / Vaucluse matin / Festival d'Avignon)

In a wonderful and original staging, the outstanding actress evokes the Fukushima disaster, gracefully. The text, beautifully written, narrates the disaster and the chaos the author lived, before denouncing the madness of nuclear power and the lies of its partisans. A wonderful show that overwhelms us and give us much to think about.

(Cezam Provence Méditerranée)

Fukushima, terre des cerisiers, is a breath-taking one-woman-show, almost hypnotic, where cesium and plutonium turn the cherry blossom gangrenous. The text is merciless, incisive, and precise, between poetry and political theater, between a modern haiku and an anti-nuclear manifesto.

(Festi TV / Marion Lefèvre)

More than fifty nuclear plants have been constructed in Japan, a country amongst one of the most subject to earthquakes. That's for the topic. It's a beneficial show for sure, as it is necessary to raise awareness on the nuclear question, but it not only is a simple denunciation of the government and the nuclear companies. Brigitte Mounier puts in perspective the disaster with the Japanese culture. That's why the show is so strong. She depicts the impact of the disaster on the nature, and shows us the confusion in which the population has to live.

(Reg'Arts / Bruno Fourniès)

Fukushima, terre des cerisiers won the Ecological Prize « Gaia » at the Off Festival Avignon 2016.



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