



HOMONOLITH

PROTEAN EVENT

Installation | Performing arts | Performance | Circus | Dance | Theater

4 hours | 12-70 years old

Creation 2018

DISTRIBUTION

Collaborating artists and performers

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Scenograph and light designer

Julien Brun

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Context	2
Introduction	2
About	3-4
Note of intention	4-5
Scenography	6-7
Biographies	8-11
Contact	11

CONTEXT

After the creation of their first outdoor show *L'envers* and the trio *Lonely are the lonely roads*, and two years of international touring in more than 12 countries and 28 festivals, the Swiss company, Ici'bas, is continuing their research about interdisciplinary fields in the performing arts (circus, dance, theater, scenography, etc.) and about positioning art in outdoor and public spaces. The company has assembled eight artists from diverse horizons to collaborate on an unconventional collective creation. Moved by the desire to explode the conventional forms of performance and pierce the theatrical code, we put together our different experiences /qualities/personalities to create this project: *Homonolith*.



INTRODUCTION

Homonolith is an original artistic object, on the edges of dance, circus, theater, and performative installation. An immersive and contemplative land art. This engaging performance unfolds in large outdoor natural spaces : prairies, hills, and forests. *Homonolith* inhabits each new space in a specific way and the dramatic curve of the piece reinvents itself as it encounters each of the different landscapes.

We would like to invite the audience to live a unique and powerful experience. We invite the public to encounter a rare oeuvre with a migratory path, surprising and organic, oscillating between reality and performance. To encounter eight artists playing with their own limits, other spectators, structures both enigmatic and comforting, a nature that can sometimes be welcoming, or worrying... to encounter yourself. *Homonolith* is a piece to ponder at length as it only reveals itself through time.

ABOUT

*At the door of the house who will come knocking?
An open door, we enter
A closed door, a den
The world pulse beats beyond my door.*

**Pierre Albert-Birot,
The natural amusements**

A virgin space is discovered, invested, and slowly tamed. The need for shelter pushes us to construction. From a simple and unique material – raw wooden beams 2.32 meters long – an instinctive architecture is improvised and diverse forms of houses start to appear. The question of the delimitation of space emerges and the one of property follows quickly.

Intimacy reveals itself with the security of a roof be it concrete or fictional. Life flourishes, gets organized, and repeated : the image of the house introduces images of a daily functional routine, which, due to its importance to our constitution, reaches the status of ritual.

However, the security of this dwelling is fragile and ephemeral. Walls fall down and the wandering begins again. Once more, a search for a house, the envy of others' shelters...

Thusly the eight interpreters of Homonolith proceed, between exile and rootedness bodies oscillate, stray and return, cluster, becoming themselves the elements of an organic building before getting lost again.

In the life of a man, the house thrusts aside contingencies, its councils of continuity are unceasing. Without it, man would be a dispersed being.

**Gaston Bachelard,
Poetics of Space**

We have calculated. During 2017, the eight of us have cumulated:

- 553** nights in hotel rooms
- 406** nights on couches or extra mattresses given by generous friends and colleagues
- 120** nights camping either in the wild or not
- 53** nights in the back of a truck
- 37** nights in the train
- 22** nights in a yurt
- 16** nights in an airplane
- 3** nights under a bridge (it's a long story...)

The lifestyles inherent to our artistic professions, the nomadic nature, contemporary and global, are not random in our decision to address the questions of private space, to question the omnipotence of the habitat as characterization of our intimate and social selves : tell me where you live and I'll tell you who you are.

What about those who live nowhere ? Those who have lost their shelter ? Is it possible to bring your dwelling with you when you leave ? Homonolith questions our relationship with the home and cannot help but sometimes reflect the recent migrational flux that is seizing the world.



NOTE OF INTENTION

Homonolith is an unusual project – we wished it to be so. Its unique form, its way of deploying itself in space and time have, since the beginning of our research, pushed us to question the specific and organic aesthetics inherent to this theatrical context. We have chosen to dismantle these mechanisms in order to start again from scratch. To call everything into question, first out of bravado, but soon after out of interest for the questions that this little revolution aroused in us.

To re-question everything, even down to the structure itself, the mechanisms of representation that our spectacular object could adopt and, to investigate as well into the nature of the spectator's relationship with the work and their degree of implication in it. Think of it in a non-linear manner, more rather as an unpredictable and rugged path. It is not about giving the key to the spectator right away at the beginning of the performance – the key that will explain the rules of the game and his place in relation to the work – but to succeed in guiding him to a wakened state ready to face the unpredictability of the proposed path.

To do this, we first play with the position of the spectator, his concrete placement vis a vis the subject he is presented for observation. How does his attention change depending upon if he watches a scene that takes place several meters from him, or at a much more consequential distance ? In what state of contemplation will he be if he is sitting in the midst of other spectators, facing a matter clearly defined in space, if he can move freely around the subjects, as if he is a visitor at an exhibition, or even if he finds himself having to follow an action that moves through the woods ?

NOTE OF INTENTION

The relationship with time participates equally in this disruption, and so we propose a relatively long format that permits us to experiment within one same framework with diametrically opposed ratios of time the actions will take, playing alternately with the virtuosic efficiency of the body that our acrobatic or dance experience allows us, but also with moments where time seems stretched, actions diluted, or repeated infinitely. This inclusion of real time in the work allows us also to profit from the different qualities of light and mood offered by early evening, sunset, and deep night.

The very nature of the spectator's involvement is multiple, alternating between moments of pure observation and moments of more direct participation : walking together through fields or forest, passing a soup around a fire, or proposals to participate more physically to support, construct, or destroy a structure.

With each performance, Homonolith reinvents itself as it encounters the different spaces that welcomes it. The show aims to be sufficiently flexible to succeed in redefining itself to marry the asperities of the landscapes that will serve as havens for it, like the hermit crab contorts itself to become one with the new shell that will become its home. This means playing with viewing angles and perspectives, from above or below, specific to each place with which we cross paths. Even the material itself of the show adapts according to the unique characteristics of each environment we encounter. The nature and irregularity of the ground, position and form of trees and forests, dead branches, stones, and other materials naturally present in situ becomes a multitude of elements to play with, pretexts to rewrite.

Finally, even the construction of the performance aids to blur the lines between written and improvised material. The different elements of which it is composed (choreographic fragments, concrete actions of construction or deconstruction, images that evoke a game or theme) intertwine like so many fragmentary strata whose borders we strive to soften and meld. All elements participate : actions, characters, situations, movements, and spaces are the many impressions superimposed one over another in repetition and variation to finish by depicting an anamorphic reality.

Thus, between exile and rootedness, walled solitude and societal constructions, rending goodbyes and perpetual returns, impenetrable borders and infinite spaces, the stories of Homonolith are told through a sprawling narrative, the result of an accumulation of sensations and senses.

Through these sometimes radical artistic choices, Homonolith proves to be an extraordinary artistic and human adventure. The questions that arise in our research periods enliven and unite us in a jubilant and precious investment. The audacious responses that we progressively found guaranteed to the project a unique quality of exploration and engagement. Homonolith remains for us a singular and passionate adventure, as it will become for the spectators who dare to cross its path.



SCENOGRAPHY



In the same manner that man adapts to all situations, his habitat transforms as he evolves and the context of his existence changes. The scenography of Homonolith intends to follow this principle of metamorphosis and of reinvention towards a structure of habitation in constant evolution.

The base of the scenography : the skeleton of a house with a pointed roof comprised of two slopes. All the elements that constitute this standard house, the « model » house, are identical : beams of raw wood 2.32 meters long. From this simplicity, this conformity, new houses arise one by one, reinventing the habitat as each new model is formed from the beams of its predecessor. And so, we pass from a sedentary normalized European house to a large vocabulary of structures and places in which to live. One after another: pile of wood, tipi, assemblage in equilibrium, complex geometric construction or biomorphic structure, these refuges contextualize and condition the interactions between the characters.

As the form of the habitat transforms itself to fit the context, it is natural that Homonolith asks as well the question of the environment. A field, a forest, a landscape, a place that man decides to inhabit. What are the factors that define the construction of a dwelling in a given environment ? How to find its place in an ecosystem that already has its own codes ? Must we redefine the context or let ourselves be colored by it and adapt accordingly ? And what about nomadism, this practice that consists of constantly reinventing our habitat according to the setting in which we find ourselves ? Can we bring our house just as it is into any setting or do we need to adapt it every time ? How to create a humane place to live with beams 2.32 meters long in a habitat of grass, trees, and nature ?





SCENOGRAPHY

The scenography of Homonolith thusly proposes a rethinking of the principles of the construction of man's habitat. The use of elements that are all identical forces the characters to use their creativity and ingeniousness towards a constant reinvention of the forms and techniques of fabrication. Calling as much upon the ancestral principles like simple assembly, as well as engineering techniques more complex like the tensegrity, the dwellings that develop from this creativity and this ingenuity are attempts to unite a technical savoir-faire and a capacity to adapt to all contexts developed throughout human evolution.



Not only should the scenography adapt to the different environments it traverses during this long-duration show, but the creation of the theatrical space, as well, should constantly reinvent itself. The interaction between stage and public is also as protean as the scenography. The spectators are invited one by one to sit in a frontal configuration with the scenic space, in a circle around a fire that unites them with the performers, to freely wander the perimeter of a performance in progress, to traverse fields and forests to discover new habitats and to participate actively in the construction of a communal space. It seems important to us to question the place of the spectator each time we question the context of the scenography. In the spirit of constant evolution, the performance proposes thusly to the public multiple forms and conventions that parallel the evolution of man and his habitat.



And so, the scenography of Homonolith proposes an exploration of the habitat, its history, and its possible futures. To ask ourselves the question of the habitat is to ask the question of architectures and structures that facilitate the development of man and the creation of societies.



Collaborating artists and performers



PABLO VALARCHER

Born in Paris in 1990. The many artists in my family introduced me at an early age to the performing arts and to the nomadic lifestyle that characterizes this profession. I begin acrobatics as a teenager while following my mother on tour with the Cirque du Soleil. I receive professional training in acrobatics and teeterboard at L'École nationale des arts du cirque de Rosny-sous-Bois, and then at the National Circus School of Montreal. Since then, I had the opportunity to perform in many different contexts : from Austrian, South African, or Spanish cabaret, to performing pieces by companies such as Les 7 doigts de la main and Cirque Éloize, to touring internationally with the Cirque du Soleil. Today, I am interested in creation and in the contemporary forms of circus.

After fifteen years of classical ballet training and a college education in photography in Montreal, Christine found her way into contemporary dance. She began her professional training at the École de danse contemporaine de Montréal where she graduated in 2014. During her studies, she worked professionally as a dancer in the opera *La damnation de Faust* by Robert Lepage (CA). Since her graduation, her career has started with O Vertigo Company (CA) and with emerging projects such as CO choreographed by Évelyne Laforest and Rémi Ouellette and Mandala from Quantum dance collective. Her growing interest for acrobatic movement will be nourished and developed by the foundation of the company Ici'bas, who's aim is to combine dance, circus and performative arts. She also collaborates as a flyer and dancer with circus companies such as Cirqu'en Choc with the creation *Scintilla* (CH) and with the director Claudel Doucet in the piece *Que nous soyons* (CA).



CHRISTINE DAIGLE



CONSTANCE BUGNON

Born in Switzerland, Constance discovers circus very young. At 15, she joins the professional circus school of Quebec where she specializes in chinese pole. Attracted by creation and new experiences, she co-founded the circus company Collectif A Sens Unique in May 2012. After graduating from school in 2015, she took part in the Circus Starlight tour and participated in the First International Youth Circus Festival in Mongolia, and received the Best Performance Award. She continues her journey and joins various projects such as ; *Control* a contemporary dance piece from the Company Idem and the 17th FINA Worldchampionships Closing Ceremony. She works with the Compagnie Ici'Bas, where she is hired as an interpret for the show *L'envers* (2016 tour) and later on for the trio *Lonely are the lonely roads*. In 2018, she integrates the chinese pole collective *Entre nous* for the creation *Le Grenier*. Through these different experiences in circus and dance, Constance is particularly interested in the fusion of contemporary arts.



EMILE PINEAULT

Emile Pineault discovered circus at the age of 4 at the Quebec City circus school, where he began his professional training few years later. He then joined the National Circus School of Montreal and completed his conservatory program in 2014. In 2012, with four of his friends and director Johanne Madore, he created the show *Croisé*, presented in La Tohu and the Festival Montréal Complètement Cirque. From 2014 to 2016, Emile joined the company The 7 fingers, for the show *Cuisine & Confessions*, with whom he toured internationally. He is currently working on his own solo show, mixing acrobatics and dance. Emile wants to erase the boundaries between the artistic disciplines while questioning their codes. In addition, he participates in dance, theater and circus productions, with various companies such as Cirk La Putyka (CZ), Théâtre du Trident (CAN), Compagnie Ici'bas (CH), etc.

Born and raised in New York City, Rachel grew up in dance, but always dreamed of circus. For four years she works for dance companies in NYC, and, in 2012, she moves to Montreal where she discovers the Cyr wheel at the National Circus School of Montreal. Upon graduation in 2015, she works for two years with the Cirque du Soleil as a performer in the show *Luzia*. After this contract, she moves to Lyon to join long time partners, Company Puéril Péril, to be a part of their new creation, *L'autre*.



RACHEL SALZMAN



MATHIAS REYMOND

Born in Switzerland, Mathias obtained his diploma in 2012 from l'École de Cirque de Québec in Chinese Pole and as porter in Icarian Games. After his graduation, he co-founded and performed in the circus collective À Sens Unique. Throughout his work with the collective, he was involved in different projects such as *Les chemins invisibles* with Cirque du Soleil, the opera *La damnation de Faust* of Robert Lepage (CA) and the G.O.P. Variété (DE). In 2015, he co-founded the company Ici'bas, who's aim is to combine dance, circus and performing arts. Hungry for art, he's particularly interested in movement research, either in floor acrobatics, in partnering or on his chinese pole. He develops his research through his company and independent projects such as *Scintilla* from the company Cirqu'en Choc (CH), *Le Songe d'une nuit d'été* from the theater Le Trident (CA), *Que nous soyons* from the director Claudel Doucet (CA) and *Bosch dreams* from the 7 doigts de la main (CA).



ANGELA RABAGLIO

Angela is a freelance dancer / choreographer and living in Brussels, with origins from Switzerland. She absolved her education as a dancer at the Amsterdamse Hoogeschool voor de Kunsten (de Theaterschool; MDT), and obtained 2013 her Bachelor diploma in contemporary dance. Upon that she created her first Solo, *Wind-up birds and polaroids*, with which she performed at several festivals in Europe. Since 2016 she started to collaborate with Micaël Florentz and founded upon that their company Tumbleweed. *The Gyre* is their first production, a duet. Since 2014, she has been dancing with the Company Alias in Geneva (Guilherme Botelho), as well as more recently with the Company Autre MiNa in Montpellier (Mitia Fedotenko) and in the new creation of the Company Ici Bas in Switzerland. In the past she participated in diverse projects and collaborations, as with Itamar Serussi, Ingrid Berger Myhre, two creations with Tanzplan Ost (LaborGras and PearsonWidrig dancetheater) as well as in several improvisation performances with the Collective Bloom (experimental Jazz Music) and with the Swiss musician Simon Berz ('Monstergroove'). Thanks to different influences in dance (Floorwork, Improvisation, Gaga, Release, Classical Ballet, Contact, ...) and other sources of movement (martial arts, climbing, yoga, dabké) she is developing her personal physical practice, by melting old and new traditions.

Dimitri Hatton is an innovative physical comedian, dancer and actor. For fifteen years he has created his own acts and full-length shows, which have been performed the world over. He continues to develop his unique style, an engaging mix of visual comedy, object manipulation, contemporary dance and improvisation. The universal weaknesses of mankind are central to his work. In his hands, these shared vulnerabilities are transformed into a constant source of laughter- transcending borders and languages. Dimitri Hatton is an internationally renowned artist of dance, circus, theatre, cabaret and street performance. Within these genres he has performed with highly respected companies and artists such as : Les Sept doigts de la main, Le Cirque du Soleil, Mohamed El'Khatib (Collectif Zilib), La soirée, Randy Weiner, Jay Gilligan, Jess Love, La Cie Off, Satchie Noro, Roberto Negro, Adrien Chenebault and Valentin Ceccaldi (Tricollectif) and Clowns sans frontières. Hatton is also director, choreographer and artistic director of his own company. And he continues to entertain and to explore artistically with the same passion and the same jubilant craziness.



DIMITRI HATTON

Scenograph and light designer



JULIEN BRUN

Julien Brun is a multi-tooled scenic artist, working on set & lighting design, as well as on stage directing and temporary architecture. He has always been interested in the melting of scenic modes of expression and in the creation of new works in the contemporary arts. He is a graduate from l'École nationale de theater du Canada, a school that brought him an important artistic and technical background. Julien Brun is now continuing his work of research and exploration as well as collaborating with different stage and artistic directors from North America and Europe. All this through the creation of works with his own company insanë; the creation of visual universes for dance, theater, circus and opera; the artistic, architectural and logistical advising in many cultural events; and teaching in many art European and North-American art schools.

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