

CITY AND NATURE | HOMO NOVUS | RIGA

The City and Nature programme includes works that talk about the relationships between the two, their interaction and conflicts in both the physical space and within ourselves.

Christine Umpfenbach (Munich)

LOST GARDENS

The documentary theatre project "Lost Gardens" relates to a specific place and a concrete event in Riga's recent past. In May 2013, a lane was cut through the allotment gardens in Bolderāja to free up the space for railway tracks as a part of the Riga Free Port development plan. Gardeners lost their gardens, fences were knocked down, trees were cut, and garden houses were burned down or were demolished by bulldozers. The traumatic event had a big impact on the lives of these gardeners, who after spending every summer there now have no place to go. Many of them started 40 years ago as young families to cultivate this area from being a swamp into the place in which trees, fruits and vegetables could grow and flowers would bloom.

In „Lost Gardens“, the audience will be taken to the original location of the allotment gardens. The protagonists will be the displaced gardeners and a representative from Riga Free Port, who will explain their perspectives on what had happened and recalling the event through their point of view. In contrasting the different interests on the same area, the theatre project draws a connection between local and global interests.

Asja bought her garden 30 years ago for her father in order to help keep him busy and give him a purpose in life. After his death, she continued to maintain the garden to help her relax. One day, she returned to the garden to find it had been burned to the ground. She wrote to the Free Port authority asking for explanations as to why she was not given notice of the demolition.

Anatolijs and his wife grew fruits and vegetables in their garden so they never had the need to go to the market to buy fresh products. He and his wife stood there watching his fruit trees being cut down. Together with his granddaughter Liza he explains how his garden house was relocated by a crane to an area 30 meters away from the original location.

Kostja, a sailor, loved his garden house. This house was used as a place for friends and family to celebrate with music, food and drinks. He talks about the oak tree he planted in 1976 when his son was 2 years old and the shock when the tree was uprooted 40 years later.

Gaida, who would visit her garden every day after work to relax by working in the garden, swimming and fishing in the nearby river. Now she does not know what to do with her free time after her garden was destroyed.

Author and director: Christine Umpfenbach

Co-authors and performers: Asja Andrejeva, Konstantīns Barkovs, Anatolijs Bistrovs,

Elizabete Bistrova, Zenta Naļivaiko, Gaida Petriņa, Nīna and Anatolijs Beļakovi

Video artist: Katrīna Neiburga

Scenographer: Rudolf Bekić

Dramaturg: Zane Zajančauska

Sound artist: Andris Indāns

Video assistant: Zane Raudiņa

Producer: Sandra Lapkovska / New Theatre Institute of Latvia

the vacuum cleaner (London)

MENTAL

The Metropolitan Police calls him a Domestic Extremist. The National Health Service have described him as 'highly disturbed' and labeled him as Borderline Personality Disorder.

"A real and present threat to the safe running of our lawful business" is how E.ON described him at the Royal Courts of Justice.

He prefers the term Mental.

After 10 years of being an outlaw and inpatient, artist activist the vacuum cleaner presents an autobiographical performance told through his psychiatric records, police intelligence files and corporate injunctions collected through the Data Protection Act.

"the vacuum cleaner is one of the most significant and exciting artists working in the UK today. Blurring the boundaries between art and audiences and between performance and politics, the vacuum cleaner's work not only gets people thinking about things, but actually doing things to effect social, cultural and political change", Lois Keiden, Director, Live Art Development Agency

This show contains material some may find challenging, and is not suitable for people under the age of 16.

Direction and dramaturgy: Kim Noble
Producer: Hannah Hull
Designer: Sophie Nathan
Originally developed with Tania El Khoury

Mental was made with support from Arts Council England, Artsadmin and In Between Time

Ingri Fiksdal, Ingvild Langgård, Signe Becker (Oslo)

NIGHT TRIPPER

Night Tripper takes shape as a trail in the woods, concert performance, ritual and social event. It begins in the twilight hour and takes the audience into the night. The piece features six performers, curious instruments, numerous installation artworks, a local choir and a lot of potent spirits. Night Tripper explores the idea of nature as animistic, as a place of both healing and destructive powers, of immanence and transcendence. Ancient mythology meets contemporary everyday life, and dream and reality merge into an otherworldly, yet tangible tale. Night Tripper draws from ideas of voodoo culture, where lingering too long at the crossroads can make true believers into divine horsemen.

Concept: Ingri Fiksdal, Ingvild Langgård, Signe Becker
Choreography: Ingri Fiksdal
Music: Ingvild Langgård
Scenography: Signe Becker
Dancers: Pernille Holden and Julie Solberg
Musicians: Jørn Tore Egseth, Ane Marthe Sørlien Holen, Ingvild Langgård and Gunhild Mathea Olausen
With participation of Saulkrasti choir Anima
Commissioned and Produced for Up To Nature
A collaboration between Brut Wien, Black Box, In Between Time, Anti Festival and Maska

Lotte van den Berg, Guido Kleene / Compagnie Dakar (Amsterdam)
WASTELAND

At a distance of just over fifty metres from the audience, small creatures potter around. They surrender to the laws of living and dying without protecting or shielding themselves. They choose to venture into the open, to be vulnerable. There is no speech. The images are gripping and follow each other at an icy pace. The lines of the countryside are long. The cruelties without cause or consequence.

'Wasteland' tells the story of nine people wandering through a forgotten place. Inspired by the novels of John Coetzee, this production uses penetrating imagery to bring the violence and desolation of his books to life.

Director Lotte van den Berg stages the action hundreds of feet from the audience, creating an expansive physical distance, and delivering a surprisingly deep and personal impact.

Direction: Lotte Van Den Berg and Guido Kleene

Cast: Matthias Maat, Monika Haasova, Carola Bartschiger, Lobke van Beuzekom, Jurgen Brucker, Erlend Hammer Hansen, Rachid Laachir, Luc van Loots, Romanee Rodriguez

Technician: Manuel Boutreur, Paul de Vries

Design of the tribune: Martin Mulder

Production manager: Erma van Maris

Producer: Compagnie Dakar / co-producer OMSK / spreading Frans brood / with thanks to Theater Stap

Philippe Quesne / Vivarium Studio (Paris)
SWAMP CLUB

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of Vivarium Studio, Quesne once more corrals his polyglot performers to tell us about a rather useless cultural centre stuck in the backwoods.

Swamp Club is an urban fairytale set in the eerily peaceful environment of a lonely swamp peopled by odd creatures, animals, insects and sounds. One building has endured – the cultural centre. The performers are the artists-in-residence of this Swamp Club. A silent old man is the host and curator. He receives people from countries like Poland and Iceland as well as a chamber orchestra. As so often happens, this centre for the arts is threatened by a municipal construction project that would spell its destruction. The Swamp Club must defend itself.

Conceived, directed and designed by: Philippe Quesne

Artistic collaborators: Yvan Clédat, Cyril Gomez-Mathieu, Corine Petitpierre, Martin Argyroglo, Abigail Fowler, Thomas Legler

Cast: Isabelle Angotti, Snæbjörn Brynjarsson, Yvan Clédat, Cyril Gomez-Mathieu, Ola Maciejewska, Émilien Tessier, Gaëtan Vourc'h and a string quartet with Ainārs Paukšēns, Arvīds Zvagulis, Raimonds Melderis, Arigo Štrāls

Technical director: Marc Chevillon

Assistant director: Marie Urban

Producer: Vivarium Studio

Co-producer: Wiener Festwochen, Théâtre de Gennevilliers Centre Dramatique National de création contemporaine, Festival d'Automne à Paris, Foreign Affairs | Berliner Festspiele, Festival d'Avignon, Ménagerie de Verre, Paris, Le Forum / Scène conventionnée de Blanc-Mesnil, Kaaitheater, Brussels, La Filature Scène nationale de Mulhouse, International Summer Festival, Hamburg, Festival Theaterformen, Hanover/Braunschweig, La Bâtie – Festival de Genève a.o.