FACE Contemporary Theater
FACE Contemporary Theater is a program of FACE Foundation in collaboration with the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States
FACE Foundation
FACE Foundation is an American nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting French-American relations through innovative cultural and educational projects. In partnership with the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the United States, FACE Foundation promotes artistic, literary and educational exchange and collaboration between creative professionals from both countries.

Laurent Auffret
Executive Director
Laurent.Auffret@face-foundation.org
Tel: +1 212-439-1439

Cultural Services of the French Embassy - Visual and Performing Arts Department
Nicole Birmann Bloom
Program Officer, Performing Arts
nicole.birmann@diplomatie.gouv.fr
Tel: +1 212-439-1444

FACE Foundation/French Embassy
972 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10075

Credits

Cover, Back Page & Page 7
Germinal – L’amicale de Production
© Alain Rico

Page 5
Unwanted – Dorothée Munyaneza
© Christophe Raynaud de Lage

Page 6
La mélancolie des dragons – Philippe Quesne © Marin Argyroglo

Page 8
Six personnages en quête d’auteur – Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota © JL Fernandez

Page 9
Kindertotenlieder – Gisèle Vienne
© Mathilde Darel

Page 10
Il n’est pas encore minuit – Cie XY

Page 11
Julius Caesar – Arthur Nauzyciel
© Frédéric Nauczyciel

Page 12
The New York Express Project
Vision Disturbance – Christina Masciotti – Richard Maxwell © Michael Schmelling

Page 13
Fore! Comédie de St. Etienne-CalArts
© Nicolas Marie

Page 14
L’immédiat – Camille Boitel
© Vincent Beaume

Page 15
While I Was Waiting – Omar Abussaada
© Christophe Raynaud de Lage
Presentation

FACE Contemporary Theater fosters innovative artistic collaborations and co-productions in theater, and contributes to a dynamic intercultural dialogue between France and the United States. It aims to encourage projects that push aesthetic boundaries and reflect the cultural and artistic diversity seen in theater today.

Created in 1999, the program is developed by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy and FACE Foundation, with the support of the Florence Gould Foundation, Institut français, the French Ministry of Culture, and private donors.

FACE Contemporary Theater supports the productions of contemporary playwrights, the residencies of directors and performers, and the presentation and touring of French productions in the United States and American productions in France. These projects include multidisciplinary and devised theater, young audience theater productions, contemporary circus, puppetry, and street theater.

The program has expanded beyond artists based in France and the United States to include projects by artists from Africa, the Caribbean, and the Middle East performing in the United States, as long as their work is co-produced by French cultural institutions. In this age of global mobility, the goal is to support artists with multifaceted backgrounds and influences, in order to promote a multiplicity of voices and foster a more varied intercultural dialogue.

Each project is intended to reach a wide audience and to engage communities as well as act as a launching pad for the featured artists.

Background

Since its creation, FACE Contemporary Theater has supported a total of 245 projects that include tours, residencies, and production. Both French and American artists funded by the program have achieved international recognition as a result of their time spent in either America or France.

These grants, totaling in $2,668,785 over the past 18 years, have supported projects at major institutions including the Public Theater, New York, the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis in the United States, and Le Maillon, Strasbourg, Théâtre Garonne, Toulouse, and Théâtre de Gennevilliers, in France. These projects have made possible the U.S. debuts of such renowned directors as Pascal Rambert, Arthur Nauzyciel, Gisèle Vienne, Emmanuel Demarcy Mota, and Philippe Quesne, promoted leading playwrights such as Michel Vinaver, Valère Novarina, and Koffi Kwahulé, and ensembles such as Compagnie XY, L'Amicale de Production, L'Immédiat-Camille Boitel. In France, FACE Contemporary Theater supported American directors and performers such as Richard Maxwell, Annie Dorsen, Basil Twist, and Okwui Okpokwasili, as well as the companies 600 HighwayMen and Nature Theater of Oklahoma.
Guidelines

Grants for Artistic Projects
FACE Contemporary Theater seeks to support French-American artistic collaborations and co-productions that help build productive partnerships between cultural organizations on both sides of the Atlantic. It also supports projects that explore aesthetic boundaries and reflect the cultural and artistic diversity of the French and American contemporary scenes.

Special attention is given to:

> Projects involving artists whose work has rarely been seen in the partner country

> French projects that are part of major festivals in the United States or in conjunction with important performing arts platforms such as APAP

> Projects involving artists with multifaceted backgrounds and influences, in order to promote a more varied intercultural dialogue

Regarding tours, priority is given to tours that include a minimum of 5 performances in a minimum of 2 cities.

Community engagement matters. FACE Contemporary Theater requests from applicant organizations a clear commitment to connections between artists and the public.

FACE Contemporary Theater doesn’t support productions of classical French repertory theater, nor theater publications.

Curatorial Grants
Each year, FACE Contemporary Theater offers grants to French or American curators and presenters wishing to explore the performing arts scene of the partner country. These grants are intended to expand the professional opportunities and networks of curators, encourage in-depth explorations of cultural resources, and provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and knowledge among artists, professionals, researchers, and institutions.
The Artistic Committee

The Artistic Committee is comprised of independent American and French professionals who specialize in performing arts. A Program Officer facilitates the operations and activities of the Artistic Committee and plays a vital role in assisting organizations to develop new projects, connect with potential partners, and evaluate the eligibility of their projects for support.

Past and Present Committee Members

Selection of Artists

Playwrights and Directors: Marion Aubert, Jalila Baccar, Jean-Pierre Baro, Camille Boitel, Philippe Boulay, Aurélien Bory, Benoit Bradel, Peter Brook, Olivier Cadiot, Robert Cantarella, Emmanuel Carrere, Marie-Vieux Chauvet, Maryse Condé, Marie Darrieussecq, Thierry de Peretti, Marguerite Duras, Armand Gatti, Jean-Claude Grumberg, Caroline Guilla Nguyen, Bernard-Marie Koltès, Joris Lacoste, Koffi Kwahulé, Jean-luc Lagarce, George Lavaudant, Erika Latta, Arnaud Meunier, Arthur Nauzyciel, David Levine, Doris Mirescu, Emmanuelle Marie, Richard Maxwell, Fabrice Melquiot, Wajdi Mouawad, Dorothée Munyaneza, Valère Novarina, Okwui Okpokwasili, José Pliya, Jean-François Peyret, Joël Pommerat, Olivier Py, Philippe Quesne, Pascal Rambert, Claude Regy, Daniel Safer, Andrew Schneider, Marion Schoevaert, James Thierrée, Basil Twist, Gisèle Vienne, Elise Vigier, Valery Warnotte

Collectives: L’Amicale de Production, Eldi Ildi, Compagnie XY, Superama, Big Dance Theater (Annie B Parson and Paul Lazar), Nature Theater of Oklahoma, 600Highwaymen, The Wooster Group
Selection of Organizations

Abrons Arts Center, New York, NY
Ann Arbor Summer Festival, Ann Arbor, MI
American Conservatory Theater, SF, CA
American Repertory Theater, Boston, MA
Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York, NY
Brooklyn Academy of Music, Brooklyn, NY
CalArts, Valencia, CA
Shakespeare Theater, Chicago, IL
Discovery Green Conservancy, Houston, TX
Ecole de la Comédie de St. Etienne
Parc de la Villette, Paris, France
Emory Theater-Emory U., Atlanta, GA
EMPAC, Troy, NY
French Institute Alliance Française, New York
Festival d’Automne à Paris, Paris, France
Festival d’Avignon, Avignon, France
Here Arts Center, New York, NY
Lark Play Development Center, New York, NY
Le Maillon, Strasbourg, France
Les Nouvelles Subsistances, Lyon, France
Le Quartz, Brest, France
Lincoln Center Festival, New York, NY
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL
New York Live Arts, New York, NY
New York Theater Workshop, New York, NY
NYU-Skirball Center for Performing Arts, NY
MAC Créteil, France
Manhattan Theater Club, New York, NY
On the Boards, Seattle, WA
Performa, New York, NY
Performance Space 122, Brooklyn, NY
Philadelphia Fringe Festival, PA
Portland Institute for Contemporary Art, OR
Princeton University, NJ
Silk Road Theater, Chicago, IL
Spoleto Festival USA, Charleston, SC
Stanford University, Palo Alto, CA
The Actors’ Gang, Culver City, CA
The Public Theater/UTR Festival, NY
The Kitchen, New York, NY
The New Victory Theater, New York, NY
Theatre Garonne, Toulouse
Théâtre de Gennevilliers – T2G, Gennevilliers
Théâtre Raymond Kabbaz, Los Angeles, CA
Théâtre de la Maronnette, Paris, France
University of Musical Society, Ann Arbor, MI
Wexner Art Center, Columbus, OH
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN
59E59 Theaters, New York, NY
Project Highlights

FACE Contemporary Theater has focused on adapting itself to the evolving performing arts scene by supporting not only text-based performances but also groundbreaking projects including contemporary circus and multidisciplinary theater. The selection of projects below reflects the diversity and richness of cultural and artistic exchange between the two countries. It also demonstrates how an artist or an ensemble has been supported through residencies and tours in the United States or France over the course of several years.


Portland Institute for Contemporary Art: September 15-17, 2017
Baryshnikov Arts Center, New York, NY: September 21-22, 2017

Rwanda-born Dorothée Munyaneza, currently based in France, explores the scars of history in her work. Following the New York presentation of Samedi Détente (Under the Radar 2016) which evoked Munyaneza’s personal memories and the generational wound of the genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda, Dorothée Munyaneza was invited by Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (PICA) and Baryshnikov Arts Center (BAC), New York, to develop her next creation Unwanted.

Unwanted examines the physical and mental repercussions of rape used as an instrument of war. Performed alongside the ethereal melodies of experimental musician Holland Andrews (Portland, OR), and created in collaboration with French composer Alain Mahé and South African visual artist Bruce Clarke, Unwanted draws from stories of women survivors to investigate how the female body holds, moves, and operates within the confines of a lived trauma.

“[Unwanted] its multiple levels are an important addition to our understanding of how art may relate what none of us long to know.” – Alastair Macaulay, The New York Times

On The Boards, Seattle, WA: September 10-12, 2015  
Portland Institute for Contemporary Art: September 17-18, 2015  
The Kitchen, New York, NY: January 10-14, 2017  
Wexner Center for the Arts – The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH: January 19-22, 2017  
The Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN: January 27-28, 2017

With an ingenious touch for reinventing the conventions of theater, Philippe Quesne brilliantly constructed *La mélancolie des dragons* into a work that celebrates the absurd and explores the profound joy of friendship.

While Quesne’s acclaimed production of *La mélancolie des Dragons* had toured internationally, it was the first time that such a wide network of presenters in the United States coordinated their effort to present the production on two separate occasions.

“A giggle-inducing work of crackpot charm...a marvel of gradual scenic escalation.” – Michael Upchurch, *The Seattle Times*
L’amicale de production / Halory Georger and Antoine Defoort: Germinal (2014 and 2016)

Portland Institute for Contemporary Art / Time Based Art Festival: September 18-19, 2014
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN: January 28-30, 2016

Two large tours of the show Germinal by the theater ensemble L’amicale de production-Halory Georger and Antoine Defoort, took place first in 2014 and then in 2016 in major contemporary arts institutions.

One of the most talked-about pieces in the international performance circuit in recent years, Germinal uses the theater as a whimsical metaphor for human civilization. With ingenious theater magic, four intrepid performers begin to construct the world from scratch and gleefully invent laws of physics, philosophy, music, language, and social interaction.

“In creating a world, they’ve created a play, a thing of rippling, radiant light to be savored before the darkness closes in once more.” – Ben Brantley, The New York Times
Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota / Théâtre de la Ville: Six Characters in Search of an Author (2014)

University of Musical Society (UMS), Ann Arbor, MI: October 24-25, 2014
Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Chicago, IL: October 15-19, 2014
Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), Brooklyn, NY: October 29-Nov 2, 2014
Cal Performances, Berkeley, CA: November 7-8, 2014

Built upon the success of the previous tour of Ionesco’s Rhinoceros, a large tour of the production of Pirandello’s Six Characters in Search of an Author directed by Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota took place in 2014 throughout the United States (Cal Performances, University Musical Society, and Brooklyn Academy of Music). Chicago Shakespeare Theater presented Ionesco Suite also directed by Emmanuel Demarcy-Mota. The tour reinforced partnership between major American performing arts centers and the prestigious Théâtre de la Ville, Paris.

“...Demarcy-Mota’s use of occasional shadows on a screen, brilliantly illuminated by lighting designer Yves Collet, effectively brought out Pirandello’s complex interrelationship of illusion and reality. This was gripping theatre at its very best.” – James Roy MacBean, Berkeley Daily Planet

Performance Space, New York: January 2010
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago: November 2015

After a noted debut with the solo project/creation Jerk in 2010 presented by Performance Space 122, New York and On The Boards, Seattle, puppeteer, choreographer and director Gisèle Vienne returned with two major works: Kindertotenlieder in 2014 at New York Live Arts, New York, then The Ventriloquists Convention at the Chicago Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in 2015. In December 2014, Vienne was named one of the top five choreographer-directors by The New York Times:

“A Surprising Year for Female Choreographers: ...Gisèle Vienne, a French-Austrian artist making her debut at New York Live Arts, conjured a spooky winter night in her harrowing Kindertotenlieder, in which a rock concert crossed paths with a funeral; it actually snowed. Dennis Cooper’s trenchant text provided the backdrop for 21st-century romanticism: delicate, bleak, uncanny. In her way, Ms. Vienne expanded the meaning of Butoh.” – Gia Kourlas, The New York Times
Compagnie XY: *Il n’est pas encore minuit* (2017)

In the performance *Il n’est pas encore minuit*, a collaboration with choreographer Loïc Touzé, the 22 acrobats of the ensemble known as Compagnie XY reflect on the ways in which humanity deals with instability and imbalance.

Compagnie XY toured twice in the United States, first in 2013, then in 2017. For the latest and so far the largest tour, two cultural organizations, Spoleto USA Festival, Charleston, SC and Discovery Green, Houston, TX, benefited from a grant by FACE Contemporary Theater with the goal to encourage them in bringing French artists to new audiences. The tour also included stops in Mexico, Montreal, Canada, and culminated in New York City.

The American Journey of Director Arthur Nauzyciel (1999-2011)

Starting in 1999, a long-term partnership with 7Stages, Atlanta, Emory University, and the French Cultural Services led to the residency of several French directors and the development of several Bernard-Marie Koltès’ productions in English interpreted by American actors: *Black Battles with Dogs*, then *Roberto Zucco*, both directed by Arthur Nauzyciel, at present Director of Théâtre National de Bretagne, Rennes; *Solitude in the cotton fields* directed by Eric Vignier; *The Day of Murders in the History of Hamlet* directed by Thierry de Peretti, Tabataba and *The Night just before the Forest* directed by Philip Boulay.

Since his experience in Atlanta, director Arthur Nauzyciel has formed an ensemble of American actors to develop several productions in English language: Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* (The production premiered at American Repertory Theater in 2008, toured France and abroad) and *Splendid’s* by Jean Genet (2014).
Koffi Kwahulé, Playwright (2004-2008)

Lark Play Development Center, New York, NY.

The international theater laboratory, Lark Play Development Center, NY commissioned English translations of several plays by Ivory Coast—and francophone—author and playwright Koffi Kwahulé. Staged readings of his plays were organized, such as *Misterioso* directed by Liesl Tommy at The Berkshire Theatre Festival in summer 2005 (*Act French festival*), and then at New York Theater Workshop and the Lark Studio (fall 2005).

These commissions resulted in the publication of Kwahulé’s *Anthology of Seven Plays: In and out of Africa* (Judith G. Miller, Editor; Chantal Bilodeau, Translator) by Press University of Michigan (2017).


T2G – National Dramatic Center for Contemporary Creation, Gennevilliers
Theatre Garonne, Toulouse
Le Maillon, Scene Européenne, Strasbourg

In association with the New York based organization Performance Space 122, three French theaters, T2G – National Dramatic Center for Contemporary Creation, Gennevilliers, Theatre Garonne, Toulouse, and Le Maillon, Scene Européenne, Strasbourg, presented the New York Express Project that introduced emerging and mid-career American theater artists to French audiences. The first series took place during Spring 2014 with *Seagull (Thinking of you)* by Tina Satter-Half Straddle Company, *Vision Disturbance* by Christina Masciotti directed by Richard Maxwell, and *Bronx Gothic* by Okwui Okpokwasili. The second season in 2015 featured *Youarenowhere* by Andrew Schneider and *Yesterday Tomorrow* by Annie Dorsen.
Fore! Written by Aleshea Harris, directed by Arnaud Meunier (2014-2016)

Comédie de St. Etienne and California Institute for the Arts-Center for New Performance (CalArts-CNP) : Spring and fall 2017 in the United States; tour in France in winter 2018

CalArts Center for New Performance (CNP) teams up with La Comédie de Saint-Étienne for the French-American theatrical co-production of Fore! The play is directed by Arnaud Meunier, La Comédie de Saint-Étienne, and is written by CalArts faculty and alumna Aleshea Harris. The production culminates a two-year-long collaboration process that has brought ten CalArts actors and artists together with actors from France. Fore! will premiere at La Comédie de Saint-Étienne, National Drama Center in France in February 2018 with additional stops at Théâtre de la Ville, Paris, and at The National Theatre, Brussels. Modeled after the classical Greek tragedy *The Oresteia*, *Fore!* traces the struggles of two contemporary families as they attempt to navigate their relationships to war, power, and disenfranchisement.
Camille Boitel: *L’immédiat* (2016)

NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts, New York: March 9-13, 2016

NYU Skirball Center for the Performing Arts presented the U.S. premiere of the critically acclaimed performance *L’immédiat* by artist, actor, and acrobat Camille Boitel.

*L’immédiat* was part of the first edition of TILTKIDS, a festival for young audience and families, initiated and organized by the Cultural Services of the French Embassy and FIAF (French Institute Alliance Française) in New York in partnership with several cultural institutions.

In sixty minutes of circus-theater chaos, seven young acrobat-adventurers defy a whirlwind of unstable forces with optimism, dark humor, and breathtaking physical skills. *L’immédiat* is a tumultuous visual commentary on the uncertainty and mayhem of modern times.

Camille Boitel develops projects at the intersection of circus, magic, and contortion, creating a theater of objects and movement.

“Occasionally reminiscent of Buster Keaton or Jackie Gleason’s “Poor Soul,” the near-silent performers communicate the shrug that can be life. For a full hour their efforts are Sisyphean. In *L’immédiat*, both gravity and levitation are futilely defied.” – Lauren Gallagher, *DanceTabs*
Playwright Mohammad Al Attar and director Omar Abusaada: *While I Was Waiting* (2017)

**Lincoln Center festival: July 19-22, 2017**

Digging into the story of one middle-class Damascus family, the celebrated Syrian team of playwright Mohammad Al Attar and director Omar Abusaada presented by The Lincoln Center Festival offered a gripping portrait of a country trapped in a gray area between hope and despair.

Brutally beaten at a checkpoint, 30-year-old Taim is admitted to the hospital in a coma. As his loved ones gather around him, they must face a reality defined by uncertainty and absence. What happened to Taim? How has their vibrant, modern city become so strange and cruel? Unable to communicate, Taim lingers on the stage, an observer and commentator, as long-buried secrets and complicated relationships are revealed. Inspired by a true story, the play weaves together different layers of consciousness, humanizing the situation in Syria and collapsing the distance between the Syrian people and the rest of the world.

*While I Was Waiting* is a co-production of several European institutions such as Festival d’Avignon, Napoli Teatro Festival, AFAC Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, Pôle Arts de la scène - Friche La Belle de Mai (Marseille), Theater Spektakel (Zürich), Onassis Cultural Centre (Athènes), Vooruit (Gent), La Bâtie Festival de Genève, Les Bancs publics (Marseille), Festival d’Automne à Paris, and more.

“You have to believe that theater is worth a lot if people are willing to risk so much to make it. (...) Taim seems to have succumbed to an ideology of hopelessness that Mr. Al Attar and the company of his play have survived. In doing so, they have given new life to the idea of political theater by showing us how it may look a lot like domestic drama, as seen from above.” – Jesse Green, *The New York Times*
Ministère de la Culture
The French Ministry of Culture aims to make the major works of humanity—and especially those of France—accessible to the largest number of people possible. As such, it maintains a policy of conservation, protection, and development of all components of French cultural heritage. It promotes the creation of works of art and of the mind, and the development of art practices and education. It further contributes to cultural initiatives outside of France and to initiatives relating to the establishment of French cultural programs throughout the world.

Cultural Services of the French Embassy in the U.S.
The Cultural Services of the French Embassy promotes the best of French arts, literature, cinema, language, and higher education across the US. Based in New York City, Washington D.C and eight other cities across the country, the French Cultural Services brings artists, authors, educational and university programs to cities nationwide. It also builds partnership between French and American artists, institutions, and universities on both sides of the Atlantic. In New York, through its bookshop Albertine, it fosters French American exchange around literature and the arts.

www.frenchculture.org

Institut français
The Institut français, under the aegis of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture, actively contributes to France’s soft power. Its projects and programs take local contexts into account and can be successfully implemented thanks to the vast network of the French Embassies’ cultural services, as well as the many Instituts français and Alliances françaises present across five continents. In the field of performing arts, the Institut français provides support for the international promotion and circulation of artists, in order to facilitate their access to new audiences and to support their international development. It offers expert advice, artistic recommendations for foreign professionals and the French cultural network abroad, consultancy and financial grants for the artists and their environment. Finally, in close relationship with French cultural network abroad, it helps to connect artists and professionals in the performing arts.

Florence Gould Foundation
The Florence Gould Foundation, an American foundation devoted to French-American exchange and amity, has consistently provided major support to FACE Contemporary Theater since its founding. Born of French parents in San Francisco in 1895, Florence Gould lived both in the United States and France during her life, which was shaped by an interest in and dedication to arts and letters. Having no heirs, at her death in 1993, Florence Gould left the bulk of her fortune to the foundation bearing her name.