

An attempt to overcome chaos using dance
as an expression. A poetic and collective transformation
on a wax landscape-table with tea, water, plants,
earth and porcelain.

INFUSE & HORTENSE

or *Les gestes déplacés d'une cérémonie du thé*
Choreographic pieces by Catherine Contour



Infuse is a choreographed piece

inspired by the “spirit of tea” and the gestures used in its preparation, gathered from different cultures and particularly from Japan. These displaced gestures are an invitation to a shared experience of time.

An experience that questions the ways in which we live together in changing environments.

It unfolds around a wax *landscape-table*, designed and created in close collaboration with the designer Goliath Dyèvre, and includes porcelain *elbow-bowls*, made with the help of ceramists Catherine Métas and Lionel Rister.

Preparing a bowl of tea as a dance/Sharing

a dance as a bowl of tea. In a delicate tea room, a dancer prepares tea and offers it to each member of a small seated gathering. Her repeated gestures amplify, suspend, give rhythm to and sculpt the space, an invitation to awaken all the senses and to come “back to our bodies” in the same way we come “back to the land”. It is a way of poetically inhabiting an interval, a moment in time where one takes the time, the time it takes for tea to infuse. It is a motionless journey, internal and external, real and imaginary, with each element present. The actions and music gradually transform the space and immerse us in a hypnotic drift leeway. Water overflows; landscapes are created and transformed, whilst evoking the scene that is playing out on the scale of the “planetary garden”. *Infuse* echoes the formula that the Japanese associate with the art of tea: “Ichi-go ichi-e”: “Once, an encounter”. Dance, like the art of tea, creates a temporary community and offers an aesthetic experience that resonates with the vital issues of our time. The choreography unfolds from

these simple gestures: giving and receiving a bowl of tea; with bowls moulded onto the elbows—a symbol for the Australian aborigines of the connection between elements. The stacked bowls form the backbone of a fragile common body, delicately placed in a landscape into which it gradually merges.

Infuse exists in different versions, one of which is *Hortense* (Franco-Japanese version):

As a solo

Catherine Contour and an assistant.

As a duet

Catherine Contour, a musician:
Bertrand Gauguet (alto saxophone)
and an assistant.

As a trio

Catherine Contour, two musicians,
including Bertrand Gauguet and
an assistant.

The Franco-Japanese version entitled *Hortense* with musicians Bertrand Gauguet and Ko Ishikawa (Sho player) will be performed at the Dazaifu shrine near Fukuoka in November 2020 and in Grenoble, France in April 2021.

As a quartet, a quintet etc.

Catherine Contour, one or two musicians,
including Bertrand Gauguet, one or more
dancers and an assistant.

In this version, the dancers connect with each of the participants by bringing them a bowl of tea. Then, as an extension of the tea choreography, a dance called *Danser Brut* (a process developed by Catherine Contour with a group of artists using the hypnotic technique) is performed.

The video film *Hortense/Dazaifu*

A solo by Catherine Contour in a traditional teahouse in Dazaifu (Japan) in July 2018. Running time: 30 minutes. This film can be screened as a single session or continuously in an installation including the landscape-table and other elements. Depending on the location, the choreographic piece can potentially be performed there.

“In my hands, I hold a bowl of tea; I see the whole of nature represented in its green. Closing my eyes, I discover green mountains and pure water...
By taking a bowl of tea, a feeling of peaceful fulfilment can be shared and lay the foundation for a way of life.”

Vie du thé, esprit du thé, Soshitsu Sen (Editor: Jean-Cyrille Godefroy, 1983).

Catherine Contour

A graduate of the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs de Paris in Scenography, Catherine Contour trained in contemporary dance in the boom of the 80s in Paris and New York. She explores the body, the poetics of gesture and devices for creating relationships by weaving subtle links with places. Her work has a strong research and transmission dimension. She collaborates with artists from various backgrounds and founded *Maison Contour*: an artisanal and tailor-made artistic trademark.

For the past fifteen years, she has been exploring the artistic and educational possibilities of the hypnotic technique, with the support of the Centre National de la Danse in 2011, the Gaîté Lyrique in Paris in 2014 and, since 2016, the DRAC Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes for the nomadic *Bains* laboratory, which brings together artists and research-professors. Recipient of a Fondation Beaumarchais grant, she also received a grant from the Institut Français in 2014 (*Hors les Murs* programme) and then in 2018 (IF/City of Grenoble) for stays in Japan, a country with which she maintains a fruitful dialogue.

From dance to gardens, from the art of the nap to the tea ceremony, from photography to ceramics, from film to hypnosis, she transforms these experiences into objects or “rituals” offering a shift towards fantasy and imagination. Her site-specific pieces (*Autoportraits*, *Plages*, *Plongées*, *Infusions*, *Danser brut*) increase one’s presence in the world through choreographic forms and ways of coming together.

maisoncontour.org



Catherine Contour in residence in Dazaifu, 2018. Photo: Niels Najean



Infuse in Une plage en Chartreuse—Suites japonaises, 2019.
Photo: Philippe Bissières



Infuse in Une plage en Chartreuse—Suites japonaises, 2019.
Photo: Philippe Bissières

The *landscape table* with Goliath Dyèvre.

The collaboration between the choreographer and designer has been ongoing since they met in Kyoto in 2014, where they both received grants from the French Institute. They are both sensitive to the qualities of the spaces and objects of Japanese culture, share a questioning of the ecology of their practice, based on gestures that take the time to immerse themselves in “what is there” (materials and know-how). The landscape-table is the central element of a gathering device for *Infuse*.

A prototype in black wax was made in 2016, then the three-part table was finalized in 2019 along with the Barthélémy Art Foundry (3D wax print reworked by hand). Other original elements will complete it including a teapot.

“The tea preparation surface is precise. Each space is dedicated to a gesture, a moment. Each function becomes a river, a hill, a mountain... We have designed tea surfaces in wax, a material rarely used in furniture, which evokes fragility. Wax can melt, the table disappears, let’s drink tea!” Goliath Dyèvre, 2018.

Goliath Dyèvre

Goliath Dyèvre graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure de Création Industrielle in Paris in 2009, the year he founded his design studio with Quentin Vaultot. Winner of various prizes and competitions, his work has been exhibited at the Vitra Design Museum, the Power Station of Art in Shanghai and the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. He regularly collaborates with Hermès, EDF, the Musée de la Chasse et de la Nature in Paris and carries out research projects, in particular with the CRAFT in Limoges, France. He began a solo career after a four-month residency at the Villa Kujoyama in Kyoto in 2014. He was awarded a residency of the Te-Ataata program in New Zealand at the Auckland Colab in 2016 for research on augmented reality with the artist Grégory Chatonsky.

goliathdyevre.com

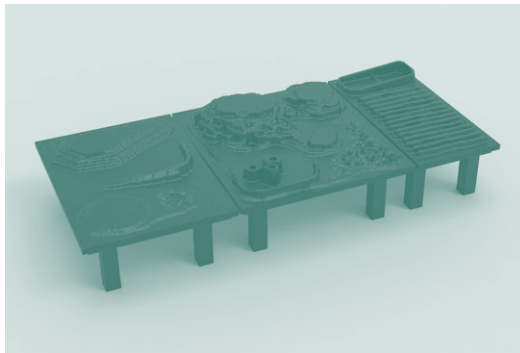


Table-paysage. Visual: Goliath Dyèvre

The *Elbow-Bowls* with Catherine Métas and Lionel Rister.

Catherine Contour believes that there is a close tie between dance and ceramics, and that the bowl encapsulates this expression. Her interest in this object led her to the Cité de la Céramique in Sèvres, where she was struck by the discovery of the *breast-bowl* (or *nipple bowl*), the manufacture of which has been going on since Louis 16th commissioned it for Marie-Antoinette. It is a fascinating and timeless object in its pure design, which can only correctly be dated through its stand. Without this stand, the bowl cannot remain upright and, due to its shape, has to be cupped in both hands.

Several residencies at the Manufacture and its museum (between 2011 and 2015) interspersed with stays in Japan led to a desire for a choreography involving bowls and tea preparation gestures. *Gestures displaced* geographically, culturally but also from their initial function; *gestures displaced* by their capacity to amplify the sensoriality and stimulate a body imaginary. The ceramist Catherine Métas suggested the idea of *elbow bowls*, inspired by the Australian aborigines for whom the elbow denotes a connection between things and relates to dance.



Bols-coudes. Photo: Catherine Contour

Sound and music with Bertrand Gauguet.

Catherine Contour and Bertrand Gauguet combine the notions of *listening* and *improvisation*. They become invested in the relationship to a specific place and the present moment, playing on tiny variations in the components of sound and on the distortion of perceptions. Using long breaths, Bertrand Gauguet produces sounds that move slowly on the harmonic scale. The landscape-table, the actions that unfold there, the voice, the lights and sounds of the place are all gateways into this open score. They have a common desire to collaborate with actors from various fields and nurture a strong bond with Japan. They have stayed there on various occasions, she, learning the art of tea and Kagura and he, the music of Honkyoku. This is how he met a traditional musician from Gagaku: Ko Ishikawa, a Sho player, open to inter-cultural encounters, and internationally recognized in the field of experimental new music.

For *Hortense*, they aim to combine their approaches to generate *mirroring* patterns that are an invitation to meditative listening and to create music using their breaths that echo gestures and landscapes. Sounds slowly transform and shape climates, in the same way clouds do.

Bertrand Gauguet

Bertrand Gauguet plays the alto saxophone in new music improvisation solo or collective contexts. He also composes electronic music and has produced many original pieces and soundtracks for dance, film and radio. His work explores the relationship between music and non-music, acoustic phenomena and sound as a medium for meditation. His discography to date includes some fifteen albums released by European labels. He was awarded a residency at the Villa Kujoyama in Kyoto in 2011. He teaches sound practices at the Ensad School in Paris.

bertrandgauguet.com



Hortense/Dazaifu, residence, 2018. Photo: Niels Najean



Table-paysage, 2019. Photo: Catherine Contour

The space

A non-staged space, inside or outside, quiet and with good acoustics.

Running time

Between 50 and 70 minutes depending on the number of people present—90 minutes with *Danser Brut*.

Participant capacity

Maximum 45/50 people per session

Implementation stages

Location scouting by Catherine Contour

Preparation time on site in the chosen space: at least one full day before the performance for solo and duet/from 2 to 4 days for trio and more.

On the day of the performance: exclusive use of the venue with no presence other than the artistic team.

Personnel required

A technician for the light and sound installation depending on the specific needs of the site.

An assistant for the preparation of the space, cleaning between and after the sessions and, in some cases, for the distribution of bowls. For *Hortense*: Misa Ishibashi, who is also a translator.

Equipment required

A—performance space

Seating (chairs, benches, cushions etc.) depending on seating capacity

On the floor (if necessary depending on its quality) a waterproof protective cover: thin plastic sheeting and/or absorbent mat to be defined together: approx. 180×200 cm

Spot lighting for the table and surroundings (to be specified according to the location)

Soft and warm general atmosphere (modular lighting if possible)

B—close by

A quiet room with running water (with a washing area for bowls if necessary)

2×kettles (to heat water on site)

2×basins

1×tray for transporting objects

Sound

(non-exhaustive list to be specified)

For musicians: piano stools

(type K&M 14093 Piano Stool)

For the delivery of ambient sound

(if this option is selected):

2×Genelec speakers (type 8020 DPM)

2×speaker stands (type K&M 260/1)

1×small mixing console

(type Yamaha MG10)

1×cable to connect a computer

(3.5mm 1M to Double 6.35mm 2M)

1×full cabling set (with very long cables)

A few milestones

Solo performances and in conversation

2019



Infuse Bosmelet—Suites japonaises or *Les gestes déplacés d'une cérémonie du thé* at the château de Bosmelet during the Diep-Haven festival.

Catherine Contour. Photo: Sophie Larger

2018



Infuse and the Mousses installation, a house of fantasy—*Suites japonaises*, at the Maison de l'International in Grenoble

Catherine Contour with Misa Ishibashi (wardrobe and assistant). Photo: Niels Najean

2017



Dialogue en infusion at the Magasin des Horizons in Grenoble for Slow is beautiful

Catherine Contour in conversation with Antoine Depaulis (neuro-researcher). Photo: Camille Olivier

Duet with a dancer

2016



Infuse—Une Plongée au Parc Jean-Jacques Rousseau in Ermenonville

Catherine Contour with Nina Santes. Photo: Laurent Paillier

Duet with a musician

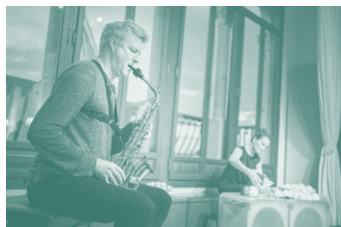
2018



Infuse—Suites japonaises or *Les gestes déplacés d'une cérémonie du thé* in Cognac in the city park's orangerie with l'Avant-Scène.

Catherine Contour with Bertrand Gauguier (alto saxophone and sound reinforcement) and Loren Capelli (drawing and assistant). Photo: Samuele Cherubini

2019



Infuse à Venise at the Palazzo Trevisan for the Swiss Salon "Slow" as part of the Biennale d'Art Contemporain.

Catherine Contour with Bertrand Gauguier (alto saxophone and sound reinforcement) and Misa Ishibashi (assistant). Photo: Samuele Cherubini

With dancers and a musician

2018



Infuse a sequence in Bain de minuit at the Dôme theater in Albertville

Catherine Contour with Marie Fonte, Jonathan Schatz (dance and readings) Sonia Delbost-Henry, Nina Santes (dance). Photo: Niels Najean

2019



Infuse a sequence in Une Plage en Chartreuse—Suites japonaises in the Chartreuse mountains with le Pacifique—CDCN de Grenoble and the CCN2

Catherine Contour with Bertrand Gauguier (alto saxophone), Marie Fonte, Alexandre da Silva, Sonia Delbost-Henry, Marie-Lise Naud, Marie Papon, Jonathan Schatz (dance). Photo: Philippe Bissières

In Japan

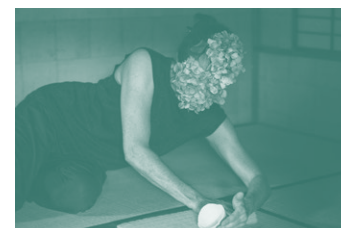
2014



Autoportrait en 1 morceau at the Kyoto Art Center

Avec Yuki Nakagawa (cello). Image from a video screenshot for the Kyoto Art Center

2018



Hortense/Dazaifu at the Dazaifu sanctuary: art residence and film's making

Catherine Contour with Niels Najean (photo) and Misa Ishibashi (translation). Photo: Niels Najean

2018

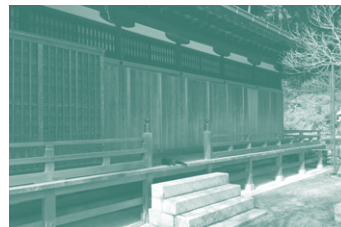


Infuse—Black Tea at Urbanguild in Kyoto

Catherine Contour with Ryotaro Sudo (amplified accordion and translation). Photo: Niels Najean

In Japan (upcoming creation)

2020



Hortense/Dazaifu at the Dazaifu sanctuary

Catherine Contour avec Bertrand Gauguier (alto saxophone and sound reinforcement) and Ko Ishikawa (Japanese mouth organ). Photos: Catherine Contour



Catherine Contour

Contact: cc@maisoncontour.org

Website: maisoncontour.org

New site under construction for spring 2020

Reading list (in French): *Une Plongée avec Catherine Contour. Créer avec l'outil hypnotique*, Naïca éditions, 2017.

Danser sa vie avec l'outil hypnotique, Collection manuels, 369 éditions, 2019.

To watch: films on Vimeo

Association 40Neuf

Contact: admin@40neuf.fr

Élise Viard, administration

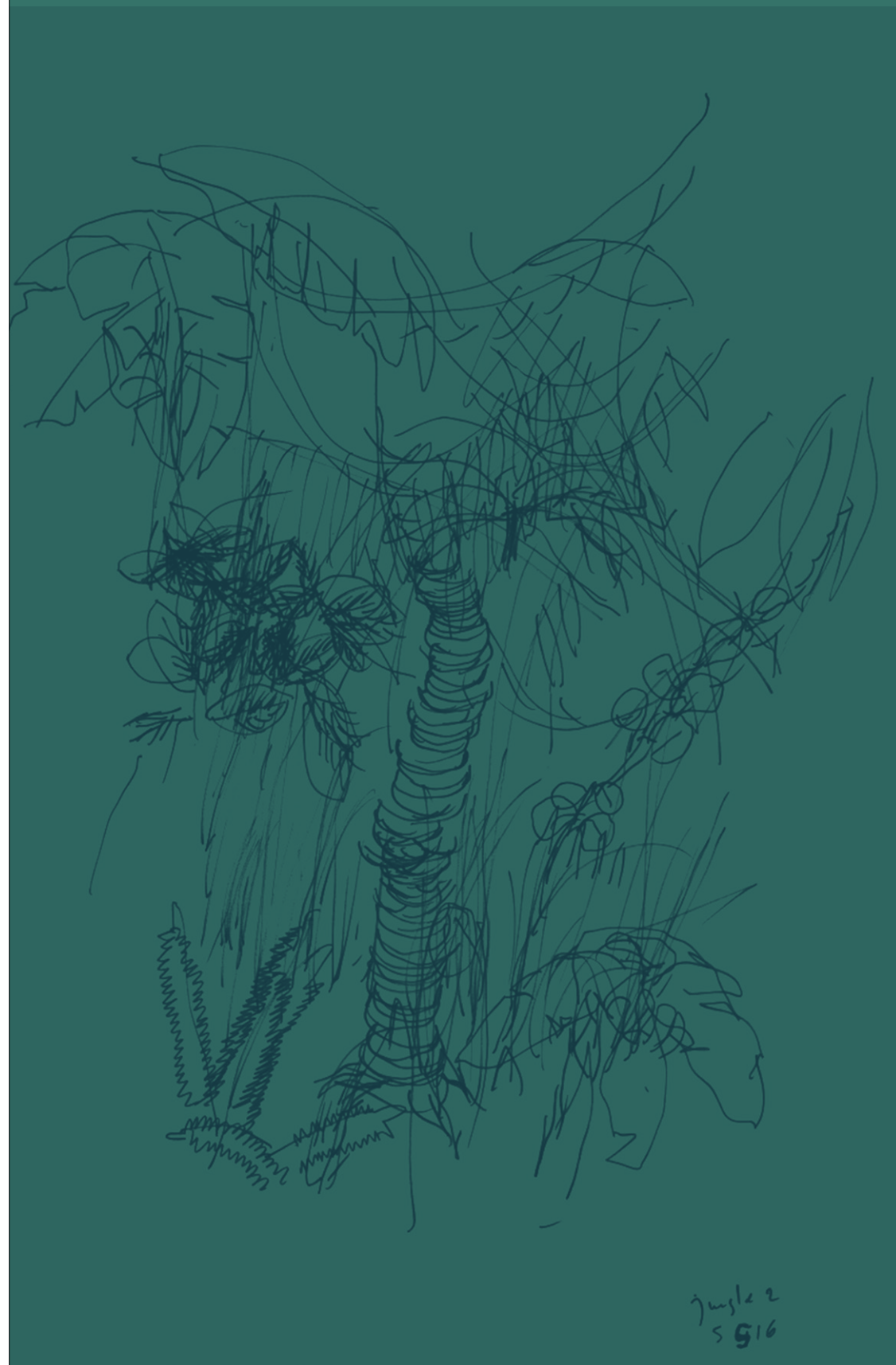
Founded in 2016 in Grenoble, France, its aim is to “broaden the field of dance and share knowledge through creation, research and transmission”.

Crédits

Inside front cover: *Infuse* in Bosmelet, 2019. Photo: Sophie Larger

Inside back cover: ©Loren Capelli, 2016

Graphic design: Lisa Sturacci with Clément Wibaut



“Delicacy is an art of presence. It can arise from an almost ritualized situation. This is the case with the preparation of tea, which Catherine Contour is so interested in and which she transposes to public situations. During the Plongée n°5 at the Gaîté Lyrique (2014), while my lecture unfolds like an accompanied self-portrait, she prepares a cup of tea for each of the guests identified by a few words they will have left beforehand on a card that has been handed out to them. These words are followed by gestures and a cup of tea. We feel time stretching.

According to Barthes, the preparation of tea in Japan is based on the ‘principle of delicacy’¹, where meticulousness, discretion, gentleness of subjectivation are associated with language through the use of metaphor. Barthes reminds us that tea leaves are ‘metaphorized with intoxication’: they unfold like the mist rising from a ravine or shine like a lake touched by the zephyr. The delicacy thus linked to language associates tea and landscape. Catherine Contour likes to recall the link between tea and foam and moss. This is how delicacy links gesture, bather and landscape.”² Julie Perrin

1. Roland Barthes, *Le Neutre* (1977–1978), Seuil, 2002.

2. An initial version of this text was published in *Recherches en danse*, with the title: « Face aux *Autoportraits* de Catherine Contour. Ou la délicatesse d’une situation » [danse.revues.org/827].