

ASPIRATOR

MÉLISSA VON VÉPY // PREMIERE 2025

Mélissa Von Vépy
// Cie Happés

[November 18, 2026]

ASPIRATOR

A metaphysical play for two clown-acrobats, a pile of dust, and a voracious vacuum cleaner

Premiere: October 2025 at the Théâtre de Nîmes

Show for young audiences ages 6 and up ▪ The show is 50 minutes long

Concept and Direction: **Mélissa Von Vépy**
Created with and performed by: **Olivier Bovet** et **Mélissa Von Vépy** and (behind the scenes) **Cédric Cambon**
Set Design: **Neil Price**
Stage manager, Sound and Electronics Design: **Cédric Cambon**
Sound: **Jean-Damien Ratel**
Lighting and Stage Management: **Sabine Charreire**
Costumes and Set Design: **Emmanuelle Grobet**
Artistic Advisor: **Pascale Henry**
Artistic Consultants: **Julia Christ** et **Sumako Koseki**
Booking: **Hélène Chenelot**

PARTNERS

Co-productions
Culture Commune, National Theater of the Pas-de-Calais Mining Basin
Le Prato, National Circus Center, Lille
Circa, National Circus Center, Auch – Gers – Occitanie
Théâtre de la Mouche, Saint-Genis-Laval
Les UtoPistes / Association for the Development of an International City of Circus Arts – Lyon Métropole
Points Communs, New National Theater of Cergy-Pontoise / Val d'Oise
Théâtre de Nîmes
La Mégisserie, Saint-Junien
La Verrerie d'Alès, National Circus Center of Occitanie
Territoires de Cirque

Residency Grants
Le Sirque, National Circus Center of Nexon | Nouvelle-Aquitaine

Creation Grants
Erasmus+ Learning Residency

Public Grants
DRAC Formal agreement - Occitanie; Creation Grant – Occitanie Region

The Cie Happés // Mélissa Von Vépy is Franco-Swiss.
Based in Aigues-Vives (Gard) and Geneva, she receives funding from the Ministry of Culture – DRAC Occitanie.

MINISTÈRE DE LA CULTURE
Liberté
Égalité
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La Région Occitanie
Pyrénées - Méditerranée

Territoires de cirque

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ARTIST'S STATEMENT

Dust falls, forming a large pile that spreads out into a vast gray area.
Consider the ground (the surface where it settles) and the sky (where it swirls).
Consider the gray of the dust set against bright colors.

To evoke dust—which is nothing other than the disintegration and fragmentation of matter—is to focus on the minute, the almost invisible to the naked eye.
Finally, sometimes we do find large clouds (or wisps) of dust.
These "remnants" of Time are unsettling; they remind us of It.

Yet it is a natural process; Time is doing its work.
Rather than dirt, dust deposited as a mark of Time is Time itself, now past.
Gray has taken over this matter, which invites us to dream about its origin;
What being, what thing was it before it crumbled like this?

The floating dust that reveals itself and dances in a beam of light has always had a strange effect on me; we are constantly moving through these billions of tiny particles;
Dust mites, a bit of the Sahara, a pinch of meteorites, a handful of hair, fabric fibers, dandruff, pollen…

…Skin flakes?! These tiny flakes of dead skin that shed on their own and renew themselves every 3–4 weeks show that there's a little bit of us in this everyday dust.
And this endless cycle of renewal and transformation—this decomposition of all these materials, which travel through the air, settle, interact with, and nourish other things—isn't this our own cycle, and more broadly, that of all living things?

The vacuum cleaner comes into play;

It's an industrial model—nothing special. It does the job, sucking up the matter that magically disappears.
Well, not quite…

Like an animal constantly digging through the ground for food, it almost comes to life.
What if, by constantly sucking and swallowing, it became increasingly threatening—a kind of voracious, uncontrollable beast, wiping out everything in its path?

Has everything really “disappeared”?
What if we were to look inside its stomach-like bag…
What if this material—despicable dust—once digested, became a treasure?

Like a cobra rearing up, it dances; it sings, too; its suction sound spiraling into high-pitched notes with the accents of a diva.

Clinging to the suction mouth, we might be swept away, lifted to the heights, where the dust swirling around becomes stardust, where the suction takes on the supreme dimension of a black hole.
Until we’re swallowed whole, until we disappear…

But no, it’s not time yet!
You don’t just turn into dust like that, in the blink of an eye.
Come back in 1,000 years, you monster !

On stage, blending in with the scattered dust, two beings—naive clowns—seem to have lost all sense of time.
Clearing a path with their vacuum cleaner, they soon find themselves confronted by its voracity, imbuing it with a living, animal-like character that grows increasingly threatening. Overwhelmed, they struggle, question themselves, feint, flee, and try to tame THE THING.
Playing on the absurdity of this “down-to-earth” metaphor, we explore—with the precious distance provided by humor—this primal fear of being swallowed up, of disappearing, of losing.

Drawing on the symbolic dimension of fairy tales and the acrobatic, aerial world of the circus, this play straddles the line between theater and object theater.

Mélissa Von Vépy
November 28, 2025



Tomi Ungerer // *Leaving Myself behind*

PRESSE

sceneweb.fr
l'actualité du spectacle vivant

With «**Aspirator**», Franco-Swiss circus artist Mélissa Von Vépy showcases her virtuosity in blending theatricality with aerial work.

As if they had fallen to the bottom of an hourglass, a decrepit queen and king play chess, half-buried under a mound of sand. They seem to be waiting for time to pass—or perhaps for it to end. From the very first image, we recognize the signature style of Mélissa Von Vépy, who has been exploring aerial art for nearly 25 years—a pursuit that has led her to create stage setups that are often one-of-a-kind. Here, she is joined by Olivier Bovet and Cédric Cambon (behind the scenes) to present a show for young audiences of great finesse, with its premiere performances taking place at the CIRCa Festival in Auch. Mélissa Von Vépy's works generally shine with their metaphysical poetry. Here, then, it is intriguing to see the staging centered around an object as mundane as a… vacuum cleaner. But the circus artist and her company brilliantly set out to reinterpret the form of the fairy tale, blending object theater with subtle aerial work.
For this is indeed the end of a reign. Dusty and ponderous, the king and queen seem weighed down, and every movement is a struggle for them. Their boredom will soon be interrupted by the arrival of a third character: a vacuum cleaner. The two companions set out to explore all the possibilities this new friend has to offer. Sometimes it's a paintbrush for creating shapes in the sand; other times, a mount to ride across the stage… Soon,





the object is no longer content to be pushed, pulled, or hauled around—it comes to life on its own. It then transforms into a playful dog, chases after a ball, and even becomes endearing. But this is a ruse, of course, for the machine will inevitably break free from its masters. Now independent of its hose and wheels, the creature grows increasingly menacing, even swallowing the king and queen's costumes. A chivalrous chase ensues, culminating in the air, balanced on the vacuum cleaner's handle. Once defeated, the machine is dismantled and becomes a veritable treasure chest, its open belly brimming with secrets and surprises.

The promised aerial work is a long time coming—since most of the show takes place on the ground—but the finale is worth the wait and showcases the company's remarkable technical prowess. In a choreography as precise as it is daring, the queen, stripped of her costume, is sucked away from the ground. The machine's nozzle then becomes the rope that keeps her from falling, and later the trapeze on which she performs. In a celestial ballet, the king, the queen, and the vacuum cleaner—which has become a sort of extraterrestrial friend leading them on a space journey—end up in the air, each serving as a counterweight to the other. Dust, initially a pragmatic symbol of the passage of time, then becomes a cosmic element. The company presents a primarily theatrical, almost clown-like work here, whose precision and striking visual impact are fueled by magic—costumes vanish, a sandcastle appears—which in turn enhances the technical performance. By doing less to suggest more, the company proves that it knows how to evolve its circus and explore new registers by offering a form that is as intelligent as it is poetic.

Fanny Imbert ■ **www.sceneweb.fr** ■ October 19, 2025

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TEAM



MÉLISSA VON VÉPY // CIE HAPPÉS • Concept - Performance

Born in Geneva in 1979, she began her circus training at the age of 5 and later enrolled at the CNAC, from which she graduated in 1999 as a trapeze artist.
Through her company, Happés, she creates performances that blend her work in aerial arts, dance, and theater.
The set designs she creates are an integral part of the dramaturgy of her pieces, which are always grounded in aerial expression: the physical and inner dimensions of Gravity.
Together with her long-time artistic collaborators—Sabine Charreire, Julia Christ, Emmanuelle Grobet, Sumako Koseki, Stéphan Oliva, Neil Price, Jean-Damien Ratel, and others—Mélissa Von Vépy has been exploring, for some twenty years, the infinite metaphors of our vertical movements.

PREVIOUS SHOWS:

2025: ***Aspirator*** (duo) Premiere in October 2025
2023: ***Piano Rubato*** (duo)
2021: ***Les Flyings*** (quintet)
2018: ***Noir M1*** (solo)
2017: ***L'Aérien***, a talk-and-flight performance (solo)
2015: ***J'ai horreur du printemps*** (concert-performance with a jazz quartet)
2013: ***VieLLeicht*** (solo)
2009: ***Miroir, Miroir*** (duo for mirror and piano)
2009: ***Dans la gueule du ciel*** (duo)
2007: ***Croc*** (solo, co-directed by C. Ikeda)

Co-directed with Chloé Moglia:
2007: ***En suspens*** (quintet, co-directed by C. Moglia)
2005: ***I look up, I look down...*** (duo) / SACD Circus Art Award – 2007
2003: ***Temps Troubles*** (trio)
2001: ***Un certain endroit du ventre*** (duo)

AS A PERFORMER

«Talk Show» (2017) by Gaël Santisteva, «Ce qui n'a pas de nom» (2015) by Pascale Henry, «Hans was Heiri» (2012) by Zimmermann & de Perrot, «UCHUU-cabaret» (2008) by Carlotta Ikeda, «Les Sublimes» (2003) by Guy Alloucherie.

EDUCATION AND ARTISTIC ADVISOR

Mélissa Von Vépy regularly leads workshops and master classes on aerial arts and is invited to serve as a collaborator and artistic advisor by several companies.
She co-directed «**Plonger**» (premiered in December 2023) by Sarah Devaux / Cie Menteuses, as part of her mentorship program with Cie Happés.



OLIVIER BOVET • Performer

Self-taught, he has trained through numerous workshops covering a wide and varied range of disciplines. (Clown with Michel Dallaire, Christophe Tellier, Emmanuel Sembely, Cahin-caha; butoh with Sumako Koseki…)
From 1994 to 2008, he worked with Cie Les sardines grillées (circus and street art). As a performer, he has worked notably with Cie Théâtre embarque, Aventures Anonymes (as an actor), and with the Impact company (as a dancer).
In 2008, Olivier Bovet founded Compagnie à tiroirs, where he developed his relationship with objects; he created and performed three solo shows: «Béron à tous les étages» (a solo piece about clumsiness), «C'est pas commode» (a poetic duet for a clown and his dresser), and «Portes!» (a giant animated origami installation).
In 2020, he joined the Easy to Digest Company for «Le magasin des suicides», a puppet circus.
At the same time, he continued his work in dance and poetic performances, notably with the Mot pour Mot Company and the Théâtre des Chemins Company, and joined Mélissa Von Vépy for the production «Aspirator» in 2025.



NEIL PRICE • Set designer, builder

Neil Price was born in Hemel Hempstead, England, where he studied engineering.
At the age of 20, he set out on a tour of Europe as a street performer and settled in France, where he has lived ever since.
He met L'Estock Fish, a street theater and circus troupe, with whom he created several shows.
In 2004, he joined Les 3 points de suspension / Dakota, a Franco-Swiss company.
He designed the sets, created the props, and performed with them as an actor and technical director. («Voyage en bordure du bord du bout du monde», «Nié Qui Tamola», «Looking for paradise», «Bains publics», «Ostrea Odulis», «Squash»).
Since 2011, he has designed the sets for Mélissa Von Vépy / Cie Happés for each of her plays («VieLLeicht», «J'ai horreur du printemps», «L'Aérien», «Noir M1», «Les Flyings»).
An exceptional structural engineer, Neil Price works closely with directors to bring their ideas to life, always striving to serve the play's message and its unique aesthetic vision, while adhering to precise safety and practicality specifications.
For the past decade, numerous performing artists have called upon his expertise to bring their set designs to life (Sumako Koseki, Ana Ventura, Thomas Guiral, Mathilde Jaillette, Olivia Csiky Trnka, Sarah Devaux…).
He is currently collaborating with Mélissa Von Vépy—«Piano Rubato», La Cie du Prélude—«Littoral», and Charlie Moine—«Le comité des fêtes.»

CÉDRIC CAMBON • Backstage, stage management, and electronic design

After earning a BTS in electronics while working as a sound engineer, I learned lighting design with the production company AMG Audio. I then moved into the world of street theater with the Plasticiens Volants in 2000 and Fred Tousch's company in 2005, indoor theater with the Bottom Théâtre in 2003, sound design with GMEA and the Ouïe-Dire Company from 2010 to 2020, and finally exhibitions with the publishers Les Requins Marteaux until 2012 and the construction company Déco Diffusion for the Cité de l'Espace in 2015.
I joined Cie Les 3 points de suspension in 2010 as a set builder and electronics developer for the show «Nié qui Tamola», for which I later became the stage manager. We then produced the show «La grande saga de la Françafrique», which ran for over 200 performances on the street and in theaters. I went on to work on the productions «Looking for Paradise», «Squach», and «Hiboux», as well as most of the company's other events.
I also work as a sound and lighting technician on the show «TROU» by Cie Ultra Nyx, as a stagehand and sound technician for Melissa Von Vépy's Cie Happés, as a set builder with Sarah and Barbara Métais-Chastanier's Les enchevétrées, and as an organizer and lighting designer for the Baignade Sauvage festival, a festival of experimental music in the Tarn region.

JEAN-DAMIEN RATEL • Sound design

Jean-Damien Ratel Ratel has created the sound designs for approximately one hundred productions. He explores various forms of live performance that blend multiple disciplines: theater, dance, circus, poetry, music, opera, and film. His sound compositions are rooted in the concrete reality of the stage space. He strives to establish a subtle connection between the presence on stage, the space, and the dramaturgy. The sound score he crafts takes shape and becomes part of the musicality of the text and the movement of the actors, dancers, or acrobats. He thus creates a dynamic soundscape that serves not only as accompaniment but also as a source of mutual influence.
He met Mélissa Von Vépy in 2005 to create the soundscape for «I look up, I look down» and has been collaborating on her productions ever since.
He was most recently seen on stage in «Melancholia Europea» and «66 Gallery» by Bérangère Jannelle, set to music using experimental instruments of his own design. He performs in a duo with actress Marie Payen («Perdre le Nord»).
He also continues his work in film with director Stanley Woodward: «Voir le jour» and «Les Vagues»; Bérangère Jannelle: «Petit Âne» and «Les Lucioles»; Isabelle Ronayette: «La Clarté»; and S. Louis: «Nourrir l'anima», «Ensuite ils ont vieilli», and «La chambrée».

SABINE CHARREIRE • Lighting design

After training in technical stage management at the CFPTS in Bagnolet (2002–2003), Sabine Charreire honed her skills at the MC93 in Bobigny, the Centre National de la Danse, and the Théâtre National de Chaillot, Théâtre de la Colline, Théâtre du Châtelet, and Théâtre de la Ville, which gave her the opportunity to work in various fields of the performing arts and to meet lighting designers, Christian Dubet, Joel Hourbeigt, Valérie Sigward, and Françoise Michelle, who would inspire her reflections on lighting design. To broaden her skill set, she has worked regularly on television sets, notably with director of photography Olivier Diolez.
Out of personal interest, her career has focused more specifically on contemporary circus and dance. She adapts and supports the tours of several choreographers, including Alban Richard and Fouad Boussouf, and stages her own productions by Nina Vallon and Mélissa Von Vépy, with whom she has worked closely since 2009.
In addition to her work as a stage manager and lighting designer, she teaches optics, photometry, and ETC lighting consoles at the CFPTS in Bagnolet and at the Arkalya training center.

EMMANUELLE GROBET • Costume Design and Set design

After more than thirty years and approximately 180 productions in live performance, this is how I would describe my career path.
I became interested in materials, volumes, and movement very early on, even before I encountered the performing arts.
I first worked with metal, then moved on to fabrics and many other materials, teaching myself and always approaching them with great curiosity. It is discovery and creative adventure that fascinate me. Costumes, masks, puppets, props, and set design are an extension of my work as a visual artist. I discover a new world (and new materials) with every creation. I have the privilege of creating with my own hands in this artistic world that inspires me and is constantly evolving.
Since 1992, I have specialized in technical circus costumes while also creating props and set designs.
I have worked with numerous companies, including Cie Vent d'Autant, Cie Contre-Pour (Michel DALER), Cie ANOMALIE, Cie Les Apostrophés, Cirque Désaccordé, Cie les ARROSES, Cie XY, Cie Un loup pour l'homme, Cie Irina BROUK, Cie la VALISE, Cie DORE, Cirque AOC, Circo AEREO, Cie MANIE, Cie L'MRGée, Cie Out of the Blue, Cirque AITAL, Cie Bistaki, Cie happés // Mélissa Von Vépy…
I would like to make special mention of my collaboration with Jérôme Savary on the design and creation of puppets and masks for two operas («Les contes d'Hoffman» (2001) and «Carmen» (2005)) and a production titled «Une vie d'artiste» (2006), as well as with the Jérôme Thomas Company, for which I have designed the costumes and set designs for its 28 productions since 1992.



JULIA CHRIST • Artistic Consultant

Julia Christ is a circus artist. A 2001 graduate of the École Supérieure des Arts du Cirque in Brussels, she has spent more than twenty years developing a unique physical language at the intersection of contemporary dance, acrobatics, and hand balancing.
After making her debut with the Compagnie Feria Musica («Calcinculo»), she collaborated closely with choreographer Gilles Baron («Droit comme la pluie», «Oozing Tears», «Animal Attraction»), and later with Jean-Baptiste André, notably in «Qu'après en être revenu and Pleurage» et «Scintillement», for which she co-choreographed. In 2009, she created the solo piece «Bambula», followed in 2016 by «Soulcorner», a winner of the CircusNext program, staged in collaboration with Michel Cerda. This artistic dialogue centered on stage composition has had a lasting influence on her dramaturgical approach and her perspective on creation.
For several years, she has been working as a director and external consultant for numerous contemporary circus companies, including Circo Aereo, Kirn Compagnie, Compagnie Happés // Mélissa Von Vépy, Association W, and La Dérive. Her work focuses on the body, dramaturgical structure, and precision of movement, within a careful dialogue with the artistic teams.
From 2019 to 2023, she was an associate artist at the Pôle National Cirque Le Sirque in Nexon (Nouvelle-Aquitaine), and since 2022 she has served on the jury for CircusNext and the European Circus Label.

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PERFORMANCES

→ **PREMIERES** **October 8–10, 2025** // Théâtre de Nîmes
[October 8 at 6:00 p.m. – October 9 and 10 at 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.]

→ **October 17–19, 2025** // CIRCa, National Circus Center, Auch – Gers – Occitanie

→ **November 14, 2025** // La Verrerie d'Alès, Occitanie National Circus Center

→ **January 16 and 17, 2026** // Le Sirque, Nexon National Circus Center – Nouvelle-Aquitaine
[January 16 at 2:30 p.m. (school groups) – January 17 at 6:00 p.m.]

→ **January 22–24, 2026** // Théâtre d'Angoulême, National Theater
[January 22 and 23 at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. (school groups) – January 24 at 6:00 p.m.]

→ **January 26–28, 2026** // L'Agora, National Circus Center, Boulazac
[January 26 and 27: School groups at 10 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. – January 28 at 5:30 p.m.]

→ **February 6 and 7, 2026** // Culture Commune, National Theater of the Pas-de-Calais Mining Basin, Loos-en-Gohelle
[February 6 at 10:00 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. (school groups) – February 7 at 6:00 p.m.]

→ **February 10, 2026** // Le Prato, National Circus Center, Lille
[at 2:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.]

→ **February 13 and 14, 2026** // Le Boulon, National Center for Street Arts, Vieux-Condé
[February 13 at 2:30 p.m. (school groups) – February 14 at 5:30 p.m.]

→ **March 6 and 7, 2026** // La Mégisserie, Saint-Junien
[March 6 at 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. (school groups) – March 7 at 5:00 p.m.]

→ **April 16–18, 2026** // Points Communs, New National Theater of Cergy-Pontoise and the Val d'Oise, Cergy
[March 16 and 17 at 10:00 AM and 2:30 PM – March 18 at 4:00 PM]
→ **June 12 and 13, 2026** // c/o Cie Happés // Aigues-Vives
[June 12 at 2:30 p.m. (school performance) and 7:30 p.m. – June 13 at 7:30 p.m.]

→ **January 5–7, 2027** // L’Empreinte, Scène nationale // Brive-la-Gaillarde
[Jan 5 at 2:00 PM (School performance) – Jan 6 at 6:30 PM – Jan 7 at 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM (School performances)]

→ **February 16, 2027** // Les Élancées Festival, Espace 233 // Istres
[at 10:00 AM and 2:30 PM]

→ **February 19–20, 2027** // Les Élancées Festival, Scène et Ciné // Fos-sur-Mer
[Feb 19 at 9:30 AM and 2:30 PM (School performance) – Feb 20 at 11:00 AM]

→ **February 23–24, 2027** // Théâtre Éphémère – Le Cratère, Scène nationale // Alès
[Feb 23 at 9:30 AM and 2:30 PM (School performance) – Feb 24 at 3:00 PM]





TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

> See the technical rider

Minimum stage dimensions:
10 m wide
8 m deep
Height: 5.5 m below the grill

TOURING CONDITIONS

• 2 performers, 2 stage managers
Depending on the venue, a booking agent.

Minimum of 2 performances - 2 performances possible on the same day (minimum 4 hour interval)



CONTACTS

Booking
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MEDIAS

→ **Teaser Aspirator :** https://vimeo.com/1101596450

www.melissavonvepy.com

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