

*(roots of heaven)*

# Racines du ciel

Visual poetry on the uprooting caused by grief

Laura Elands





Puppetry performance

30 minutes

Without text

Age 8+

Created, directed and performed by Laura Elands

Sound and lighting design by Isi Milton

## DATES OF RESIDENCIES 2019

24-25 June 2019

't Magische Theater(t)je, Maastricht, Netherlands

15-19 July 2019

Centre Culturel de Tubize, Tubize, Belgium

25 July - 7 August 2019

Théâtre C.R.E.A. Bruxelles, Brussels, Belgium

19-30 August 2019

Association 'On Tire Les Fils', Saintes, Belgium

9-13 September 2019

Centre de la Marionnette, Tournai, Belgium

16-19 September 2019

Association 'On Tire Les Fils', Saintes, Belgium

## PERFORMANCE DATES 2019

Friday 13th September 7pm

End of residency performance

Centre de la Marionnette à Tournai, Rue Saint  
Martin 47, 7500 (Belgium)

Monday 23rd September 1pm & 3pm

Théâtre Thémac, 3 rue du Gymnase 08000  
Charleville-Mézières (France)

during the World Puppet Theatre Festival

*With the support of UNIMA Belgium*

Friday 15th November 7pm

Saturday 16th November 6pm

Théâtre C.R.E.A. asbl, Brussels,  
Belgium (*Followed by a group discussion on  
the theme of grief*)

*Racines du ciel* is a performance project taking place in 2019 to 2020. During its stages of creation it will be presented in September and November 2019 and it will première in 2020.

## PARTNERS

With the support of UNIMA Belgium, le Centre Culturel de Tubize, l'Association 'On tire les fils', Les Manies ASBL and the artistic advice of 't Magische Theater(t)je (Charlotte Puijk-Joolen and Ananda Puijk, Netherlands).

This performance project was created during a companionship with Colette Garrigan from Compagnie Akselere (Caen) from 2018 to 2019.

*The companionship scheme is an initiative of the DRAC (Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs) and the Ministry of Culture in France, a springboard for professionalisation after the end of studies.*



## SUMMARY OF THE PERFORMANCE

*Racines du Ciel* (roots of heaven) is the story of a woman who has lost her loved one. We follow her path through a performance without words, a visual and poetic 'bubble', which flows, softly and slowly, whilst the character experiences her grief through a memory that she is reliving. And then, little by little, without forgetting what has been lost, the connection with the lost one is transformed in order for her to move on.

In a world comprising of puppetry, mask and sculpture, *Racines du ciel* evokes loss and the way it can uproot us and upset our inner landscape. It is a journey of sensations and universal symbols in which you are invited to find your own meaning, to add your own stories, as well as to share a moment of contemplation about a subject that is often delicate and difficult to speak of, but which touches each and every one of us at some point in our lives.

## THE SCENOGRAPHY

The scenography is comprised of two main elements – two trees that recall our attachment to our physical existence, as well as the living connection between heaven and earth. Roots make their way to becoming a trunk, until their branches touch the sky, an image of the connection with the dead.

This is where the name *Racines du ciel* (roots of heaven) was born.

The trees are surrounded by roots, a symbol of the resting place of buried bodies. Roots are found under the ground, a place that is hidden to us and difficult to access. This echoes the idea of the subconscious. The experience of mourning 'uproots' the subconscious, it upsets our inner landscape. These elements of the scenography are made using scrunched-up brown kraft paper wrapped in brown string.



## ELEMENTS OF THE PERFORMANCE



### THE PUPPET OF THE LOVED ONE

At the beginning of the performance the audience witnesses the love between two beings; the puppet and his manipulator, the puppeteer. The puppet dies, and images of mourning and grief follow.



#### A STRETCHABLE BLACK CLOTH, WORN ON THE BODY

It is the feeling of finding oneself in a black hole whilst grieving; to be completely separated from the rest of the world, reality doesn't seem so real anymore. The cloth also references the veil worn by women in mourning.



#### SHADOW PUPPETRY

We follow the body under the earth.

## THE THOUGHTS THAT SAW *RACINES DU CIEL* COME TO LIGHT

David Abram, philosopher, ecologist and author of 'Becoming Animal, An Earthly Cosmology' (First Vintage Books Edition 2011) believes that human beings need to recover their intrinsic link with nature, a reciprocity to find balance and to harmonise with their natural environment. He puts forward the idea that every body is a threshold that makes it possible to come into contact with the world around it, with other bodies, whether human, animal, plant or landscape. This experience of the world is of a sensory nature, it is non-rational and works through an intelligence of the body. It is a contact made with another through our physical envelope. At our death our body becomes an empty shell that serves to feed other beings. Through this, devoid of corporal boundaries, we become one with all. The experience of mourning following the loss of a loved one transforms our inner landscape. We lose the physical and sensory contact we had with this person, and at the same time the identity we built by sharing our lives with them.



## THE MASK OF TEARS

Following the loss of the loved one, a mask of tears expresses grief and sadness. Being more of an art object than a theatrical mask, this allows a certain distancing which brings out the state of paralysis or numbness caused by the shock – the inability to understand what has taken place.



The 'roots of heaven' worn on the body like the weight of grief.

### THE ARTISTIC APPROACH

The process of creating a performance is mainly intuitive and starts with research and internal questioning. This leads to visual research being developed in sketchbooks and experimenting with different materials using different disciplines. Gradually, images emerge that take shape by exploring with them on stage. They take the form of puppets, masks and scenographic sculptures animated by a language of movement and gesture, creating 'living paintings', which come to life in front of an audience.

These images are akin to dreams, the imaginary and the subconscious, are often without words and they express sensations and feelings, touching upon a universal symbolism as well as an understanding relating to personal sensitivity and history.

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Language : without text

Audience : age 8+

Length : 30 minutes

Get in : 4h

Get out : 2h

Indoor performance

Black box with closed drapes

Minimum stage space :

Height : 4m 30

Width : 6 m

Depth : 5 m

Capacity:

Up to 150 people

To be provided by the organiser :

Sound :

2 UPA-type speakers (if unavailable, MACKIE)

Lighting :

2 short profiles 1kW

5 PARs CP 61 1kW

4 PCs 1kW

## THE SOUND

The sound design was created from sounds recorded by the team, through the use of a flute and the manipulation of various objects such as mud, a small metal ball rolling in a barrel, a passing car, an ocean drum, amongst many others. This approach made it possible to avoid using pre-existing sound banks and to create a soundscape that effectively translates the dramaturgical intentions as to be better able to convey the emotions and images expressed on stage.

## LIGHTING

The choice of warmer lighting was made in order to create a contrapuntal effect with the theme of grief and to bring out the scenography of brown kraft paper. The space is divided into several areas that can exist individually and to allow a journey to be made through the story by passing from one state to another.



## THE TEAM

### LAURA ELANDS

**Director, puppet maker and performer**

Laura Elands is a puppeteer as well as a visual artist. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in 'Theatre Practice: Puppetry' at the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in London. To further pursue this path, she studied at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mézières in France and graduated as part of the 10th promotion.

Originally from the Netherlands, Laura was born in Germany and has lived in France, Canada and the United Kingdom before finishing her studies in Charleville-Mézières and moving to Brussels, where she currently lives.

### ISI MILTON

**Light and sound design**

Isi Milton is a rapper and sound designer.

In 2019 he completed a degree in sound engineering at the Institut Supérieur des Arts (INSAS) of Brussels, before undertaking a master's degree there. He has worked as a technician at the Théâtre La Montagne Magique before working as a sound engineer at the Théâtre Nationale in Brussels. He has toured the show 'Wij Zij' by Théâtre Bronks and has been a sound engineer on 'Sweeney Todd' at the Théâtre de la Monnaie.

He intends to pursue creating sound for theatre as well as for documentary films. He was born and lives in Brussels.

### LUDOVIC FLOEH

**Light and sound technician**

Ludovic Floeh is studying at the Theatre technician/stage management section of the EFP (IFAPME - Institut wallon de Formation en Alternance et des indépendants et Petites et Moyennes Entreprises) of Uccle, Brussels.



## CONTACT

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