

*A support scheme
for emerging creators of contemporary circus in Europe*



CircusNext

Odyssey

Translation of the video report

**La Migration
(Quentin Claude, Marion Even & Gaël Manipoud)**

“Creating LANDSCAPE(s) #1”

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Quentin: Landscape(s) is a diptych. The first part is shaped as a landscape; in this first part you face a landscape. The audience looks at poetry in front of an environment, a landscape, a panorama. We wanted to go and ask the question from the outside, from us as human beings in our relationship with the external environment, the daily environment, or the remarkable environment. To go and question it. So that was quite important, it was our starting point.

Marion: I think that what was really interesting for us in this project was that we could... that something magical could happen in that place, in the place where we will be, which can probably seem commonplace for a lot of people, because it's part of a daily routine etc. well... we wanted that place to be seen differently.



Gaël: In the middle of my training, I started to distort my specialty, which was the 'Roue Cyr', to transform the circus apparatus. At the same time, and without talking to each other, Quentin had also started thinking about what other tight wire he could make to give him his freedom back, his mobility... another way of enjoying work, in fact. And we thought: 'if we're going to ask the same questions, we might as well look for answers together'.

Quentin: In fact we raised issues related to our disciplines, the notion of 'discipline' in circus, and we wanted to enlarge our vocabulary. This is what it was, to start with. In this thought process there was also an economic dimension, because tight-wire walkers have issues related to their rigging points on the ground, etc. I wanted a completely autonomous structure.

Gaël: There was no dedicated time to meet given that we already knew each other well. However, we met on the structure. First of all there was a transmission work, he taught me what he knew. Then we discovered together, because a structure on your own or a structure together is like working solo or in a duet. After the technical learning part, Marion came to rework on all the material.



Marion: We indeed wrote together with Quentin. He had a view on the piece, and I had one too. The complexity was to transcribe both views through mine, and my job was not easy because when I intervene, I don't work on the technical dimension, I'm not a circus artist, so my job was to forget about the technical dimension in order to bring a sensitive dimension. It's one thing to put a structure together, a new apparatus outside, but then, 'what do you do with it?' 'What do you say with it?'.

Gaël: In a way the structure is kind of part of the landscape, because it's material, it's rusty, there are things you can find... However, it's something, which was designed by man: it's metal, there are St Andrew crosses, there are powerful relationships... This cannot be something you bump into by chance. And at the same time, when it's in the landscape, it doesn't have the same effect as a red car in the middle of a field. You can very well look at the landscape through it without it being the single point of focus. We do not force the viewer's look to focus on such or such action; there is a triangular relationship between the performers – Quentin and I on the one hand – the structure on the other hand, and the landscape coming next to it, and the audience can decide to move from one to the other. It's like various levels in a picture, it's not because one level is the last one geographically speaking that it is less interesting or less important. Sometimes it brings little gifts in the creative process...

Quentin: ... yes, because it's not only visual...

Gaël: ...it's not only visual, it's moving. So a bird flying by, a noise being triggered, a cloud changing shape, all these are things that might not be noticeable straight away, but they take part in building the piece that we are trying to create, and that we will create.

Quentin: Outside, the landscape components change every time. This is why we are going to assess the landscape in each place we go, well in fact we already do it in every place we arrive in, because this is why we go and walk in each place – in order to absorb what the place is, what it is full of. We walk in various places, and in fact we realized that there are places...

Gaël: The feelings triggered are very different...

Marion: For me it was a way of having a basis for work. We put a structure outside, we want to talk about the landscape but if they can't feel – because for me, that's what walking does, it's a real experience in the landscape, feeling the landscape with your body – if they don't feel it, it seems to me that it's a bit complicated to talk about it, and to do something sensitive around this landscape.

Gaël: when we come back from walking, we try and concretely put our finger on what we experienced. And after these feelings, these words coming out, sometimes Marion asks us to write sequences. For example in #1, we have a sequence called 'plenitude', which is kind of the feeling you are going to get when you reach the top of a mountain, where the human being goes back to being a human being, small amongst all this vastness. So we are inspired by the outside world when it comes to bringing material; this material, we shape it a bit as if we were talking concretely; we give it to Marion; Marion polishes it, gives it back to us; we work on it again, and then afterwards there is a kind of cycle which is created like that.

Marion: When we started thinking about that with Quentin, I was really into something totally 'in situ', the slightest change also changes your movement or the way you act on site... except that it's not possible! Because with this structure you cannot improvise, so you work on something written. But I think that this 'in situ' dimension can be found in the music, with Jean-Christophe, who is also going to write certain things because he works with... with what happens on stage, he manages to take into account the sound environment in which he is, and work with it.



Jean-Christophe: Physically speaking, what I'm interested in, straight away, is rhythm. And this structure develops its own rhythm, which is really interesting because it's a circular rhythm, and at the same time there is a horizontal dimension with the walk on the wire, and a vertical dimension as well... so there are a lot of rhythms from a musical point of view. In music, the vertical, horizontal and circular dimensions are things we work with all the time: either the loop, or chords, or the melody. Their own rhythm, their own involvement in the structure itself with their bodies, there are huge differences between Gaël and Quentin, and at the same time, they are so together sometimes, it also builds real music.



Gaël: The fact that we first of all worked without Jean-Christophe forced us to be demanding without counting on anybody, and this necessity arose from a certain reality, and now the quality we had found is like reinforced or even transcended. If we'd had him right from the beginning, I think that sometimes we could have counted on him, and then the day he was gone, we would not have understood why the picture didn't work anymore. Whereas here, we tried and draw strength from elsewhere, and then he brought something on top of that.

Jean-Christophe: It was like a trio in fact, but with four people, with 2 circus artists, Marion and I. I had to get into their story, from that point of view, but also be some kind of third voice. The fact that the musician is live, you are always reinterpreting your own codes, what you built together, so it's living material. For me it's essential, in music, but also in the relationship with the stage.

Quentin: So when he started working on material we had already created, and moved it, that afternoon, that really was the moment when we created several materials. So with Jean-Christophe, it's like we started playing table tennis: he played a sound, we worked on it, we suggested, etc., etc. So again we started composing with him, and writing with him.



Quentin: CircusNext was a major issue. When our administrator suggested it – we had thought about it too, to present this project – we thought about it with Marion... 'Is it not going to propel us too quickly?' 'Is it not going to freeze certain things?' But in fact we didn't feel it that much, so that was positive. And it also enabled us... to compose, in fact. And it also enabled us to ... at a given time, it gave us a date to present a first draft and therefore to try and be clear with what we wanted to say, and what we would like to do even if we had already written it on paper, it had to be written on stage as well...

Gaël: What was interesting in meeting all the jury members was to see that they were more interested in the immersed part of the iceberg than in what they had seen in fact. It made it possible for us to take a step back and anticipate our own questions. The fact that we had to... well, knowing that you have to explain it to an expert eye, that is both professional and means well, it enabled us to put words on sensations, on things we might feel, because we had to talk about it very precisely. They also asked questions which helped us to launch #2 well, whereas it was still a bit fuzzy. It really made it possible for us to refocus or to refine our approach in the second part.



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