

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



# CircusNext

## Odyssey

Translation of the video report

**Julia Christ**

**presents "Soul Corner"**

Creation Residency at Espace Périphérique (Paris, FR)  
October 2014

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## Presentation of the project

Julia Christ: The project is called « Coin de l'âme » ('Soul Corner') and deals with boxing. When I was a kid, I was a big fan of Mohamed Ali, he was a very important person in my childhood. In 2012, I decided that I wanted to work on a solo piece, and I saw myself as a boxer. I did a lot of research and I watched a lot of movies on boxing, and then I found a book by Joyce Carol Oates. She's a woman who talks about boxing, and it was the opportunity to legitimate my approach, and to say "ah, it's possible to talk about boxing as a woman", because they're not very... I mean, boxing is still very masculine. I started working on this topic, working with gloves, working with ribbons... Now...

Michel Cerda: We got down to it.

Julia Christ: We started working on the topic.



## Standing next to boxing

Julia Christ: In the beginning, I thought one always had to show the fight, the violence, that's what I was into. After Neerpelt, I thought to myself «no, no, no», you have to strive not to be in the fight, in the action of fighting, in violence, but rather stand next to boxing.

Michel Cerda: The fact that the title changed made a huge difference. The fact that the word 'soul' was introduced in one go, the fact that it has something rather fleeting and immaterial to it. It's Mohamed Ali's soul, or the boxing soul... In fact, we went from a very concrete topic, given that we're talking about boxing, and we all have images related to boxing, and now, it's as if this material became a bit less material, to try and illustrate the material. The first image of the boxing ring that comes and then disappears... For us, it's something which is here and then only leaves a trace.

## Building your world in a corner

Julia Christ: I am a circus artist, I had circus training, and I always was in a corner, with my own balance and my little things, because us, handstand artists, we don't need much space, we're always in a corner. And I was doing my job, building my world. In this topic, I really enjoy being in a corner, building a world, digging into boxing and also digging into circus, looking for things, dark ropes that drive things, that come, disappear, build a world.



## Materials

Michel Cerda: These materials had been made by Julia, they were the foundation. We keep digging into it. They are not questioned, maybe because they will be later, but so far they're like a matrix. It's like a common territory that we have to share with others. If you never stop changing territories, it's a bit complicated.

## Team Work

Michel Cerda: The fact that it was only the two of us in Neerpelt and then only one all of a sudden, obviously it makes you grow up, it dispatches things differently, it redefines, redivides... The idea of increasing the family was important because we always thought being solo had nothing to do with someone being on their own.

When you're on your own and a lot of people arrive, it always takes time, but it's not time... which is important. It's important to welcome people, and to be a team talking about the same show. Obviously, this is done when creating the objects, but I think it's worth it for these new people arriving to understand well both the project which is currently being implemented, and sometimes it's not easy (even for Julia, it's not either), so all this takes a lot of time. It's essential for us to get to the TCI with a group in which everybody talks about the same thing with their own tools.



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## CircusNext

Michel Cerda: What does CircusNext bring you?

Julia Christ: For me it was a great process because at first I didn't start with the dancing room, with dancing and handstands; the first time, I took a book, I worked on paper, and I wrote. I built a file, I wrote the idea, it helped me a lot, it has to be said, because I wasn't going through the body, I was using imagination: what do I mean, what do I want to say, what do I want to show, what do I want to look for? It also helped me a lot to talk about being an 'author'. It helped me a lot to become the author of my own work.

Michel Cerda: because you are a performer, in general.

Julia Christ: Yes, I still was a performer.

Michel Cerda: Even if you were working on being an author...

Julia Christ: But all the same... The first time that I sat down at the table and wrote things and also said what I wanted to work with fundamentally: gloves, white ribbons, chalk. It helped me a lot, to describe a given world, to focus on things, to say 'I'm interested in this, in boxing'; and 'I'm interested in this, in circus', to find a connection, where there are frictions. And also talking about work, because in Neerpelt I was also with the jury, we had a conversation and that was nice because I was in front of people, and I talked about the reason why it was necessary to represent all this on stage. We say it first, and then we go and check. But what is my will, what do I want to talk about? This process makes me grow up, I'm somehow becoming an adult, author. And this a nice journey.