Statement of Intent

LE BAL DES ARDENTS



Creation 2026-2027

Conception and choreography: Claire Durand-Drouhin

Dramaturgical support: Audrey Chazelle
Performers:

Circus artists: Julius Bitterling, Adalberto Fernández Torres

Dancers: Inés Hernández, Jyotsna Liyanaratne (+ LSF), Karine Girard, Haruka Miyamoto, Mathieu Boudon

Dancers with disabilities: Jean-Pierre Rigondeau, Géraldine Seguin
Costumes: Anaïs Durand

Sound design: Charles Amblard

Technical direction and lighting: Emily Brassier

Partners

co-producers:

TAP Poitiers, MAD-Opéra Limoges, OARA, Fondation de France, CNCA Morlaix.

With the support of micadanses-Paris, Théâtre de Suresnes, Vieux Château Vicq-sur-Breuilh, Réseau IMAGO.

Ballet Brut is supported by DRAC Nouvelle-Aquitaine and subsidised by the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region.

The spoken texts in the performance are interpreted in French Sign Language (LSF) by a dancer of Ballet Brut.

Video of presentation

https://balletbrut.com

Le Ballet Brut

The approach – creation and inclusion

The choreographic approach of Ballet Brut has its roots twenty years ago, within the walls of psychiatric hospitals, where unique body-to-body encounters were woven — singular pairings of a patient and a dancer. At that time we gave birth to improbable duets, meetings between personalities with distinct bodies and movements. The singularity of personalities and physiques, juxtaposed to provoke a sense of strangeness, became the fertile ground for a certain osmosis. It is in this alchemy between self-taught movers, such as people with disabilities, and virtuosos of circus or dance, that the poetry of action in the present unfolds.

“Today, my condition for choreographing lies in the fusion of professional performers with individuals from ordinary life who bear the marks of reality. » Claire Durand-Drouhin

Emerging on stage in 2022, this tribe brings together people with singular life paths who reveal both their solitude and their salvific union. They are a symbol of the cultural right defended today in our contexts. Building bridges over cliffs that seem impassable is our goal. Bridges between performers who were never meant to meet, and today a new bridge between eras and societal visions.

Jean-Pierre Rigondeau underwent amputation of both legs following arteritis. He uses a wheelchair. The encounter took place during the inclusive creation of Une famille singulière in 2022, as an amateur. From the very first day, Claire had him leave the wheelchair to rediscover sensations on the floor, to be carried… He very quickly demonstrated extraordinary physical capacities and has become an emblematic figure of Ballet Brut ever since.

Géraldine Seguin has been living with multiple sclerosis for 25 years. She is a long-time friend of Claire’s. She was an actress. She still has a love of the stage and of creation. She possesses as much mental strength as physical frailty. We work with her on sincerity, simplicity, moving towards sensuality while her body becomes increasingly sclerotised.

Mathieu Boudon was originally a musical composer. Claire met him through personal connections of the dancers. He is gripped in his body and especially in his face by uncontrolled movements, tics and spasms. Within the inclusive creation process of Une famille singulière in 2022 he developed a personal gestural language, a way of moving whose initial impulse arises spontaneously without prior trajectory. He brings richness to the dramaturgical writing of Ballet Brut’s works.

Jyotsna Liyanaratne, contemporary and Sufi dancer, offers in Le Bal des Ardents her knowledge of LSF by providing a translation of the spoken texts on stage.

Ballet Brut is a company unlike any other. Its performers are all valued through their otherness. It is a company capable of making each performer a central character in order to compose a heterogeneous and authentic “family”.

The piece – the subject and its dramaturgy

Between the Ball and the Fire of the Ardents — those historical references in which collective dances, processions and contagious trances announce unconscious political movements, while solitary immersions evoke chaos and loss, like engulfing marshes — this performance navigates through strange intimate detours, where mutual aid becomes impossible and each person confronts their own abyss. Each singular body takes centre stage to reveal its inner flame. An ardent quest for renewed contact, against a persistent backdrop of abandonment.

The protagonists of Ballet Brut wear the appearance of queens and kings of illusory kingdoms. Reality and onirism intertwine to form a precarious ridge, where these two steep slopes contend for primacy, alternately pulling the cover over each other.

A woman in complicity with the audience asserts herself, bringing us back to ordinary reality, to everyday anecdote, deflating the sacred and the transcendent in the blink of an eye. In fragments of individual lives we brush against personal stories, yet relentlessly the return to the source of a collective energy resurfaces.

Caught in the flow of a procession, they advance, escaping it intermittently to reveal their singular trance. And what if we dared to pursue a salvific union of these disparate trances, transforming the malady into a liberating ball?

"What interests me in the story of the Bal des Ardents beyond the accident is this king and his madness, his need for creativity and for going outside the frame when he is supposed to be only responsible and wise. We are a procession of kings and queens of kingdoms that do not exist, characters who transform themselves face-down or head-to-the-sky to find their madness and their trance until gradually uniting them. 'Ardent' here is rather an adjective attributed to each person, to an internal flame, to a fire that is always ina ppropriate."Claire Durand-Drouhin

Sound design

The musical part, composed by Charles Amblard with a modular synthesizer, plays a fundamental role in this dynamic. The sound, both repetitive and destabilising, accentuates the mechanical and relentless aspect of power relations while creating ruptures that open the way to emancipation. The music accompanies the evolution of the bodies, moving from a synchronised and constraining rhythm to an expressive and cathartic freedom, amplifying the dramatic tension of the piece. The musical work gradually establishes an immersive and hypnotic atmosphere conducive to collective trance.

Making body together – creation and participation

The desire to integrate a group of amateurs into the finale of the creation Le Bal des Ardents is part of the inclusive and participatory approach of Ballet Brut, led by Claire Durand-Drouhin. This initiative responds to the frequent requests from host venues for workshops while embodying our wish to infuse a spirit of collective trance, joyful celebration and mixity.

By involving amateurs from varied backgrounds in collective rehearsal periods, we wish to create a moment of communion in which these participants join the stage from the audience at the finale, fusing with the professional and experienced amateur performers.

This dynamic aims to break the boundaries between spectators and performers, embodying a collective liberation in the image of the raves evoked in the piece.

Depending on the contexts, the integration of this group may also spark the desire in other spectators to join the dance, thereby amplifying the momentum of a spontaneous and universal celebration in which the diversity of bodies and life paths becomes the driving force of a shared artistic experience.

In each territory of distribution, in collaboration with the host venues, we will contact associations or health institutions, conservatories, students, etc.

Calendar

Creation

Résidencies 2025-2027

16-19 June, Le Vieux Château, Vicq-sur-Breuilh (1 choreographer + 3 performers + 1 musician)

15-19 September, Théâtre de Suresnes (1 choreographer + 9 performers + 1 musician)

Presentation at the Imago platforms on 14 November

2026

19-24 January, MAD Limoges

9-13 February, TAP Poitiers → Residency showing on 12 February at 4 p.m.

8-12 June, Vieux Château Vicq then Micadanses Paris

23-28 November (venue search)

14-18 December, MAD Limoges, lighting creation

2027

4-8 January, CNCA Morlaix → Residency showing on 8 January at 7 p.m.

Touring

In progress

14 November 2025: project presentation at the IMAGO platforms, Carreau du Temple, Paris

13 June 2026: public opening within the framework of Faits maison, at micadanses-Paris

Season 26/27

14 January 2027: Premiere at MAD Limoges

18 February 2027: Le Vivat Armentières

2 April 2027: TAP Poitiers, Festival À corps

10-13 June 2027: Vieux Château, Vicq-sur-Breuilh / Festival Z.O.M

Previous creations

Désaccord parfait
Teaser https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZQ9ARH2Bem5acJgx4-U6xcmR3sjgRJL1/view

Duos improbables
Teaser https://vimeo.com/988306484

Vie de Famille - Génération 2
Teaser https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRT7d5KyJnw

Une Famille Singulière
Teaser https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XgohWZ1G11k

Chambre 10
Teaser-extraits https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFyrdR1_Q9c

Le bal des ardents

Claire Durand-Drouhin

For some fifteen years, first as a performer and then as a choreographer, Claire Durand-Drouhin has patiently immersed herself in closed worlds such as prisons and specialised psychiatric hospital centres. There she leads regular workshops with patients, some of whom take part in her creations: Vie de famille, Une famille singulière, Duos Improbables and Désaccord Parfait. Claire has broadened her gaze to the making of documentary films in which she is also a protagonist (France 3, Planète Justice, SCAM). From the beginning her work has received support from, among others, MAD Opéra Limoges, DSN – Scène nationale de Dieppe, the seasons of the Vieux Château at Vicq-sur-Breuilh, the Ministry of Culture, DRAC, the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region and OARA.
In 2018 she was laureate of the scheme “Où sont les femmes”, implemented by La Fabrique de la Danse. In 2022 her company took the name Ballet Brut and received the support of the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris (Danse élargie & Danse élargie Suite). In 2024 Duos improbables received the Olympiade culturelle label, Paris 2024. The work of Ballet Brut now radiates internationally, notably in Bulgaria (One Dance Week Festival), South Africa (JOMBA! Festival), England (Enrich Festival)…

THE BALLET BRUT MANIFESTO

The centre is each person’s place. The relationships between us are woven in the silent quest for this centre by each one of us. Our vulnerabilities, in social life as on stage, are our living strength, at the heart of the stage.We seek a more nuanced, more authentic vision of difference. Difference is not a theme to be defended: it is already there, the primary postulate. Bodies as they are reveal themselves, raw, unadorned, in their immediate truth. To bear witness to this diversity as it exists is to welcome beauty in its fragilities, in its shadows. Trauma, impulse, the unexpected are not to be excluded: they nourish our material, our inspiration. This is where our deep confidence lies: the capacity to transmute these dark parts into vibrations, into artistic presence. To bear witness to the complexity of human bonds — in all their intensity, their fragility, their interweaving — remains our aim.

Every body, every voice, every breath finds its place there.

Choreographer and performer

2025
Désaccord parfait
Création



2024
Duos improbables
Création



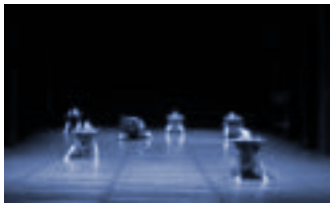
2023
Une famille singulière
Création



2022
Génération 2
Création



2021
Der Mannim Stock
Création



2018
Portrait de groupe avec femme(s)
Création



2016
Who’sBach ?
Création



2013
Vie de famille
Création



2012
Festival des petites formes (d)cousues au Point Ephémère à Paris

2011
Chambre10
Création



Réalisatrice

2014-2015
Le monde autrement
Documentaire, 52', Pyramide production, France 3/Télim tv



2013-2014
Seconde danse
Documentaire, 52', Pyramide production/ Télim tv/Planète



2011-2012
Blanche-Neige en prison
Documentaire 52', Pyramide production/ France 3/Planète



2009
Je danse donc je suis
20', Prison de Limoges

2007
Passe,passe le temps
14', Maison d’Arrêt du Val d’Oise

2006
Évasions
26', Maison d’Arrêt de Versailles

Le Ballet Brut

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