

UNE TRAVERSÉE

A show of the *Company Tchaika*

Creation planned for November 18th 2025 at the Théâtre de la Cité and Marionnettissimo Festival of Toulouse

Freely inspired by *Through the Looking Glass* Lewis Carroll



DIFFUSION FILE

Distribution et Mentions

Direction and dramaturgy **Natacha Belova and Tita Iacobelli**

Puppet design **Natacha Belova and Marta Pereira**

Interpretation (in alternance) **Elise Reculeau, Emilie Eechaute , Lou Hebborn and Marina Simonova**

Scenography **Aurélie Borremans**

Sound Creation **Simon Gonzalez**

Costumes **Jackie Fauconnier**

Choreography, outside view **Nicole Mossoux**

Light creation **Aurélie Perret**

Assistant to the direction **Lou Hebborn**

Construction **Ralf Nonn**

Production **Thérèse Coriou and Charlotte Evrard**

Production Company Tchaika, DC&J Creation, with the support of the Tax Shelter of Federal Government of Belgium and d'Inver Tax Shelter

Coproduction Théâtre de Liège, Le Vilar, Théâtre les Tanneurs, Maison de la Culture de Tournai/Maison de la création, Théâtre de la Cité & Marionnettissimo, Théâtre Antoine Vitez, Casteliers, Centre National de la Marionnette – Le Sablier, Festival Mondial des Théâtres de Marionnettes de Charleville Mézières, Biennale Internationale des Arts de la Marionnette de Paris – with the support of Fédération Wallonie Bruxelles, Wallonie Bruxelles International, Wallonie Bruxelles Théâtre Danse and Commission Communautaire Française

Duration: 60 minutes

For adults and children aged 10 and over

SYNOPSIS

In a room, a young child plays with a kitten. Asleep, she observes the world from the other side of the mirror, and launches into a game of survival, where compromise, despair and empowerment make you grow.

A game to not sink, but to stay strong, to assert yourself, to keep your name and your personality firmly in mind. A game in which you must participate, even as a Pawn on the big chessboard, even if it would have been better to be Queen.

Through the eyes of a child, **Une Traversée** explores the mysteries and mechanisms of consciousness and imagination that activate to face the absurdity of our world on the verge of collapse, torn apart by the madness of war.

Inspired by the masterpiece work by Lewis Carroll, which follows the famous *Alice in Wonderland*, Natacha Belova and Tita Iacobelli, with the help of puppets and the misappropriation of objects, engulf the public in this world now orphaned by all rationality where the absurd logic of a child's fantasy suddenly becomes salutary, an indispensable weapon against the manipulation of words and the domination of harmful ideas.

A child-level immersion in an absurd world torn apart by the idiocy of war



GENESIS AND NOTE OF INTENT

by Natacha Belova, march 2023

It has been two years since the war between Russia and Ukraine began.

Often, during the endless days at the beginning of this war, I thought, heard and read from my Russian and Ukrainian friends the phrase "it's like a dream, a crazy dream." It's such a scary dream and it's so hard to wake up. As if it were no longer your own dream but - like *Through the Looking Glass* - It's the Black King's dream and you're stuck in it, paralyzed inside.

"Once the Black King wakes up, you disappear, you disappear like smoke."

I remember how Soviet and Russian propaganda works, but how can we believe in the impossible to support this war?

"You can't believe things are impossible," said Alice.

"I am sure you lack training," said the Queen. "When I was your age, I trained half an hour a day. Well, I used to believe up to six impossible things before breakfast time. »"

Millions of adults and children are trying to cope with this nightmare, living in basements, moving, going crazy and... get used to it, which is *probably the worst*.

Since October 2023, all eyes have been on Palestine and Israel and the war raging there. The media seize these tragic events, international support is divided and the population is lost in the meander of the dis-information.

My brain cannot comprehend this reality. The show inspired by *Through the Looking Glass* wouldn't make sense if I were capable of doing anything reasonable about the war. It is not a question of working on these specific conflicts but rather on our losses in the face of the disaster of armed conflicts.

This is where the need to create comes from *Une Traversée*.

A show about a child who navigates disaster through play, and, in her fiction, reality is stripped to the bone. In the absurd logic of fantasy, the origins of speech are scratched and the manipulation of words is turned around to lose its force.

WRITING

Une Traversée is inspired by Lewis Carroll's book, which lends itself perfectly to the theme that the directors wanted to address from the outset of the project: the absurdity of the world through the eyes of a child. Starting with a child in a migration situation will create a special link with the reality that concerns us all.

The chapters of *Through the Looking Glass* take us through the stages of adapting to today's world in a playful, offbeat way.

At first glance, the narrative moves forward in a random fashion. But in reality, it is completely logical. It simply follows the rules of a game as yet unknown to the child. It's a game of survival, a game of compromises that allow us to grow up, but also to decipher the society around us.

The dynamics of the narrative are driven by the desire to arrive, not to sink and at the same time not to lose one's name and personality. It's a game, and a child is ready to play.

The movement does not depend on her, and the closer she gets, the further away she gets; but she is always ready to play. Doing 'as if', clinging to the Queen who runs away, to the Goat's beard, to the Knight who slips, doing everything not to fall, not to get out of the game, not to get locked into a fixed image, not to get used to the 'impossible', not to get stuck in someone else's dream.

The child observes the adult world from the other side of the mirror, she takes part in their game and at the same time, she is not there. She is asleep. She's not afraid. When incomprehension reaches its limits, it begins to shake the Black King and he turns into a kitten.

***"What if we weren't all part of a dream. But in this case I hope it's MY dream, and not the Black King's dream!
I hate the idea of being part of someone else's dream."***

SPACE AND PRESENCES

Starting point

A little girl is playing in her room. A child's bedroom like any other: the shelves are filled with school notebooks, dolls and soft toys, books and drawings. The coat rack is overflowing with clothes, balloons and roller skates are lying on the colorful carpet. Everything is normal, but strangely silent. A memory? A mirage? A dream?

It is a starting point that will become a point of no return. Everything will disappear. But it is with the scraps of this image that the child will build her path to survival.

Collapse

A child sits in her chair surrounded by ruins. She begins a game: brings out the old figures, which appear as fragments of her memory, the memory of the world "before", a memory of the world "after", its still unknown future. In this game with vague rules and absurd speeches, she advances by drawing and erasing interlocutors, and seeks the end of the road, the victory of a game that she does not fully understand, but

the stakes of which are vital: being able to get up from her chair. To walk. To leave this ruin that imprisons him.

The people on the other side of the looking glass

Characters take shape before the spectators' eyes, black garbage bags transform into the Black Queen, piles of papers become train conductors, piles of clothes transform into the White Queen, and floating pieces of plastic become mosquitoes that tell jokes. A school locker room, animated by a tremor, takes the shape of a train, while textbooks are transformed into passenger animals. This welcoming land is an enchanted forest which makes you forget its name and which seems to breathe, stretch, deform like a breathing lung... that of the Black King, who dreams. He sleeps in this suspended space, dreaming of this child, of her world. Maybe she's part of her dream?

In this uncertainty, the abandoned balloons become two twins, Tatati and Tatata, the child's guides. They whisper to him that it is part of the sleeping king's dream, and that, in order not to wake him, he must advance cautiously, as if on a minefield. A silent challenge, an invisible ordeal, where every step counts, and where the balance between reality and dream becomes more and more fragile.

The child searches for her place in this constantly changing world. The kingdom of the imagination reveals itself, unfolds and is torn apart at every moment. A kingdom that bears the traces of conflict, and the violence of a game whose rules will never be fully understood. The question remains suspended: who dreams, and who is dreamed in this journey between shadow and light

Puppet and its manipulators

The 7-year-old child is played by a puppet, manipulated by three women. These manipulators, like guides or protectors, are there to accompany her, sometimes taking part in her encounters, sometimes remaining in the background, silent observers of the world that the child creates and destroys at every moment. Their presence is a support on this border between imagination and devastated reality.

The puppeteers' play visibly displays Alice's powers of imagination and change of perspective. This child guides us, gives birth to universes and invokes these characters while mixing in her behaviors and details which, in her experience, touched her intensely. Through this deployment, the external hostility and senseless conflict is revealed as a sort of internal struggle, which calls into question one's identity and social belonging. Everything "normal" she had ever known was destroyed.

She must rebuild everything to be able to continue being alive.





TOURING SCHEDULE

2025

18 > 21 November : Théâtre de la Cité, Toulouse (France) as part of Festival Marionnettissimo

26 November > 05 December : Théâtre des Tanneurs, Brussels (Belgium)

2026

14 > 16 January : Maison de la Culture de Tournai (Belgium)

27 January : Le Sablier, Iffs (France)

26 > 28 February : Le Diamant, Québec (Canada)

07 > 08 March : Festival Casteliers, Montréal (Canada)

17 > 21 March : Théâtre Antoine Vitez, Ivry-sur-Seine (France)

31 March > 04 April : Le Vilar, Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium)

08 > 11 April : Théâtre de Liège (Belgium)

2027

11 > 12 March : Les 3 scènes - Grand Saint-Dizier (France)

01 > 02 April : Centre Culturel de Nivelles (Belgium)

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