



# TOO MAD TO BE TRUE

2023

**Captation :**

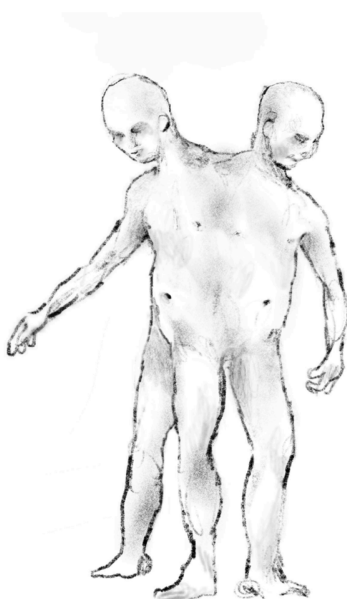
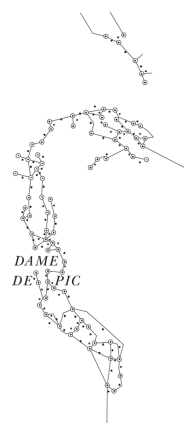
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Dame de Pic / Cie Karine Ponties

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[www.damedepic.be](http://www.damedepic.be) | [www.vimeo.com/damedepic](http://www.vimeo.com/damedepic)

[info@damedepic.be](mailto:info@damedepic.be) | [diffusion@damedepic.be](mailto:diffusion@damedepic.be)



What violence must one inflict upon oneself to find one's own identity?

A plunge into the depths, ultimately becoming nobody. There's someone I don't know who inflicts violence upon me. It's this imprint of myself that destroys me.

We construct ourselves with images so clumsy. To touch something that doesn't express itself, so abstract that it becomes intimate.

As if the intimate were hidden in symbols. Emptiness overwhelms me. Love, devouring, disappearance. Who am I in this torture? These are monsters. My monsters, from which I make a cushion; it brings softness. It's not just an abyss, not just a nightmare. It belongs to me, it builds me.

*“Too Mad To Be True” is a solo by KangKang Deng, choreographed by Karine Ponties and produced by Dame de Pic – dramaturgy and lighting creation by Guillaume Toussaint Fromentin, costume and puppet by Kangkang Deng, external perspective by Natacha Belova.*

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The body is a highly mixed representation of the imaginary. It is a reservoir of anthropological images, a complex crossroads where dreams, fictions, myths, and fantasies resonate. The figures of the other emerge through a corrosive process of fissures, additions, and exaggerations, through disruptions of perceptions.

Kangkang wanted to explore the theme of madness. The fine line that separates normality from madness, the moment when one transitions into this state. The moments when madness erupts in our everyday lives, in our most mundane gestures.

As creators, we have an ambiguous fascination, composed of fantasies and anxieties, for madness. Madness inscribed in a work always questions meaning because it shakes reality, discourse, and narrative structure. It also compels us to emerge and triggers a need to speak, a desire to write in order to free oneself from oneself, from the other, from the other within oneself.

On the contrary, it seems that madness is, perhaps more than reason, a common characteristic of human beings. Who can claim to possess flawless reason, a perfectly balanced mind?



### **Why madness? – Kangkang Deng**

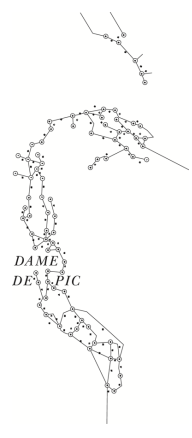
"It is clear that madness has always exerted a great fascination on me, dating back to my childhood. In my family, diagnosed schizophrenia in my maternal grandmother and paternal cousin, both of whom have already passed away due to this illness, has left a profound impact. When I was little, I witnessed moments of both of these close relatives becoming 'mad.'

My grandmother told me that someone often speaks to her ear, the voice controls her to do things, and she is compelled to follow it; I found it so mysterious and was curious to find this voice. I remember the last time I saw my cousin, it was in the summer, towards late afternoon. I was alone at home, immersed in reading a tale when someone knocked on my door. Upon opening it, I discovered my cousin, sweaty on her face, asking if I wanted to go out and play with her. I then realized that she had walked twenty kilometers to reach my place. This moment reinforced in me the idea that madness can be the origin of poetic and authentic moments, despite the judgment of others and the extreme loneliness it can bring.

All forms of art resonate with universal experiences of pain, solitude, love, and the search for meaning. They remind us that the boundary between normality and madness is often thin, and each of us carries within the seeds of madness



Each person is first and foremost the product of a family, of an origin in the history to which they belong. They carry its strengths as well as its wounds, and, above all, are born into a specific place.



Creation emerges from the incomprehensible. But nothing comes from nowhere; everything has an origin, arises from consequences. Archives, dreams, memories establish a circuit in which memory is the smallest common denominator that expands towards the world and towards the other (archive) or plunges into the unknown and the unspeakable (dream). What is most personal may be at once the most mystical and universal, and at the same time the most collective and historical.

To grasp the rhythm of the world and let oneself be carried away in these flows, to carry within us a kind of inner dance, of our disagreements with ourselves. To accept clumsiness by facing our fears. To find strength in weaknesses.

From piece to piece, I continually give new forms to a sharp and inexhaustible questioning of the world, and it is in the material itself that something I seek is found without knowing exactly what it is. A material all the richer for being composite, stratified, saturated with a thousand possibilities. It is a matter of listening to the voice that speaks secretly in the material and clearing a path for it.



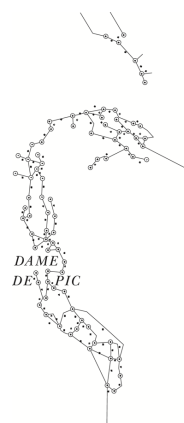
Writing, for me, always comes from the body, hence the need to create connections by working with individuals who each contain a writing. Individual writings with an animalistic instinct that attempt to translate, to rewrite existing languages: sounds, words, gestures, colors, and excesses of the world that erupt. Raw materials to transform. To translate, rewrite, not us in the world, but rather the world in us, like living beings among other living beings

Thus, by searching in this intimate struggle, every detail, all the possibilities of this body are explored, pushing its limits to the point where it reveals the flaw, the flaw where one can nestle, where the body frees itself from its boundaries, from its exasperations.

The detail becomes a pretext to explore, to sublimate, and the action transfigures the banality of the gesture into this absurd universe that questions us about the very purpose of the act, its gratuitousness, its grandeur, its perversion, its subversion.

To translate by playing, playing with languages, seeking an organic rhythm and attempting to break down the boundaries within oneself to explore the universe of the in-between territory without ever fixing the meaning, remaining open to each imaginary, elusive, fragile.





## ABOUT DAME DE PIC

TDame de Pic/Karine Ponties Company was founded in 1996 by Karine Ponties. With 46 creations presented in 36 countries, over 1000 performance dates on 4 continents, the company has developed a unique body language. Anchored in Brussels, the company has built its identity within the Belgian territory through significant partnerships and collaborations with artists from the French-speaking community. Gradually, the company has gained international recognition, leading to numerous collaborations abroad.

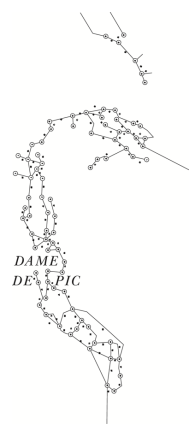
Exploring forms and formats with a great openness to audiences, the choreographic research has centered around translation. To translate, to rewrite, not us into the world, but rather the world into us, like living beings among other living beings. Translation as a mediation between the plurality of cultures and the unity of humanity.

From the dialogue between cultures to the dialogue between arts, each project of the company is the meeting point between dancers, actors, illustrators, and national or international musicians, offering a transversal horizon, making dance a platform, a means to encounter the other.

Over time, the company has built its own network of international diffusion with particularly strong connections in Eastern Europe (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Lithuania, and Russia), Asia (Vietnam and Korea), Africa (Senegal), and the Americas (Canada). While the quality of the developed work has also ensured the construction of loyal relationships with the main dance diffusion structures in Belgium, the company continues to develop tools to expand its footprint and reach audiences unfamiliar with choreographic art. Its work focuses on different lines of objectives: the creation and diffusion of repertoire, international artistic collaborations, artistic teaching and mediation, and support for young creation.

### Prices :

- **LOSS / HOME FAR AWAY FROM HOME** Prix du Kaunas Theatres – Fortuna 2022 (Lituanie)
- **Same Same** Mention spéciale du Jury de la Czech Dance Platform 2019 (République Tchèque)
- **Every Direction Is North** Golden Mask 2017 – Prix du meilleur spectacle de danse contemporaine (Russie)
- **Pastime Paradise** Nommé au Golden Mask 2016 – Prix du meilleur spectacle de danse contemporaine (Russie)
- **Luciola** Nommé au Prix de la Critique de la Communauté française de Belgique - Meilleur spectacle de danse 2016
- **Mirliflor** Golden Mask 2011 – Prix du meilleur spectacle de danse contemporaine (Russie)
- **havran et Fidèle à l'éclair** Prix Mimos 2009
- **Holeulone** Mention spéciale du jury au festival MIMOS 2008
- **Holeulone** Meilleur spectacle de danse au Prix de la Critique de la Communauté française de Belgique 2007
- **Mi non Sabir** Prix du public au Tanec Praha Festival
- **Brutalis** Prix de la création chorégraphique SACD 2002



## TEAM

Direction & choreography : Karine Ponties

Performer : Kangkang Deng

Puppet & costumes : Kangkang Deng

Light design and dramaturgy : Guillaume Toussaint  
Fromentin & Pier Gallen

Outside perspective : Natacha Belova

# KARINE PONTIES

*Choreographer*

Artistic director of Dame de Pic, choreographer and performer, Karine Ponties is the author of over forty dance pieces, a few of which were met with international awards. The language she creates on stage is chiseled and precise, echoing between humor, monstrosity and pure intensity, which she unearths in the organic singularity of each of her performers, and their absolute necessity for movement. The choreographic translation of this raw material leads towards a layered creative universe, mixing animation, illustration and music, and always relying on close collaborations.



DAME  
DE PIC

# GUILLAUME TOUSSAINT FROMENTIN

*Technical Director, Lighting Designer and Dramaturg*

With a literary education, Guillaume Toussaint Fromentin is a rather unconventional figure of the Belgian theatre scene. Lighting and graphic designer, as well as theatre creator, he has been based in Brussels since 2009. Guillaume offers a vision of the scenic arts which is free of barriers, and he is known to more than fully commit to his artistic partners. While his research around darkness and organicity have naturally led him towards dance, alongside Karine Ponties most notably, he remains very close to the theatre and the stakes it raises in our society. The technical and technological expertise he has acquired through the conception and realization of large-scale events, together with his grassroots knowledge of theatre inherited from his street theatre work and many international tours provide endless support to creativity and dialogue.

# KANGKANG DENG

*Performer*

Kangkang Deng is an artist, mime, and puppeteer of Chinese origin. She initially trained in France through a program in corporeal mime at the International School of Corporeal Mime in Montreuil and professional training in rod puppetry at Théâtre aux Mains Nues in Paris. Subsequently, she pursued a master's degree in Puppetry Arts at the École Supérieure des Arts de Mons – Arts2 in Belgium. She has expertise in Etienne Decroux's mime technique and puppet making.

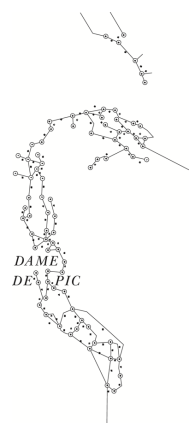
In a previous life, Kangkang Deng worked as a businesswoman in the Maghreb for a Chinese company specializing in construction and project engineering before completely redirecting her career towards the performing arts.

The encounter between Kangkang Deng and Karine Ponties, choreographer and artistic director of the Belgian contemporary dance company Dame de Pic, occurred during the first Academy of Mime and Gesture Arts in 2021 in Périgueux. She later participated in a second workshop in Paris with Karine, and upon learning about the choreographer's role as the coordinator of the Puppetry Arts master's program at Arts2 in Mons, decided to enroll.



For her final project, titled "To Mad to Be True," artistically and choreographically supported by Karine Ponties, Kangkang Deng received the highest distinction for the "quality of her work, a relationship to the body with a genuine purpose, and the risk and depth of the proposal."

Their desire to work together and deepen their collaboration developed over time and continues for a new creation within the Dame de Pic company. Kangkang Deng's hybrid background – mime, dance, puppetry, physical theatre – provides an intriguing palette for their work. They want to continue this meeting between themselves, between languages, cultures, and thoughts, and to find an "in-between," a space that unites us while acknowledging our differences.



## CONTACTS

**Karine Ponties / Artistic Director**

[karine@damedepic.be](mailto:karine@damedepic.be)

**Mahalia Carette / Producer**

[info@damedepic.be](mailto:info@damedepic.be)

**Caroline Gallois / Distribution manager**

[diffusion@damedepic.be](mailto:diffusion@damedepic.be)

**Office & Studio**

Rue du Labeur 1  
1070 Anderlecht  
Belgium

[www.damedepic.be](http://www.damedepic.be)

[www.vimeo.com/damedepic](http://www.vimeo.com/damedepic)

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