

La visite

A dance film inspired by Wanjiru Kamuyu's
An Immigrant's Story and the Palais de la Porte Dorée
(The Golden Gate Palace), Paris

Choreography & performance Wanjiru Kamuyu
Director Tommy Pascal



A commission by the public establishment
Palais de la Porte Dorée (The Golden Gate Palace)
in partnership with Théâtre de la Ville-Paris (France),
December 2020

“Being is one thing;
becoming aware of it is a point of arrival
by an awakened consciousness
and this involves a journey.”

Ngūgī wa Thiong'o
(From the book *In the Name of the Mother*)

*“Etre est une chose ;
en être conscient est l'aboutissement
du voyage d'une conscience éveillée.”*

Ngūgī wa Thiong'o
(*Du livre In the Name of the Mother*)

December 4 to 6, 2020, choreographer and dancer Wanjiru Kamuyu had 3 performances programmed of her recent solo *An Immigrant's Story* at Palais de la Porte Dorée (The Golden Gate Palace) in partnership with Théâtre de la Ville-Paris. The solo's point of inquiry begins with her personal migration story, from Kenya to France via the United States, interwoven with a collection of diverse migration stories, initiating an examining of the notions of displacement and otherness.

Confronted by the health crisis rendering the performances impossible, Wanjiru Kamuyu and all partners wished to envision an alternative avenue of visibility. Thus *La visite* was born - a dance film directed by Tommy Pascal.

La visite brings into resonance elements of Kamuyu's solo and her sensorial journey within the complex history of the Palais de la Porte Dorée (The Golden Gate Palace). A building constructed in 1931 for the International Colonial Exposition, was originally intended to be the Historical Museum of French Colonies. It was transformed multiple times to finally accommodate within it the current National Historical Museum of Immigration.

Through dance and image, *La visite* echoes the colonial heritage and contemporary revolts that have their roots in this history.

La visite

An echo of *An Immigrant's Story*, solo created by Wanjiru Kamuyu
A film inspired by le Palais de la Porte Dorée
(The Golden Gate Place)

Choreographer & performer | Wanjiru Kamuyu

Dramaturgy & production | Dirk Korell

Music composition | LACRYMOBOY

Costume | Birgit Neppl

Executive producer | camin aktion

Director & editing | Tommy Pascal

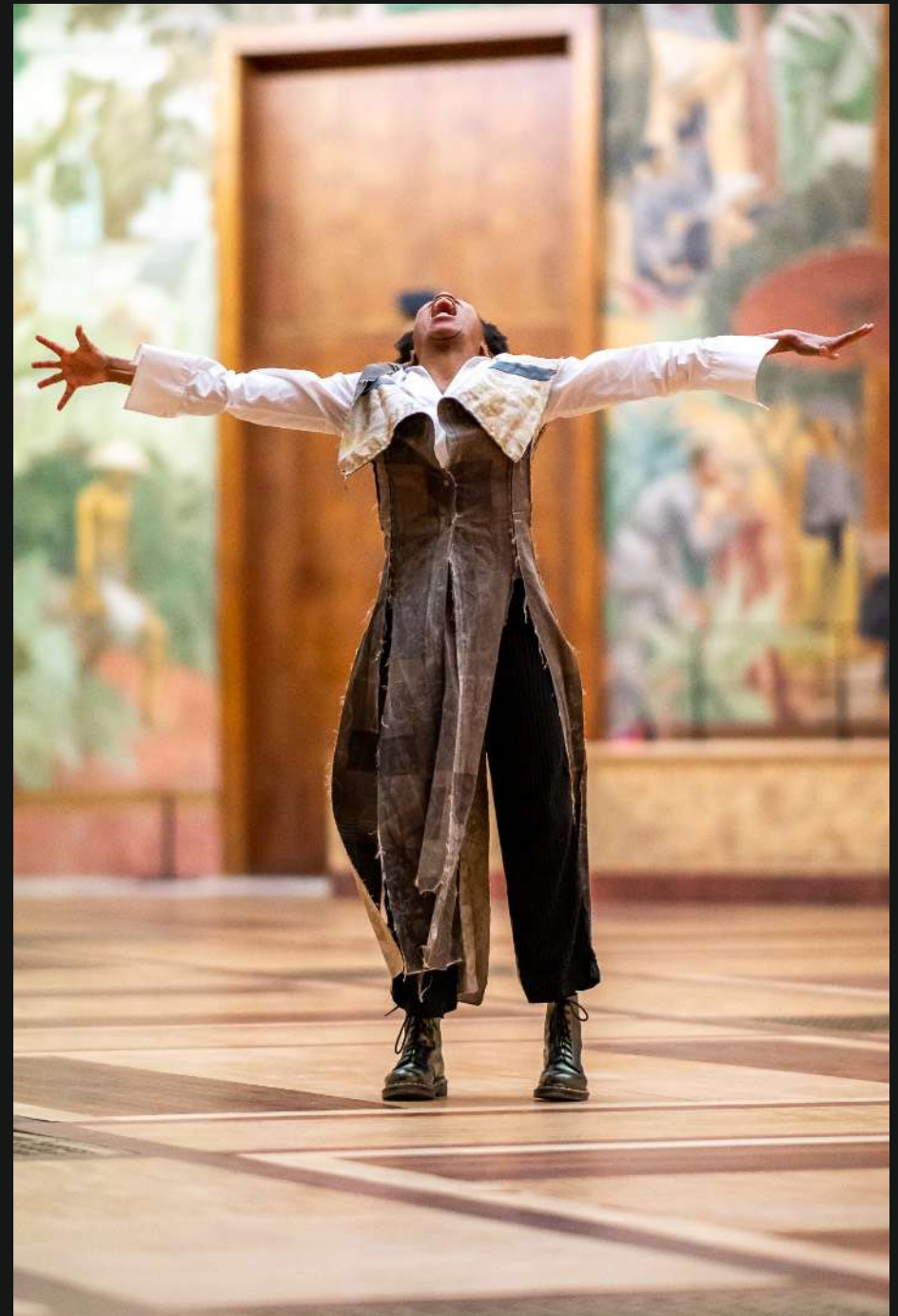
Sound recording | Julien Ravel

Gaffer | Sébastien Roman

Sound Mixing | LACRYMOBOY

Color grading | Nicolas Perret

A commission by the public establishment Palais de la Porte Dorée
in partnership with Théâtre de la Ville-Paris, December 2020



“As if a nasty gust of wind were sweeping her towards dead end spaces of turbulence, Wanjiru Kamuyu launches into a dance of tremors. Volatile hands, closed eyes, pierced body; she is gripped from within by a trance. In the sumptuous colorful and graphic décor of the Palais de la Porte Dorée (The Golden Gate Palace), nowadays the National Historical Museum of Immigration, which inspired her, the dancer and choreographer, captured by Tommy Pascal's precise and attentive camera, draws on her distant and recent history. From Kenya, she left for the United States and lives now in France. This film entitled *La visite* was born of her solo *An Immigrant's Story* (...). A long slow motion, like an immense vertigo, leaves the performer exposed, sitting on a bench.

The eye of the storm has passed. A lull supplants it.

Rosita Boisseau in Têlérama magazine | May 5, 2021

BEST OF: Dancing in museums! 8 instances of grace on video

An Immigrant's Story could not take the stage in December 2020.

The project was transformed, and became *La visite*, a short film made with Tommy Pascal, in the historically charged setting of the Palais de la Porte Dorée (The Golden Gate Palace), nowadays the National Historical Museum of Immigration.

Wanjiru Kamuyu moves in dialogue with the museum's forum, whose decor, when created in 1931, was intended to exhibit France's contribution to its colonies. She evokes her own relationship to immigration, from Kenya to the United States, then to France. A troubling creation of agitation to be watched online in the fourth edition of the festival *L'envers du décor*.

Maïlys Celeux-Lanval in Beaux Arts Magazine | February 10, 2021

<https://www.beauxarts.com/lifestyle/danser-au-musee-8-instants-de-grace-en->

“Like a wild beast let loose in the arena of the mezzanines and the art deco Forum of the Palais de la Porte Dorée (The Golden Gate Palace), Wanjiru Kamuyu dances a story. That of all humanity, which comes, goes, circulates, seeks. Lonely, almost disjointed, her body inhabited, a moving form deployed in a primal cry, navigates among frescoes, bas-reliefs, marquetry floors – so many emblematic testimonies of colonial history and immigration. This journey, about displacement and otherness, is at the heart of the choreographic work of the cosmopolitan Kenyan, whose commitment to the cause of refugees is fundamental. Sketched by dramaturge Dirk Korell and director Tommy Pascal, the filmed transcription an echo of her solo, capturing the eloquence of its details. The language of her hands, of her expressions, dazzling. The tumult of battered identities, constrained emotions explored. Then, released. Like tattered skin that finally falls off.”

C.F. in Afrique Magazine | May 1, 2020



Wanjiru Kamuyu

Dancer and choreographer, native Kenyan, living in Paris since 2007 with the genesis of her career in New York.

Coming from ballet, learnt as a child in Kenya, later turning to contemporary dance. As a dancer, between New York and Paris, she works with internationally renowned choreographers such as Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, (Urban Bush Women) Robyn Orlin, Bill T. Jones, Molissa Fenley, Okwui Okpokwasili, Emmanuel Eggermont, Irene Tassemedo, Nathalie Pubellier, Bartabas. As a choreographer, she collaborated with choreographer Bintou Dembélé, directors Jérôme Savary, Jean-François Auguste and Hassan Kassi Kouyate, alongside community engagement projects with a focus on immigration and refugees.

A graduate of a Masters of Fine Arts (Temple University, Philadelphia), Wanjiru Kamuyu has mastered different dance techniques with a keen interest in teaching through avenues of arts education and dance training in Africa, Europe and North American.

In 2018, at the Palais de la Porte Dorée's Grand Festival, Kamuyu performed her solo, *Portraits in Red*. A work that speaks to her triple continental living (Africa, North America, Europe) and questioning the very idea of beauty and the associated stereotypes.

In 2020, she created solo *An Immigrant's Story*. The National Museum of the History of Immigration and Théâtre de la Ville - Paris, co-producers of the work, subsequently commissioned a dance film, thus birthing *La visite*.

Tommy Pascal

Tommy Pascal is a film director specialized in dance and music.

After an eighteen-year career in dance, performing with the likes of Béjart Ballet Lausanne, Ballet Prejocaj, he turned his gaze towards directing and capturing the moving body on camera. His keen knowledge of dance and awareness of rhythm allow him to create while remaining faithful to the choreographic and musical works he films. Having become a reference in the field, he collaborates with internationally renowned choreographers, such as Crystal Pite, Ohad Naharin (The Paris Opera), Olivier Dubois, duo Wang-Ramirez, Akram Khan...

His expert eye in capturing the dancing body in space renders a multi-dimensional energy to his images, which consequentially offers a profound intuitively thoughtful and poetic experience for the viewer.

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Production & bookings

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Informations

Synopsis & interview with Wanjiru Kamuyu

<https://www.histoire-immigration.fr/ressources/art-et-culture/la-visite-de-wanjiru-kamuyu>

Photos by Anne Volery © Palais de la Porte Dorée

