

Rébecca Chaillon
Compagnie Dans le ventre

LA PARABOLE DU SEUM

[PARABLE OF THE SOUR]



Credits

Text and direction **Rébecca Chaillon**

Co-direction **Céline Champinot**

With **Yanis Boulahia, Hassan Gourniz, Loulie Houmed, Camille Léon-Fucien, Living Smile Vidya Nabila Mekkid, Julie Teuf**

Set design **Camille Riquier**

Sound design **Élisa Monteil**

Video design **Elisa Bernard**

Light design **Alexia Alexi**

Costumes **Solenne Capmas**

General management (creation) **Suzanne Péchenart**

General and stage management (tour) **Suzanne Péchenart, Marianne Joffre** (*alternately*)

Light management **Chloé Roger, Selma Yaker** (*alternately*)

Sound management **Elisa Monteil, Justine Pommereau** (*alternately*)

Video management **Elisa Bernard, Pauline Millet** (*alternately*)

Surtitling **Lisa Wegener**

English translation **Amelia Parenteau**

Technical support **Nicolas Ahssaine**

Intern in directing assistance **Marie Delpit**

Administration, production **Élise Bernard, Manon Crochemort and Amandine Loriol**

Production Direction & Development **Mélanie Charreton / Bureau O.u.r.s.a M.I.n.o.r**

A set design production by the **Pôle de mutualisation de services et ressources techniques.**

With the support of the **Costume Workshop of the Théâtre National Wallonie Bruxelles**

Rébecca Chaillon is represented by L'Arche - Agence théâtrale. www.arche-editeur.com

Practical information

Estimated duration : **2h45 / 165 min**

Not recommended under 15

Trigger Warnings (*in process*): **contains nudity on stage and smoke effects; the performance deals with situations involving fatphobia, queerphobia, racism, sexism, sexual violence and transphobia.**

Production

Production: **Compagnie Dans le ventre**

Coproduction: **Théâtre Public de Montreuil - CDN, Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles (BE), Vienna Festival (Wiener Festwochen) | Free Republic of Vienna (AT), Les Nuits de Fourvière - Lyon International Metropolis Festival, Comédie de Genève (CH), Maillon - Théâtre de Strasbourg - European Stage, Festival d'Avignon, Dublin Theatre Festival (IE), tnba - Théâtre National Bordeaux Aquitaine, Le Volcan - Scène nationale du Havre, La Criée - Théâtre National de Marseille, Carreau du Temple - cultural and sport institution of Paris, Théâtre Sorano - Scène conventionnée - Toulouse.**

Coproduction supported by the **cross-border program Interreg VI France-Wallonie-Vlaanderen - EMERGE: le Manège Maubeuge - Scène nationale transfrontalière, le phénix - Scène nationale de Valenciennes, Maison de la Culture d'Amiens, Théâtre de Namur (BE) and Kunstencentrum VierNulVier - Gent (BE).**



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With the support of **Pôle International de Production et de Diffusion - SUN**, of **Théâtre Léo Ferré – Aulnoye-Aymeries** and of **Générateur – Gentilly**.

The text was commissioned by the **Maison de la Culture de Seine-Saint-Denis (MC93)** as part of Multitude, the Seine-Saint-Denis Intercultural Biennial.

The Compagnie Dans le ventre is supported by the French Ministry of Culture (DRAC Hauts-de-France).

Creation calendar

2025

June 2025 - Performative and dramaturgical residency - Le Générateur - Gentilly

September 2025 - 2 weeks residency at Théâtre public de Montreuil - CDN

December 2025 - 2 weeks residency at Théâtre public de Montreuil - CDN

2026

January 2026 - Technical research laboratory at Théâtre public de Montreuil - CDN

April-May 2026 - 3 weeks residency on a stage with technical equipment at Le Manège Maubeuge, Scène nationale transfrontalière

May 2026 - 2 weeks residency on a stage with technical equipment at Théâtre public de Montreuil - CDN

Premiere from 11 to 14 June 2026 at the Wiener Festwochen (AT)

4-12 July 2026 at the Festival d'Avignon

16-19 July 2026 at Nuits de Fourvière (Lyon)

On tour on season 2026-2027.



Residency at TPM - Théâtre Public Montreuil, December 2025 ©Marikel Lahana

Synopsis

La Parabole du Seum* [Parable of the Sour] is an attempt to survive.

An attempt that begins in the margins, from life experiences that resist the norm and what it crushes.

In the face of rising fascism—in the face of the fascism already among us—Rébecca Chaillon offers neither a program nor consolation. She shares an experience: that of human beings wrestling with a world too big, too heavy, too urgent, despite their yearning for lightness.

Between sky and earth, the roofs of Seine-Saint-Denis, department 93, are home to satellite dishes pointed at a faraway place that is full, fragmented, already occupied. A space marked by French colonial history, by the neglect of public service and organized relegation, but also by strategies for living that are constantly inventing techniques of survival.

Faced with materialist rationality and the monotheisms of the norm, power and purity, religious syncretism, hybrid beliefs, and secular rituals function as poetic and political resistance, ways of allowing the soul to breathe.

In **La Parabole du Seum** [Parable of the Sour], the sky is both the place from which disaster strikes—hurricanes, floods, so-called “natural” disasters, which always reveal the same fault lines and divisions, and the new territories of Western imperialism.

If the sky is raging and no longer empty, what space remains for us to project our beliefs?

Between gravity and lightness, Rebecca Chaillon composes a funny and fierce parable: if not a lesson, a parable of bitterness.

Montreuil, January 2026

Note on the french title **La Parabole du seum [Parable of the sour]: In French, the word “parabole” means both “parable” and “satellite dish.” “Seum” is a French slang word said to derive from the Arabic word for “venom.” It is used to express feelings of anger, frustration, and bitterness. The title **La Parabole du Seum** also refers to Octavia Butler’s novel «Parable of the Sower», which is published in French as «La Parabole du Semeur» (note that “semeur” is very close phonetically to “seum”).*



Residency at TPM - Théâtre Public Montreuil, December 2025 ©Marikel Lahana



NOTE OF INTENT

La Parabole du Seum [Parable of the sour] is a project for an **astrological and astronomic story**, possibly a religious parable that flirts with the eco-friendly animated film, and that starts from my own territory: Seine Saint Denis (also known as the 93, after its administrative department number). The 93 is a peripheral territory of the capital, and is extremely stigmatized. People project all sorts of violent ideas on the area, immediately connecting it with poverty, filth, migration and its deviant cultures, savagery. No, thank you.

In this story, **I'd like to invite those who are considered minorities** due to their race, their sometimes racialized religions (like Islam or Judaism), their gender, their sexual orientation, or their health or disability to continue to work collectively to fight fascism and ecophagy. Those people who are refused the right to form a community, but are penned and isolated from the rest of society. Through multiple artistic mediums including poetic text, performance, and the construction of audio and visual images. I still and always imagine, as with my previous work, finding an impact between the work and the audience in order to create empathy, awareness, laughter, dreams and the desire to revolt.

I hope to create communities on the stage that are more complex and more highly valued than in our society.

In my territory of the 93—my research field—two figures stand out right away. A duo I dreamed up one sleepless night on the internet.

The “star” artist **Aya Nakamura** and the woman who studies the stars, the astrophysicist **Fatoumata Kebe**. As two French women of Malian ancestry who grew up in this department, they provide me with an ebullient horizon when it comes to imagining uncommon possibilities for our futures. These women are narrators of what they observe of the world, from the micro to the macro of this world. They are highly visible or more discreet public figures who by their natures are not expected to be where they are today. They are over-adapted and strategic in a hostile environment, where one couldn't even imagine they would be able to exist and become models reaching beyond multiple borders.

From February to May 2025, I had the good fortune to travel to New Orleans and Martinique. I was able to dive into two very inspiring spaces given my roots—one fantasized, the other real—and observe the strength required **to survive political and environmental catastrophes**. From the visits to plantations and homes of slaveowners to the traumatic discussions with locals about climate disasters due to capitalist and colonial excess, from emancipatory festive rituals that purge the violence to spaces dedicated to spiritual and material nourishment, I've come back from the trip feeling like I was in a time machine, a vessel traveling toward the past and the future at the same time.

I want to propose a **work that mythologizes our survival strategies**, that offers inspiring figures and that, like me, gives the lie to the current system. I need theater today to give me the time and the tools to think about a future. I want to put myself forward as a researcher to resolve the painful equations we're offered. The exhilarating discovery of **science fiction written by black American women** (Octavia Butler, N.K. Jemisin, Nnedi Okorafor), Caribbean women (Ketty Steward, Isis Labeau-Cabera, Nadia Chonville), an Afro-British trans writer (Rivers Solomon) and an obese white writer (Meg Elison) filled me with the desire to play with this language poetically and politically. You don't find a solution in sci-fi, but you digest the pain differently, you dream differently.



Residency at TPM - Théâtre Public Montreuil, December 2025 ©Marikellahana

During my trip overseas, I was particularly moved by **fat bodies**. I myself weigh 265 pounds, I'm thinking about getting pregnant, and have experienced tension between my shame and my pride. Sometimes I've wanted to fight by giving into ultra-positive hygienism in the most clichéd American fashion, and other times I've felt the desire to own my excess weight loud and proud, feeling "not so fat compared to." As in the movie *La Grande Bouffe*, I told myself, "let's bask in grease and die of capitalism, after all I'm in the country of excess and executions." I also told myself that I wanted fat bodies in **this strange community** I'm building onstage, which will come together like Dorothy's gang in Sidney Lumet's *The Wiz* to accompany the figures of Aya Nakamura and Fatoumata Kebe.

There are many of us who have more fights to fight than we have time to do it. There are so many of us who are overwhelmed. (Maybe it's a question of taking off). There are also many of us who are taking action.

What I'm doing here is a humble attempt at **a creative reaction** in the face of the loss of desire, the fear of collapse, the massacres underway and the collective stupefaction that leave greasy marks on everything they touch.

I have faith, and my faith has been mixed with the occult since my childhood. It's in the air I breathe, in my decisions, in the voices in my head. God, an astral theme, a bible, precious stones hidden in the brassiere covered in full moons, a charcoal incense that sets off the fire alarm, salt over the shoulder, mirrors for chasing something away, lentils on the first Saturday of the month, a wish, a candle, a novena to pray... It's my Caribbean education, it's survival against the colonization of our cultures, a forced cross-breeding of the knowledge of the native people present in the Caribbean and massive white evangelization.

I have magical faith, and this is one of my strategies as a fat black woman, a childless aging lesbian.

As embodied onstage, these figures of resistance and survival will be full of faith, weight, gravity, and weightlessness.

Perhaps we'll find the very poetic-performative means to prevent our sky, our dreams, and our religions from being colonized.



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I imagine working with Camille Riquier and Suzanne Péchenart on the set design and technical direction to continue what we started with *Carte Noire nommée Désir*: a search for a coherent but innovative scenic device allowing bodies and people with different cognitive needs to finally feel comfortable in the institutional theater and its codes. Céline Champinot and Elisa Monteil, who have partnered with me on several shows by structuring, contradicting, midwifing, and guiding the artistic construction site of which I am the architect, will help me to write for a science fictional and performative space.

Rébecca Chaillon, May 2025

CONTACTS



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