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ABSENCES
(WORKING TITLE)

Histoire(s) du Théâtre IX
CHRISTIANE JATAHY



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HISTOIRE(S) DU THÉÂTRE IX

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... is a reflection on memory and transmission.

On men who disappear and women who endure.

On a letter written before death to someone not yet born.

*On the need to invent forms of continuity when whatever should
bind us to the past seems to have vanished.*

*On an artist trying to understand why she has spent her life crea-
ting forms of presence in the face of what goes absent.*

Author, director Christiane Jatahy

Premiere May/June 2028 Vienna Festival (Wiener Festwochen) | Free Republic of Vienna

In *ABSENCES (Working Title)*, Christiane Jatahy turns towards a very personal story that long remained outside her work, yet is deeply rooted in her identity as a person and an artist: The story begins with a plane crash before she was born and the disappearance of her grandfather in the Amazon rainforest. Did he actually board that plane? Was it a political disappearance? His body was never found. What remained of him was a letter, written to her before she existed.

For years, Jatahy is trying to write this story. The series *Histoire(s) du théâtre*, a long-term investigation of humanity's oldest art form, gives now finally the right context. *ABSENCES (Working Title) – Histoire(s) du Théâtre IX* is a piece born from the attempt to write a film about that impossibility to write the story — about disappearances as well as the power of imagination. Onstage herself as an artist and investigator, Jatahy tries to build the first version of that screenplay in front of the audience. The writing itself becomes the theatrical event. Not as a subject, but as an experience. Not as the representation of a process, but as a real process, exposed in all its hesitations, detours, dead ends, and transformations.

While the story unfolds, the inquiry into the disappearance of her grandfather reveals a wider web of absences,

strange coincidences, and repetitions. The initial investigation shifts, and contradictory accounts appear: an absent father runs through the whole investigation without ever occupying its center; another grandfather, also the victim of a plane crash that same year; uncles, who died young. An unknown sister appears out of nowhere and changes everything. Because in the end, this story is – above all – about the women who stayed. About the grandmother who spent her whole life awaiting the return of a husband whose body was never found. About the many other women who held the continuity of life together in the face of one disappearance after another. The artist finds herself between two inheritances: the disappearance of the men and the endurance of the women.

“Believing that from the investigation of the past, some truth might emerge. But that, perhaps, truth does not exist as something hidden, waiting to be uncovered. Perhaps there are only questions, traces, voices, documents, absences. And the act of placing them in relation to one another already constitutes a fiction. Might theater inhabit precisely this space? Not the space of recovering what was lost, but of the provisional creation of a presence in the face of what disappears.”

Christiane Jatahy, author & director

HISTOIRE(S) DU THÉÂTRE

ABOUT

Histoire(s) du théâtre is a 10-part series and playful long-term investigation of humanity's oldest art form, a search for the core of the human condition and a celebration of the power of theatre. The series opened in 2018 with *La Reprise* (kunstenfestivaldesarts) by Swiss director Milo Rau. Since then, the play has toured the world. This was followed by *Histoire(s) du Théâtre II* by choreographer Faustin Linyekula (NTGent, 2019), a re-enactment of a performance by the Congolese National Ballet from the 1970s with some of the original performers. Part three *Liebestod* (Festival d'Avignon, 2021) by Spanish radical performer and director Angélica Liddell and part four *ONE SONG* (NTGent, 2022) by Belgian artist Miet Warlop were both internationally acclaimed as highlights of the Festival d'Avignon. The fifth part was created by Tim Etchells, director and founder of the legendary

theatre company Forced Entertainment, with *How Goes the World* (NTGent, 2023). *No Yogurt for the Dead* (NTGent, 2025) by Portuguese director and artistic director of the Festival d'Avignon Tiago Rodrigues celebrates with part six the power of theatre to find joy even in the saddest moments. For *Histoire(s) du Théâtre VII*, American choreographer Trajal Harrell created the solo work *Music Music* (Vienna Festival, 2026) in which he reflects his engagement with music in dance by revisiting and re-choreographing a catalog of significant musical pieces he has previously worked with. In 2027, Australian theatre company Back to Back Theatre will create their new major work *NEANDERTHAL* (Working Title) as part eight of the series. *Histoire(s) du Théâtre* will continue in 2028 with a new work by renowned Brazilian author and director Christiane Jatahy.



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BIOGRAPHIE

(b. 1968) is a Brazilian author, director and filmmaker who explores the boundaries between artistic disciplines, reality and fiction, and the distinction between performer and character. In 2022, she was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale: "As a perceptive observer of the brutal cruelty of our world, Jatahy develops an original, boundary-crossing language that combines the radical power of its poetic dimension with the counterpoint of biting political thought," said the jury. Jatahy has been a guest at the Vienna Festival seven times, including in 2022 with the world premiere of *Depois do silêncio*, a play about the intertwining of racism and capitalism, in 2024 with *Hamlet – dans les plis du temps*, and most recently with the widely acclaimed world premiere of *The Day Before* together with composer Brigitta Muntendorf and author Rosa Montero.

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