

# ARTEFACT

Joris Mathieu with Haut et Court

FOR ALL AGE GROUPS, 14 AND ABOVE - RUNNING TIME : 55 MINUTES (+ Q&A session)

Creation 2017



THÉÂTRE  
NOUVELLE  
GÉNÉRATION  
CENTRE DRAMATIQUE  
NATIONAL - LYON



## PRESENTATION PACK

# SUMMARY

<b>CAST AND CREDITS .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>PRESENTATION .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>INTERVIEW OF JORIS MATHIEU AND NICOLAS BOUDIER .....</b>	<b>5 TO 7</b>
<b>THE ARTISTIC TEAM.....</b>	<b>8 TO 11</b>
<b>ON TOUR.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>CONTACTS .....</b>	<b>14</b>

# ARTEFACT

Joris Mathieu with Haut et Court

## **INSTALLATION / PERFORMANCE**

**FOR ALL AGE GROUPS, 14 AND ABOVE**

**RUNNING TIME : 55 MINUTES (+ Q&A SESSION)**

CREATION Théâtre Nouvelle Génération - CDN de Lyon

## **DISTRIBUTION**

**Written and directed** by Joris Mathieu

**Designer of theatrical devices** Nicolas Boudier, Joris Mathieu

**Set design, lighting engineer** Nicolas Boudier

**Video, programmer** Loïc Bontems

**Video and shootings** Siegfried Marque

**Composer** Nicolas Thévenet

**Robotics** Clément-Marie Mathieu

**Stage manager and 3D printer** Gérald Groult

**Control room** Basile Verrier

**Artist collaborators** Vincent Hermano, Philippe Chareyron

**Acknowledgments** Rémi Rauzier, Fabrice Garnier, Lisa Lou Eyssautier, Martin Detoef

**Scene shop** Un Point Trois, La Ferraille

**Production, touring** Claire Lonchamp-Fine

**International touring** Bénédicte Goinard (Bureau Formart)

## **MENTIONS OBLIGATOIRES**

**Production** Théâtre Nouvelle Génération - Centre dramatique national de Lyon.

**Coproduction** Le Grand R - Scène nationale de la Roche-sur-Yon, Le Merlan - Scène nationale de Marseille.

**With the support** of l'Espace Jean Legendre - Théâtre de Compiègne, Le Merlan - Scène nationale de Marseille in the frame of Noûs partners of the three-yearly artistic events of Théâtre Nouvelle Génération - Centre dramatique national de Lyon.

**With the participation** of DICRéAM, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, CNC, CNL.

**With the support** of Fonds de soutien à la création artistique et numérique [SCAN] de la Région Auvergne Rhône-Alpes and of d'Arcadi Île-de-France in the frame of NémO Biennale.

**In partnership with** Confluence Institute for Innovation and Creative Strategies in Architecture.



Creation in March 2017 at L'Espace Jean Legendre - Théâtre de Compiègne, Scène nationale de L'Oise then at Théâtre Nouvelle Génération - CDN de Lyon.

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**Capacity : 45 seats**

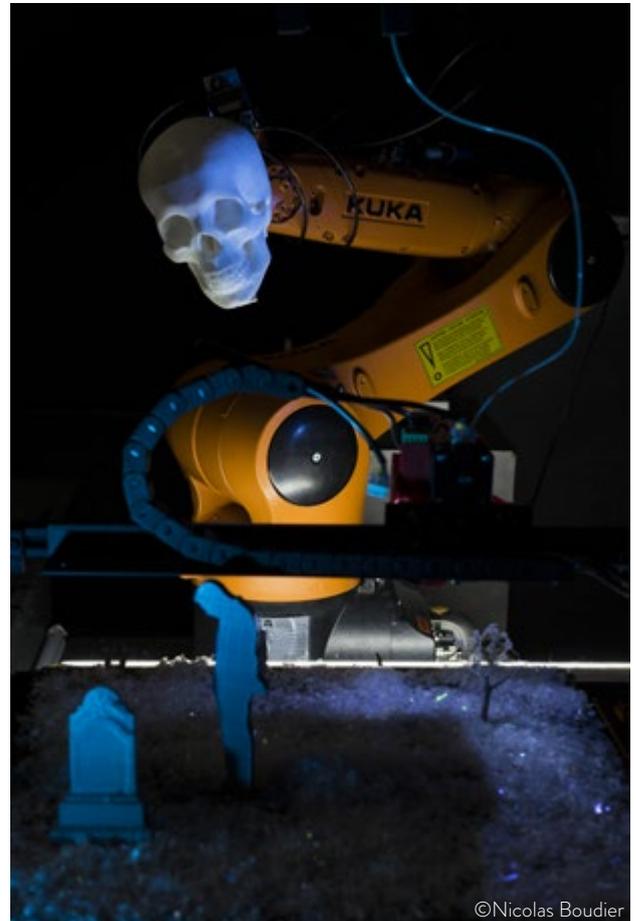
# PRESENTATION

## THEATRE WITHOUT PEOPLE? DIALOGUES PERFORMED BY MACHINES?

Welcome to *Artefact* – a production with a difference, in which spectators equipped with headsets are invited into a walkabout performance combining optical theatre, 3D printer technology and robotics.

*Artefact* explores our innermost nature, revealing far more than our relationship with objects. Its captivating, ingenious mechanics both fascinate and disturb as they play with the codes of classical representation.

The production features three installations that appear to be three different facets of the same waking dream, peopled with extraordinary puppets. The precise movements of the set designer/robot, the synthetic voices, the 3D printers moving back and forth and the flowing images come together to create a profoundly moving and original performance.



Anticipating the outright disappearance of humans, *Artefact* resonates with the contemporary social and political debate about our future on Earth, in a period torn between a traditionally work-related vision of society and a degraded natural environment. Part of the story it tells is the dialogue between a man and an artificial intelligence that is nourished and informed by humans. This brain machine, endowed with a strong personality, feels a desire to express itself through drama; unfortunately, the man disappears – along with the rest of humanity – leaving the nostalgic machine to face this challenge alone and unaided.

Are we actors or mere spectators in the world being constructed before our eyes? Evoking Shakespeare and Beckett, the theater in *Artefact* explores our uncontrollable urge to create, providing a timeless, sensitive window into the world we are building. Will we be able to resist the lure of the machines we produce? This questioning of our ability to reinvent ourselves for the future is particularly geared toward the “digital native” generation; it appeals to the spectator to reclaim the present in order to play a true part in the world of tomorrow.

### MEDIAS

Link to the *Artefact* teaser : <https://vimeo.com/259329513>

Teaching pack and press review available on request

# INTERVIEW

## INTERVIEW WITH JORIS MATHIEU (AUTHOR AND STAGE DIRECTOR) AND NICOLAS BOUDIER (SET DESIGNER AND LIGHTING ENGINEER) BY ÉLISE TERNAT

### **How did *Artefact* come into being? And how does this new production follow on from the previous projects by the Haut et Court theater company?**

The fundamental question that inspired *Artefact* was, “what place do human beings and their bodies have in the world of theater, and in the world in general?” Our work in recent years (with productions such as *Cosmos* and *Urbik Orbik*) has positioned the human being as one object among others, while exploring the concepts of physical disappearance from the stage and loss of communication.

*Artefact* takes place in a hypothetical future world from which humans have disappeared as a logical result of our longstanding goals for society – a process accelerated by the intensive industrialization of the 20th century and confirmed by today’s digital and robotic revolution.

The idea of *Artefact* was also inspired by a project we have been working on since we came to the Théâtre Nouvelle Génération in Lyon in 2015: to engage with the reality of today in order to imagine the world of tomorrow. The problems under discussion today are already part of our lives. The world of the theater can play the role of a deforming mirror. *Artefact* resonates with the current political debate: what is our future on Earth, now that we are torn between a traditionally work-related vision of society and a degraded natural environment? How can we, as humans, reinvent ourselves for the future?

### **What story does *Artefact* tell?**

Part of the story it tells is that of a machine enthusiast who begins to write with a view to creating an artwork with machines. He enters into a dialogue with an artificial intelligence that is nourished and informed by humans (recalling films such as *Her*, and smartphone assistants such as Siri, with a service logic). The sole purpose

and function of the artificial intelligence is to exchange with human beings, but as it has a strong personality, it feels a desire to express itself through drama... Unfortunately, it cannot see this project through as the man disappears, along with the rest of humanity. So the artificial intelligence, left with the nostalgic desire to act, tries to find ways of creating without the help of its tutor. The fictional world underpinning this narrative takes us inside the machine, into different aspects of its life and work.

In addition to this link between two entities, one of which has disappeared, *Artefact* tells the story of humans who turned their attention to production as soon as they appeared on Earth – creating, evolving, advancing, and constantly seeking to transform natural raw materials into reproducible manufactured objects.

Humans are builders and manufacturers, always creating and producing. Now, because of overproduction and the decline of the environment, we are duty-bound to put an end to this behavior – but without production, we seem unsure of the meaning of our existence. The development of robotics and artificial intelligence projects has resulted in objects endowed with human qualities – it’s rather as though we were arranging for our own physical disappearance, or imagining other (more resistant, even virtual) bodies to enable the migration of human intelligence, culture and knowledge.

### **Why do you draw a parallel between 3D printers and puppet theaters?**

We always start with simple images, then make them more complex. The inspiration for the first image came from a visit to a 3D printer Fab Lab with a group of middle-school students – who, unlike me, were not at all surprised by what they saw.

# INTERVIEW

We went on to make a visual analogy between the 3D printer and the puppet theater. The box-shaped printers have the same form as toy theaters. Our first idea was to make a connection between optical theater and a form of puppet theater with technologically controlled sets. We wanted to reconsider the position of the spectator, to explore an immersive relationship with differences of scale. As the spectators of *Artefact* walk around inside the scenic space, they are both observers and observed.

The important thing here is the idea of a theater within a theater – a recurrent theme. *Artefact* politically explores the role of theater in society, just as Calderón, Ibsen and Shakespeare did in the past. Theater emerges as an indicator of the human condition: are we actors or mere spectators in the world that is coming into being? There is also the question of power, of the relationship between creator and creature. Having created machines that are now autonomous, humans are questioning their own nature as elements of a permanent chain within which machines are a new evolutionary species to be taken into account as part of our environment.

## **Artefact is an installation / performance. What form does it take?**

The spectators of *Artefact* must find and create a place for themselves. They are immersed in a world of objects (3D printers, digital images, a robotic arm) – a world without people, without actors. *Artefact* concerns objects, but also images, networks and flows. The spectators will look for meaning: what are the screens hiding? What lies behind the images? What do they reveal?

The word *Artefact*, derived from the Latin *ars* (skill) and *facere* (to make), was chosen for the significance of its etymology, its suggestion of handcrafted production – the artificial

reproduction of reality. Can art – and therefore theatre – be created artificially? If so, humans – at the very heart of the theater – are no longer required.

*Artefact* proposes a theatrical form in which human beings play no part; their absence is keenly felt and its significance is highlighted. As in the work of Bertolt Brecht, the concept of alienation is also key. How can we gain a critical perspective of the world in which we are immersed? *Artefact* uses images and scenic objects to make these different approaches possible, in a form combining spectacle, installation and performance.

The reproducibility of artworks is an underlying theme in *Artefact*. Is this a reflection on theater and on the actor's central role?

*Artefact* creates an encounter between an audience and a world designed and managed by an artificial intelligence – a functional dimension programmed for specific tasks, but which has secret gardens of its own. This artificial intelligence has a memory that it searches to find what is missing, what it has lost of its connection with human beings. Several narrative layers are superimposed and, as the spectators walk around, they must position themselves in relation to the performance.

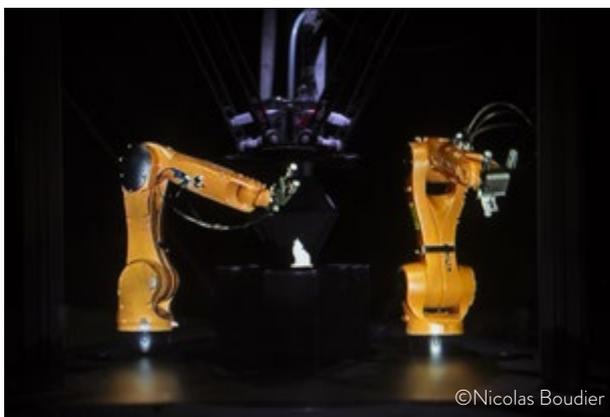
Just as actors are asked to perform roles with more or less structured dialogues, the narrative here is constructed around the repetitive nature of the actions. Actors are generally believed to be the essence of theater, with variations in their performance from one evening to the next making each theater visit a unique experience. In *Artefact*, the machines never vary in the performance of their gestures; they were designed in order to perfectly and invariably reproduce a specific role. The idea is to see how sensibility can arise in a machine that dreams of being human.

# INTERVIEW

## Why does the production target audiences aged 14 and over?

It is evident that today's adult generations have failed; they are incapable of making the decisions necessary to bring about change. We are no longer even convinced that we can act on the world to change it. *Artefact* is geared to young audiences to help them confront reality, find their own position in relation to it in a rational, lucid and non-dogmatic way and develop an individual and collective approach to the construction of tomorrow's world.

There is a real gap between our generations and the "digital natives" for whom the new technological developments are normal and self-evident. In response, we want to recover a sense of wonder and novelty and inspire contemplation... to put something of the fabulous back into the Fab Lab.



# THE CREATIVE TEAM

## HAUT ET COURT A COLLECTIVE THEATER COMPANY

For me, theater is a collective art. I believe the strength and beauty of the artistic gesture stem from the combined desires, visions and abilities of several individuals working together.

The Haut et Court company was created in 1998, thanks to the passion and energy of a group of artists who are still by my side today, having supported and energized the project over the years and shared in its successes and failures. Haut et Court has developed its own, singular identity through this patient, collective artistic evolution. The forms we create are unreservedly theatrical; interweaving images, literature, optical illusions, music, new technologies and traditional machinery, they appeal to all the viewer's senses. Science fiction, scientific imagination and technological and scenic innovation are among the powerful driving forces behind our creative research.

The question of living things is central to our work; it is expressed on stage by an exploration of the actors' physical presence, a language developed from the start by the company's founding member-actors. Nicolas Boudier's work as a set designer is an integral part of the dramaturgy of our productions, and Nicolas Thévenet's musical compositions help shape the scenography.

Our common goal is a poetic theater of science fiction that reconnects with a political theater tradition, questioning the world, the place of the individual and the role of art in society.

In 2015, after its years as an independent company, the Haut et Court team came with me to the Théâtre Nouvelle Génération - CDN, the Centre dramatique national in Lyon, to develop its artistic project. Pooling their ideas, passions and skills, they now support the CDN's creative projects, in its own theater in Lyon, on tour in France and abroad, and in their work with audiences.

**Joris Mathieu**

### THE CREATORS

**Joris Mathieu**

Stage director, author, designer of theatrical devices

**Nicolas Boudier**

Designer of theatrical devices, lighting engineer, photographer

**Nicolas Thévenet**

Composer

**Philippe Chareyron**

Actor

**Vincent Hermano**

Actor

**Marion Talotti**

Actress mask designer

**Loïc Bontems**

Video creator, programmer

**Siegfried Marque**

Video creator, photographer

# THE ARTISTIC TEAM

## JORIS MATHIEU

Stage director

After getting a Master in Theatre Studies, Joris Mathieu founded in 1998 the Haut et Court company with a few friends in Lyon. As passionate about literature as about visual arts, Joris Mathieu focuses on adapting novels or short stories, which gives him the opportunity to fully express himself visually on stage.

Fairly quickly, the company's work gets noticed on a regional scale and by theatre institutions. They become associate artists in Polaris in Corbas then at the Théâtre de Vénissieux. Joris Mathieu questions theatre involvement in the city and invents different projects to explore and invest the local territories.

Over the years, Haut et Court artistic identity gets stronger and clearer: Joris Mathieu puts together ambitious projects, pushing the envelope poetry and literature wise, as well as in his technological innovation use. With "Des Anges mineurs" and "Le Bardo", Joris Mathieu starts collaborating with the author Antoine Volodine, a prominent figure in French contemporary writing. These clearly theatrical shows combine images, literature, optical illusions, music, new media, as well as traditional machinery, in a totally interlocked way. This atypical stage writing is directed at the spectator's every sense. The company also develops an interest towards younger audiences, by adapting short stories.

Since January 1st, 2015, he is the director of the Théâtre Nouvelle Génération – Centre Dramatique National de Lyon.

The artistic built for the Théâtre Nouvelle Génération-CDN de Lyon totally echoes the one he started back in 1998 with the Haut et Court company, looking at creation and poetic action through an intergenerational lens.

Finding new ways into art for each and every generation, inventing new and innovative devices to reach out to audiences and in particular, the younger ones: this is the very heart of our project.

The presence of the Haut et Court within the CDN is crucial. Stage innovation, anticipation, mixing technology and sciences with imagination, these are the core and powerful forces driving our creation process.



### PREVIOUS WORKS :

- **2017** *Artefact* by Joris Mathieu with de Haut et Court art collective
- **2016** *Hikikomori - The shelter* by Joris Mathieu with de Haut et Court art collective
- **2013** *Un jour je vous raconterai une autre aventure extraordinaire...* *Cosmos* adapted from Witold Gombrowicz novel
- **2011** *Urbik/Orbik* based on Lorriss Murail inspired by the life and works of Philip K. Dick
- **2011** *La Sphère d'Or* based on Barjavel and Erle Cox *Sarapis* based on Philip K. Dick
- **2010** *Le Bardo* written in collaboration with Antoine Volodine
- **2006-2010** *Des anges mineurs* by Antoine Volodine
- **2005** *Microclimats* from Maïakovski, Cortazar and Botho Strauss
- **2004** *Notices, manuels techniques et modes d'emploi* from Laurent Gautier
- **2003** *Matin brun* (youth theatre) based on Franck Pavloff
- **2003** *Préambule à une déclaration mondiale de guerre à l'ordre* from Alain Turgeon
- **2002** *Gorges déployées* collective writing
- **2002** *Le palais des claques* (youth theatre) based on Pascal Brückner
- **2001** *pH neutre* by Joris Mathieu
- **1999** *La méthode albanaise* from Lorriss Murail
- **1998** *Kernok le pirate* (youth theatre) based on Eugène Sue

# THE ARTISTIC TEAM

## **NICOLAS BOUDIER**

**Set designer, lighting designer and  
photographer**

After studying automation and robotics, he turned to performing arts in 1992. He's been working with the Haut et Court Company since the very beginning and has been taken part in the making of the shows as a set and lighting designer.

On top of his collaborations with the collective, he has also been designing sets and lightings for Lia Rodrigues, Yuval Pick, Shantala Shivalingappa, João Saldanha, Astrid Takche de Toledo, Pina Bausch, Ushio Amagatsu, Denis Plassard, Gilles Pastor, Olivier Meyrou, Stéphane Ricordel, Carole Lorang, the Talipot Theatre in Réunion, the Nordik Black Theatre in Oslo, Sylvie Mongin Algan, Christian Gariat, Savitry Nair, project Namasya directed by Shantala Shivalingappa, Enzo Cormann, Nathalie Royer, Philippe Pellen Baldini.

Recently he sat up optical, lighting and video devices in collaboration with Enki Bilal for the exhibition « *Mécanhumanimal* » at Musée des arts et métiers in Paris.

He is also a photographer and creates performances and installations together with Astrid Takche de Toledo.

Within the Théâtre Nouvelle Génération he continues to work closely with Joris Mathieu to develop the staging research project of the national center's productions.

## **PHILIPPE CHAREYRON**

**VINCENT HERMANO**

**Artist collaborators**

They have been performing on each and every single show since the start of the company Haut et Court in 1998. In the Théâtre Nouvelle Génération, they take part in development by educational outreach, readings and workshops. Philippe Chareyron has been working with Hans Peter Cloos, and Vincent Hermano has been working with Wladyslaw Znorko, among others.

## **LOÏC BONTEMS**

**Video creator and multimedia artist**

Loïc Bontems graduated from Saint-Etienne School of Fine Arts in 2004 and from the Studio National du Fresnoy in 2005/2006. He created several films and multimedia installations and his works have been showcased at the Festival Côté Court in Pantin in 2006, as well as part of « *Dans la nuit, des images* », exhibition at the Grand Palais, Paris, in 2008. He has been a video manager for several performing arts shows since 2008, working for Joris Mathieu and the Haut et Court company, as well as Stéphane Ricordel at the Monfort Theatre and Florent Trochel.

Within the Théâtre Nouvelle Génération, he continues to use both film making and development skills for image creation and innovative technological devices.

# THE ARTISTIC TEAM



## **SIEGFRIED MARQUE**

Video creator and photographer

After studying ethnology, he turned to video and directed his first short film.

In 2003 he became a free-lance photographer. He has been working for the Haut et Court Company since 2008 as a stage manager, videographer and photographer. Since 2015 he has integrated the creative team of the national dramatic center, to invent still and moving images.



## **NICOLAS THÉVENET**

Sound designer and composer

Nicolas Thévenet graduated from Lyon College of Music in acousmatic music (musique concrète). He composed each sound design of each performance of the Haut et Court company. He also collaborates with the Traction Avant Company, Jean Christophe Hembert, Jean Lambert-Wild and Nicolas Ramond, la hors de Company, le Musée des confluences Lyon. In parallel with stage productions, he develops in the national dramatic center a work of audio fictions.



## **CLÉMENT-MARIE MATHIEU**

Robotics

During his studies in “Art and Technology – Sound Recording and Materials” at the Université de Marne-la-Vallée, then in “Sound Production” at the ENSATT theater school, Clément-Marie Mathieu honed his skills in the technical and artistic aspects of sound engineering – skills he now uses in his work with several theater, circus and dance companies. He also uses other digital media, particularly video. After completing his master’s thesis on “the gesture and the tool”, he focused his research on robotics and their implications for the performing arts. He is currently pursuing this line of research in collaboration with companies and professionals in the industry sector, and with the associative laboratory he has founded (the “L.I.E.”). Clément-Marie Mathieu has worked with companies including Le Théâtre du Rivage, YK Projects / Qudus Onikeku, Le Théâtre Exalté, Compagnie Vladimir Steyaert, Compagnie Les Endimanchés, Compagnie Tzara and Clastic Théâtre.

# ON TOUR

## SEASON 2017 / 2018

**10-15 & 17-22 July - Festival d'Avignon OFF at la MANUFACTURE Collectif Contemporain, in the frame of a Digital Focus. Location: École Supérieure d'Art d'Avignon.**

Every day at 11:30 am & 4 pm.

- **16th-24th November 2017 (24 shows)**

Théâtre Nouvelle Génération – Centre dramatique national de Lyon, in the frame of festival Micro Mondes

- **2d-3d February 2018 (6 shows)**

La Gaîté Lyrique, in the frame of NémO, digital arts international biennale – Paris / Île-de-France produced by Arcadi

- **6th-10th February 2018 (14 shows)**

MC2: Grenoble, in partnership with L'Hexagone Scène nationale Arts Sciences de Meylan

- **17th-18th March 2018 (6 shows)**

Les Giboulées - TJP Strasbourg

- **April 2018 (7 shows)**

La Manufacture – Centre dramatique national de Nancy, in the frame of festival Ring

- **3d-4th May 2018 (4 shows)**

Théâtre Jean Lurçat, Scène nationale d'Aubusson

## SEASON 2016 / 2017

- **24th-28th March 2017 (11 shows)**

Espace Jean Legendre – Théâtre de Compiègne – Scène nationale de l'Oise in prefiguration

- **4th-13th April 2017 (22 shows)**

Théâtre Nouvelle Génération – Centre dramatique national de Lyon

- **25th-28th April 2017 (8 shows)**

Le Merlan – Scène nationale de Marseille

- **4th-5th May 2017 (6 shows)**

Le Lux – Scène nationale de Valence

- **11th-18th May 2017 (17 shows)**

Le Grand R – Scène nationale de la Roche-sur-Yon

# TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

## PERFORMING AREA

**Stage :** Ideal wall-to-wall width: 14m x 12m or 12m x 10 m minimum

**Height :** 2m80 minimum

## TEAM ON TOUR

6 persons maximum from Lyon

**Volume of freight :** The whole scenery is carried on a 45m3 carrier depending on access to the venue.

**Technical rider on request**  
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# CONTACTS

## THÉÂTRE NOUVELLE GÉNÉRATION - CDN DE LYON

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Le Théâtre Nouvelle Génération - Centre dramatique national, est subventionné par le Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, la Ville de Lyon, la Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, la Métropole Grand Lyon et le Département du Rhône.

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