

Artistic Project

The Panta Théâtre is a team of theatrical researchers and creators, and a resource centre of contemporary form and writing.

In 1991, we invested in a space, a converted hangar in the centre of Caen. It really is an alternative space, not only in terms of our social and political artistic project, but also in institutional terms. The Panta Théâtre is developing a singular style of research, creation, distribution and training centred essentially on contemporary writing and authors, with the aim of gathering large audiences and bringing together the residents of this city.

In placing the words of the author of a given text at the heart of our work, in privileging the importance of contemporary writing in the whole of our approach and in all areas of our project, the Panta Théâtre forms links and partnerships with teams both national and international and exchanges theatrical experiences bringing together authors, actors, technicians, directors, translators and audience members.

The originality of the Panta-théâtre lies in its investment in the heart of the city, in its perpetual confrontation of the day-to-day world by the interrogation of human nature and our relationships with the world and with others.

This preoccupation with sharing and questioning and with discussion within the theatre reflects the desire to defend an ideal: the theatre as a place of speech, in political terms, which allows for a new way – at least a different way – of looking at society. It marks a desire to assemble a large audience to create a republic of dreams and the persistent hope to bring together the residents of the city.

Above all a theatrical laboratory, the Panta Théâtre is developing in terms of the length and continuity of its adventures and projects in its home city, but also nationally and internationally. We have toured productions abroad (Poland, England, Finland, Mexico, Algeria, Italy) and participated in an international co-production with Mexico and Finland.

The festival 'Écrire et Mettre en Scène Aujourd'hui' (Writing and Directing Today) for example, invites foreign dramatists to work with us – in years past we have welcomed English, Russian, Polish, Bulgarian, Lebanese, German, Algerian, Finn, Italian, Catalan, Greek, Macedonian, Swiss dramatists. For nineteen years, this original work, which takes place on stage with the authors and directors, has allowed for artistic meetings and encounters which could develop beyond France. These encounters are vital to the development of the Panta Théâtre's project and double responsibility for our company results from them.

Our premier artistic responsibility is to question 'the state of the world' with recourse to fiction, to illusion: rather a way of questioning the forms and conditions of performance than a witness-account of the real. By researching a 'communal' approach between an author and a director, the Panta Théâtre is trying to deepen a logic of ensemble work which governs the journey of a piece of writing right up to its performance, questioning the language, the space, and the forms of representation. It is a professional choice to engage in a reflection on writing and the conditions of the exercise of writing by the author, by questioning the conditions of their representation in the space, on stage. This interest leads equally to an obligatory interrogation of the forms of representation which go beyond the simple identification of a character and turn the codes of representation and of narration on their heads. In this sense, the piece in question is seen in the larger sense of theatrical writing (texts – materials, images – materials, body...).

We also have a social responsibility: to involve the audience in the different steps, the different phases of the work consecrated to contemporary writing and dramaturgy.

This social responsibility is intrinsically linked to our work on formulation and transmission.

It is this social responsibility to involve the audience in the different steps of writing that leads the Panta Théâtre to employ a range of methods (rehearsed readings, meetings with authors, the Écrire et Mettre en Scène Aujourd'hui festival, authors-in-residence, orders of translation, invitation of contemporary pieces). Also, through our relations with the University of Caen, the Lycée Malherbe – Baccalaureate in literature/theatre, the School of Fine Arts in Caen, and the Rectorat, the Panta Théâtre demonstrates a wish to be active in the areas of education and training. By bringing students and secondary school pupils into the process consecrated to writing, the Panta Théâtre increases the accessibility of theatrical writing.

None of this would be possible without the national and international work of creation and distribution, the indispensable backbone and priority of the Panta's artistic project.

We want this theatrical space to remain a space of interrogation and critique of the world and its representation. We never want to stop telling of this world, nor questioning ourselves on the multiple ways of interpreting the way we tell it.

'To be a theatre in construction in the open air'