

# SNAKEAWAKE

## transcultural hybrid performance

**ANIMISTIC MAGIC MEETS REAL DIVERSITY MEETS DOCUMENTARY THEATRE**

*A long time ago, the gods and spirits ruled the heavens, whilst humans and animals ruled the Earth. Like oil and water, the two worlds did not mix. But one day, the serpent decided to unite them, transforming his long body into a rainbow, and thus connecting heaven and earth. It is said that since then, humans and the divine are eternally one.*

Different interpretations of this Yoruba creation myth can today be heard in the Americas, the Caribbean and the whole African diaspora. In fact, in many indigenous cultures, from Indian to Greco-Roman, Chinese and Native American, the snake is a powerful symbol of tolerance and diversity; and of the connection between the material and spiritual world.

It is this meaning that we ascribe to SNAKEAWAKE, a **co-created transcultural dance and devised theatre performance with live music** that brings back **ritual as a central element of culture**. By bridging artistic excellence with participatory practices, SNAKEAWAKE offers a space for both personal and collective transformation.

SNAKE AWAKE is a hybrid participatory performance, a live concert and an animistic ritual. SNAKE AWAKE is a space we invite you into to experience, create and celebrate our humanity in a diverse community. SNAKE AWAKE as an open ritual channels the energy of the participating persons and their ancestors and thereby enables an individual as well as collective experience of transformation or transition.

Through a non-binary perspective of gender represented by the snake, we want to dare to invite the unknown in this participatory show by preparing ourselves and the audience to create it together. We will create a 'safer space', tell our story with elements of autobiographical theatre and video documentary, 'outing' ourselves as people with our stories. These stories create a space at eye level where we bravely face and examine our own clichés.

In a world of increasing polarities and continuing systems of discrimination, Snake Awake provides a creative response to fostering social inclusion and cohesion. Dance, performance and storytelling become a language to create a space for curiosity, mutual appreciation, and a sense of interconnectedness. It draws inspiration from the ritual element of West African dance, where there is no separation between the dancer, the musician, the storyteller and the audience. But where rather, they exist in total harmony.

In Snake Awake, we re-awaken and translate universal principles of animistic dance traditions into a new transcultural, contemporary methodology. During the experience, co-curated by artists from Africa, Europe and South America, we create a sensorial site-specific performance with live music. Both the artists and audience will share stories. We will embody the experiences of others. We will examine our own prejudices and explore questions around identity and culture, race and privilege, gender and sexuality, and our connection to nature and the divine. We will invoke our ancestors. We will sing our names. We will dance. And together, we will re-birth the myth of the snake through our mind, body and soul.

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**MAÏMOUNA JALLOW**, *creative direction (Gambia/Spain)*

**CARMELITA YG SIWA**, *lead choreographer (Benin)*

**BETH BELI**, *musical coordination (Brazil)*

**JOSHUA ALIBET**, *video design (Uganda)*

**TEMMIE OVWASA**, *voice performer (Nigeria)*

**JANICE ICHE**, *vocalist and DJ performer (Kenya)*

**WAKIO MZENGE**, *actor/storyteller (Kenya)*

**RODOLPHO SAGBO**, *dance performer (Benin/Germany)*

**MASSA DEMBELE**, *instrument performer (Burkina Faso/Germany)*

**MARTHA SAMBE**, *performer (Nigeria)*

**MIRIAM DEL BARRIO**, *artistic management (Spain)*

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