

# Vies de Papier

Documentary Object Theatre

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# VIES DE PAPIER [PAPER LIVES]

©ed. Naly Gérard

## Summary

This show came about by accident. One day, at a flea market in Brussels, Benoît Faivre and Tommy Laszlo came across a strange document: a family photo album, superbly decorated and in excellent condition. The photos portrayed the memories of a woman born in Germany in 1933, from her childhood to her marriage in Belgium. Who was this person named Christa? Why did our two artists immediately feel intimately linked to the album? How did the fate of this immigrant recall the path of each of their grandmothers? This was the start of a vast investigation. The artists crossed Europe to question Second World War experts, genealogists and their own families.

Here they are, before us on stage, to recreate the steps of this long-running investigation. They play the role of themselves and use the images of this album, videos and geographical maps. Close ties and surprising coincidences emerge. Little by little, like a dotted outline, the portrait of an unknown woman and that of a Europe still scarred by the last World War, appears. *Vies de Papier* [Paper Lives] give visible substance to the inextricable links between personal history and History "with an H for hatchet", as writer Georges Perec used to say.

In this performance, Benoît Faivre and Tommy Laszlo question the process which transforms the past into a memory: what do we choose to see, to keep, to accept or to flee?



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## Partners

**CO-PRODUCTION:** Théâtre Gérard-Philippe, publicly-funded theatre of Frouard; MarionNEttes, International Festival of Neuchatel (Switzerland); Centre culturel André-Malraux, Vandoeuvre-les-Nancy; La Méridienne, publicly-funded theatre of Lunéville; Espace Jéliote, publicly-funded puppet theatre of Oloron-Sainte-Marie; Le Carreau, National Theatre of Forbach and Est mosellan; Mil Tamm, cultural project of Pays de Pontivy; T-Werk Potsdam; Le Sablier, Normandy- Ifs/ Dives-sur-Mer, Centre for Puppetry Arts; Moselle Arts Vivants; The City of Brussels / Nuit Blanche; the City of Metz (heritage department, archives and media libraries); Metz Métropole (Musée de la Cour d'Or).

**PRE-PURCHASE:** Le Mouffetard, Puppet Theatre, Paris; L'Arc, Creusot national theatre; Festival Perspectives).

**SUPPORT:** The script is the winner of the National Commission for the creation of dramatic texts -ARTCENA / distinction in plural dramaturgy. This project received the production support of the DRAC Grand-Est and the residency support of DRAC Grand-Est / Agence culturelle d'Alsace. The company La Bande Passante is supported by the Grand Est Regional Authority for the period 2017-2019.

## Cast

With: Benoît Faivre, Tommy Laszlo  
 Script: Benoît Faivre, Kathleen Fortin, Pauline Jardel, Tommy Laszlo  
 Artistic direction: Benoît Faivre, Tommy Laszlo  
 External view: Kathleen Fortin  
 Photos: Pauline Jardel  
 Musical creation: Gabriel Fabing  
 Lighting creation: Marie-Jeanne Assayag-Lion  
 Costumes: Daniel Trento  
 Stage management / Set-building: Marie-Jeanne Assayag-Lion, Olivier Gaille, David Gallaire, Thierry Mathieu, Daniel Trento  
 Management: Marie-Jeanne Assayag-Lion  
 Production Manager: Claire Girod  
 Production assistance: Aurélie Burgun

## Distribution

For all audiences, 11 years and over  
 Duration: 1 hour 20 minutes  
 Capacity: 150 people (please contact us for larger numbers).

### Touring team:

2 artists  
 1 technician  
 1 tour administrator

# DOCUMENTARY THEATRE FROM OBJECTS

## The object as a document

Benoît Faivre is a "Jack-of-all-trades". He studied music, cinema and theatre, then after creating soundtracks for theatre and radio, he became a director and actor in object theatre. Certain audiences will remember *Compléments d'Objets*, where telephones, olive stones and car keys released the sound memory of events they were witness to, or *Cockpit Cuisine*, a cinematographic tribute to the artists of Art Brut and other handymen of dream machines. For Benoît Faivre, who identifies with the processes of Roland Shön, Pascal Rome or Christian Carrignon, the object is a document which leads to the encounter with the Other. For the company, objects are like sponges that need to be interpreted in order to draw out their stories and artistic possibilities. More than just illustrative tools, they are genuine vectors of stories.

## Towards a paper dramaturgy

With the arrival of Tommy Laszlo, in 2014, the company began research work on old papers rescued from oblivion. During performances, they were transformed into encyclopaedias, botanical drawings, postcards and architectural plans to recreate sets in volumes enhanced by sound, light and video. *Au Fond* [Deep Down], *Villes de Papier* [Paper Cities] and *Nos Jardins* [Our Gardens] are unique forms born of the meeting between two artists and paper objects. The artistic approach of la Bande Passante took a new direction with the discovery of a personal archive in which history overtakes fiction. In creating *Paper Lives*, Benoît Faivre and Tommy Laszlo take us on an ever deeper journey into time and memory, real and retold.

### A few dates

2007 : *Compléments d'Objets*  
2012 : *Cockpit Cuisine*   
2014 : *Ville de Papier* : Metz   
2015 : *Jardin de Papier*  
2015 : *Ville de Papier*: Brussels  
2016 : *Nos Jardins*  
2016 : *Au Fond*  
2016 : *Ville de Papier*: Pays de Pontivy  
2016 : *Ville de Papier*: Oloron-Sainte-Marie  
2017 : *Vies de Papier*   
2018 : *Ville de Papier*: Vevey

See all the videos at: <https://vimeo.com/ciebandepassante>





## An object towards which stories converge

This album was a real find, because it is the **convergence point of people, spaces and time-frames**. First, it brings together **small and great histories**, that of a family and that of a world event. In doing so, it questions us on the consequences of our choices, our commitments and our abandonments, of their impact on collective society, the way history was shaped and how it shapes us. It enables us to question the Second World War in other terms than those of "goodies and baddies", of victims and tormentors. Furthermore, the fact that the album evokes a period as significant as the Second World War through a wealthy Berlin family which supported the regime, **causes the truth to collide with the lie**. This family album in itself is a double staging: firstly, that of the photo (the importance of the framing, in particular) and the choice of photos and their layout (this album was created after the event, what does its staging hide?). It raises, above all, the question of filtering memories.

What do we choose to see, to keep, to accept or to flee?

It is also at the **crossroads of geographies**, countries, the issue of Europe at that time, the building of today's Europe, with its mass immigrations and how they shaped populations. This album is at the crossroads of current affairs and history. It shows striking similarities between the history of that time and the history we are writing today, with its wars, migrations, protectionism and the rise of extremism.

Lastly, beyond these general convergences, Tommy and I noticed that **this album echoed our own family histories**. Tommy is of Hungarian origin (Tommy comes from Tamàs).

Tommy's grandmother lived alone with her two children in Hungary after their father disappeared during the Hungarian defeat in January 1945. She arrived in France with her two children after the 1956 revolution. Tommy was very close to his grandmother, who passed away in 2008. Since the discovery of this album, new family archives have reappeared, such as a sketchbook used regularly by Tommy's grandfather before disappearing in 1945. For Benoît, the album echoed the stories he heard from his maternal grandmother, who was born in Berlin in 1931 and arrived in France in 1948.

## Starting the creative process

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This album shook us up as artists and people. Our ideas changed, our desires became images. It led us to **carry out an investigation together and to bring its story to the stage**. Going in search of a story, a buried memory, means acting on the present, it upsets us and the people around us. This investigation was full of surprises, and it was upsetting too. We admit we were afraid of what was in store for us. What would this investigation reveal to us about the world? What would it reveal about us? What would it require of us? What would it provoke in us? In others? Would we be able to rise to the task? To our responsibility? To our encounter with history?

Then, there was the **question of representing this reality on stage, of all the realities we encountered**. Of the form we had to create. What about the impact it would have on audiences, every evening? How could we take stock of the transformations brought about by this album? How could we show the effect of this album on living things?

It was a poetical and human challenge.

## A documentary collection to take stock of reality and its transformations

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How do we represent a thought in movement, a thought which changes with time? How do we present assumptions, mistakes and changes of opinion? How do we present multiple, tree-like, omnidirectional thinking? A person's thought? A group's thought, too?

We believe **this plurality can be taken into account through the document**.

In *La Maison des Feuilles*, through the document, Mark Z. Danielewski tells the tale of the transformation of three characters who analyse, through a chain reaction, the documents that each one has produced. Zamparo's thesis adds itself to Navidson's film, followed by Johnny Errand's annotations. The three characters seem to change together in different times, united in a book which will in turn receive the reader. The document is also at the heart of George Perec's writing, in *La Vie Mode*

*d'Emploi [A User's Manual to Life]*, where he writes about life in a block of flats. By attempting to "grasp, describe, exhaust, not the whole world - simply evoking such a project is enough to ruin it - but a fragment made from it". The document also fuels the writing of historian Philippe Artières, in his novels *Vie et mort de Paul Gény* and *Au Fond*. From a document he summons a new historical tale, a "potential opening to history". As with these references, **documents would form the basis of the writing of Paper Lives**. Documents which had been created, some which had been gathered, and which we would organise live in front of the audience.



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## Documents chosen, sorted, presented, animated, transformed and filmed live.



Our documentary collection consisted of numerous documents, old or recent, retrieved or created. Some were in audio form, others visual, others in artistic form. The sizes and materials were very different. How could we bring them together? How could we give them coherence, a direction and a pace and share them with the audience? The answer lay in **linking them by a point of view**. What unites these objects, sounds and images is Tommy's and Benoît's point of view. Through these documents gathered, chosen, sorted, manipulated, assembled and transformed by us, the audience can enter into their world, their poetry, their history, the ties they create and their viewpoint.

For this, we would use cameras. **Video** would enable us not only to **share a point of view**, but also to enlarge it for everyone. *Paper Lives* thus consists in the **live creation of a documentary**, in the here and now of the stage, starting from documents gathered in another time and place. This shooting is more than just a film, which freezes elements, **it is a performance which is capable of taking into account the motion of time and thought**.

# THE CREATION TEAM

## **Benoît Faivre**

**Design and script,  
construction, acting and manipulation**

Born in 1979, he abandoned his studies in science to study history, cinema, theatre, history of art and music. He moved into the direction of radio plays and into sound and musical creation for theatre (Cécile Backès, Joseph Danan, Michel Dydim, etc.) and visual arts. He founded the company la Bande Passante in 2007. After his first two plays (*Compléments d'Objets* and *Cockpit Cuisine*), he started to form a documentary object theatre. He was joined by Tommy Laszlo in 2014.

## **Tommy Laszlo**

**Design and script,  
construction, acting and manipulation**

This visual artist, born in 1975, graduated from the Lorraine Higher Art School and worked as a film set decorator for the Samsafilms and Delux Production studios in Luxembourg. He created videos for the Metz opera-theatre, the National Theatre of Nancy-La Manufacture and the Escales Lyriques festival. At the same time, he worked on personal productions, in particular video portraits. He joined the company in 2014 and co-directed the "Paper Worlds" Cycle.

## **Kathleen Fortin**

**Design and script,  
outside view, construction**

After studying theatre and mime in Quebec, Kathleen studied for 3 years at the National School for Puppetry Arts in Charleville-Mézières. After graduation, she settled in Alsace and worked with various directors in Alsace and elsewhere (Eric Dominicone, Eve Ledig, Anne Aycoberry, Luc Amoros, Grégoire Cailles and Émilie Flasher), as a puppeteer, shadow theatre player and actress. She made puppets for La Soupe Cie, Actemobazar, and Cie Rebonds d'Histoires. She received voice training from Isabelle Marx and Catherine Fender. She has been the external eye for various companies, such as La Mue/tte, Le coin qui tourne and Les mots du vent. Since 2018, she has been the artistic director of the company PuceAndPunez, for which she has written and directed *Tremblements*. At the same time, she teaches drama and puppetry arts to various audiences. She joined la Bande Passante in 2016 and worked with Benoît Faivre and Tommy Laszlo on the design, adaptation and staging of the show *Au Fond*, which was adapted from the novel by Philippe Artières.

# THE CREATION TEAM

## Pauline Jardel

### Photos, documentary direction

After studying foreign languages in Strasbourg, she moved to Berlin in 1995. In Berlin, she began working in audio-visual production, as a production assistant for documentaries and reports, in addition to feature films and advertising. She also worked as assistant director for short films and video clips. She has lived in Paris since 2003, where, in addition to her work in film production, she makes her own documentaries: *Walter Potts* (16', 2003), *All I Wanna Do* (35', 2010), *Kaori* (10', 2011), *Mais comment t'as fait, Mathieu Boogaerts?* (52', 2012), *Il était cinq heures dix*, *Bertrand Belin* (50', 2014), *Albin de la Simone*, *Images Fantômes* (50', 2016).

## David Gallaire

### Device design, construction

David Gallaire was born in Paris in 1969 and lives in Nancy. After scientific studies, he entered the technical world of performance arts in the early 1990s. His work consisted in designing and building stage sets and structures. His work progressed into the design of quirky machines and mechanical sound and poetic creations for the performing arts, for which he carries out parallel research on lighting. This self-taught designer has participated in numerous theatrical projects. His career has also led him to stage acting as an actor-manipulator of animated objects. He has worked with: Le Théâtre en Kit, Mille Failles, Boomerang, Théâtre de la Manufacture, CDN de Nancy (National Drama Centre), 4 Litres 12, La Valise, Repères, Blah Blah Blah, La Bande Passante, Soundtrack, Le NEST and CDN de Thionville (National Drama Centre), among others, designing and touring in France and abroad. He has also designed works of visual art for display through the Art Brut network. - In partnership with L'Art en Marche, his works were exhibited in several locations in France from 1999 to 2012. Since 2015, he has been a founding member of the 711 collective, a multi-disciplinary collective which works on lighting and stage design for performing arts, as well as for other independent projects.

## Gabriel Fabing

### Musical composition

This multi-instrument musician and composer, with a passion for free and open music, studied piano, flute and cello at the music academy in Amnéville for ten years. In 2003 he met the company La Valise (theatre/ puppetry/circus) for which he composed ten soundtracks. From 2007 on, he worked with numerous companies (dance, street theatre, circus, puppets...) and composed his own work for the majority of shows. (Cie La Vouivre, Carabosse, Les fruits du hasard, Anomalie, Azimut, Caliband théâtre, Volubilis, M.O#Cie). In 2010, with Claire Girod, he founded the company Blah Blah Blah, focussing on live, free and offbeat music. The company's repertoire ranges from shows for very young audiences to participative horn concerts and sound siestas. Its latest production, *Périphérie*, is based on a collection of images and sound atmospheres to create a geographical portrait. Its final form is a film/documentary/concert, played by a local choir and a group of electric musicians to Gabriel's compositions.

# PRESS EXTRACTS

## Thierry Voisin - TELERAMA **TTT**

*"Build a show around a family album found in a flea market: this is the crazy task which Benoît Faivre and Tommy Laszlo set out to do and achieved brilliantly (...). Thanks to clever staging, the show blends photos of the life of their heroine with the film of their investigation (...) and a two-voice story on stage, where our own family history finds an unexpected echo. Overwhelming!"*

## Mathieu Dochtermann - TOUTE LA CULTURE

*"Tender and moving, accomplished and remarkably intelligent, this gem is a must-see"*

## Isabelle Arnaud - UNIFICATION

*"The staging is highly clever and played with talent and extreme accuracy by two impressive artists (...). This unique performance is definitely not to be missed."*

## Victoria Faurel - UN FAUTEUIL POUR L'ORCHESTRE

*"The intelligence of a show which speaks to us of the love of objects and archives, which transmits to us the pleasure of research, which also talks about us, our family histories and the mystery of people's universal path. This is a play which touches, breaks up, comes together and builds itself in our head. It's fascinating."*

## Nicolas Jaray - L'EXPRESS

*"A moving exploration of the meanders of past and present time. The show is touching, like the album. It is an artistic presentation which links people's and the audience's lives."*

## Yann Albert - LA PETITE REVUE

*"This intimate journey is served by an inventive and stimulating scenography. (...) Original and touching, the show makes you want to know more about your own history, and to speak with those who witnessed it, before it's too late."*

## Angélique Lagarde - KOURANDART

*"A rare object you must see!"*

## Paula Gomez - THÉÂTRE ACTU

*"Suspense, humour and poetry pleasantly punctuate this surprising show. In 'Vies de Papier', La Bande Passante stages a reality which catches up with and goes beyond fiction, this is powerful!"*

## Valérie-Louise Iglesias - LE JSL / journal de Saône-et-Loire

*"The fascinating story and excellent technique did not take from all the emotions felt along this journey. The audience was moved, won over and could not stop applauding."*

**FOR COMPLETE (FRENCH) PRESS REVIEWS, DOWNLOAD THE MAGAZINE : [http://ciebandepassante.fr/public/uploads/2018/08/revue-de-presse\\_Vies-de-Papier.pdf](http://ciebandepassante.fr/public/uploads/2018/08/revue-de-presse_Vies-de-Papier.pdf)**

# La bande passante

— théâtre d'objets documentaire

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