

# Claire Dessimoz

## GRAND MIROIR (2023)

valuing fragility / pop and baroque music / movement and voice / questioning social postures / judgment and evaluation / social pressure / mixing styles / questioning self-representation / doing like everyone else while trying to distinguish oneself

Premiere at Théâtre Sévelin 36 - Lausanne, 14-15.03.2023



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<https://vimeo.com/802813775>  
<https://www.claire.dessimoz.org>  
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***Grand Miroir* explores the possibility of an individual and collective revolution through fragility by looking with tenderness at our never-ending attempt to fit into the mold while distinguishing ourselves from it.**

**It is a solo that questions the intimate and social paradoxes linked to the evaluation of others and of oneself in an attempt to valorize uncertainty, doubt and the possibility of being labile. *Grand Miroir* proposes to play down our social posture and our assurances to embrace the attempt, the ridiculous, the uncertain and therefore the change.**

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“...We place our courage today in «doing as our friends do» and “maintaining our standards”. And when we are being open, we are ready - even willing - with kindness and distinction, to expand those standards.

But I don't want us to expand the standards to include the abnormal in what would be the new standard of tomorrow.

Rather, I would like us to be able to accept that which is outside the norm, that which has perhaps not yet been made fashionable, that which perhaps just seems strange to us.

And perhaps we don't even need to understand it, but only to let it be there, to let it be, abnormal, outside, even without understanding.

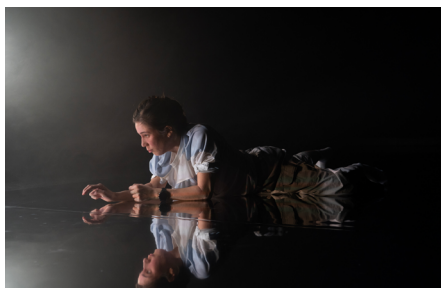


But, my courageous fellows, I wish you in your turn, also to lack courage sometimes, and to dare to go out even when you are not sure that you're admirable. To dare to be together, vulnerable and miserable. And to dare to imagine that this is like this that the revolution proceeds.”



Excerpt of the piece.

Freely inspired by *Courage d'être soi*, Paul B. Preciado and *Shame on Shame*, Viviane Morey.



**Chorégraphie, performance:** Claire Dessimoz

**Based on choreography created with and by:** : Éléonore Heiniger, Jenny Lacher, Klaire-Alice, Yuta Ishikawa, Valentine Paley

**Collaboration:** Éléonore Heiniger, Valentine Paley, Louis Bonard

**Set and lighting design:** Florian Leduc

**Dramaturgy, administration:** Roberta Alberico

**Costume:** Safia Semlali

**Production:** PRAXIS

**Coproduction:** Théâtre Sévelin 36

**Support:** État de Vaud, Fondation Leenaards, SIS

**Photos, videos:** Anouk Maupu

**Duration:** 45 minutes



Claire Dessimoz has started to create her pieces in 2016 at Théâtre de l'Usine and at Théâtre Sévelin 36. She benefited from the YAA!-Young Associated Artist program (18-20) developed by Pro Helvetia, she was an associate artist at the Arsenic-Lausanne (17-20), and is currently supported by the State of Vaud (21-23). She lives and works in Lausanne.

# Claire Dessimoz

## GRAND MIROIR (2023)



### CONTEXT AND PRINCIPLES

by Roberta Alberico, PRAXIS collaborator and dramaturge on the piece

Grand Miroir is based on the piece *current currents* created in 2021 by Claire Dessimoz in collaboration with Éléonore Heiniger, Valentine Paley, Klaire-Alice, Yuta Ishikawa and Jenny Lacher. With *Grand Miroir*, Claire continues this work with her own body and as a solo artist, relying on the sensitive experience of *current currents* to extract a new, more direct and manifest form.

By moving to a solo, the notions of judgment and evaluation are no longer worked through interactions between the performers on stage, but between the solo character and the audience. The audience, often challenged and questioned, is constantly referred back to its own gaze, and to the fact that it constitutes a social mirror of the character who shows itself to it.

**Grand Miroir** explores the fragility and courage of breaking out of a paradigm structured by judgment, by seeking out unstable languages: a song that hesitates, poses that oscillate between the cat walk and the solitary pyjama party, a few minutes of hip-hop exuberance and wanna-be...

**Grand Miroir** uses several languages, such as song, dialogue with the audience, dance or recitation of texts, without ever seeking mastery or virtuosity.

**Grand Miroir** is a precarious exploration of the countless possible ways of being «oneself», an invitation to deconstruct the seriousness with which we view our social postures in order to conceive ourselves as more labile.

**Grand Miroir** is carried by a performer who keeps changing hats to see what it's like, as if she were alone in her bedroom, in front of one of those big mirrors you see in teenagers' bedrooms in the movies. It's a character who's a little careless, a little playful, but aware that she's being watched and probably judged.

**Grand Miroir** proposes to embrace doubt and interrogation: Aren't self-confidence and certitudes part of the valorized social postures? Can the affirmation of uncertainty and faith in attempts constitute a collective social and ethical pact? In *Grand Miroir*, the performer exposes herself by being constantly in the act of attempting, trying out several versions of herself, without valorizing or devaluing one attempt over another.

**Grand Miroir** is the solo performance of a person who tries on a multitude of styles, social postures and self-representations, all the while asking us: «So? what do you think?»

# Claire Dessimoz

## GRAND MIROIR (2023)



### HOW THE PROJECT CAME ABOUT

by Claire Dessimoz

*Grand Miroir* was originally thought up for RÉDUKTION: a micro-festival of research and creation based on existing pieces that will be 'reduced to a sauce' in September 23.

For RÉDUKTION, PRAXIS invites 7 other artists/companies to experiment to reduce pieces that have already been created and are rather successful, but too heavy to be easily toured, and therefore too heavy to live. It's an invitation to reduce, or an invitation to increase the autonomy of a piece by lightening its weight, with the aim of depending less on theatres and gaining other audiences for our work (by reducing the technique, for example).

When planning RÉDUKTION, the PRAXIS team chose *current currents* from the four scenic pieces in its «repertoire» to propose a reduction, even if the potential for a reduction didn't necessarily seem obvious at the time.

The idea of reversing the roles by going to the stage myself whereas I wasn't performing for *current currents* quickly emerged. I then embarked on a solo, asking two of the five *current currents* performers to accompany me in this process, this time from the outside and as intimate partners who knew the project very well, having gone through all the *current currents* questions from a different point of view than my own.

I first tried to select material created by the five performers, staying as close as possible to what Valentine, Eléonore, Klaire-Alice, Jenny and Yuta embody in *current currents*, to avoid «smoothing out» the content too much by making it my own. While in *current currents*, the cohabitation of different personalities and opinions is a central theme, in *Grand Miroir*, the transition to solo work has given rise to a new motif: mimetism as a search for oneself. Copying our friends, our models, trying to perceive what suits us, or what suits us less... Quickly, the work turned to the search for a tender look at our adolescent selves, post-adolescents selves or still-adolescents selves... I focused on the ways in which we seek love and approval, and on the ways in which we attempt to imitate others while simultaneously trying to distinguish ourselves from others.

The result of this research is indeed a new show that doesn't have quite the same purpose as *current currents*, but remains a close cousin that exploits the same vocabulary and the same soil.

In this gesture of reduction, what also shines through is the desire to create a tighter object both in terms of time (45 minutes rather than 2h10) and in terms of addressing to an audience, given that *Grand Miroir* seeks to be more explicit, more direct, more self-assumed. It's a show that's less focused on the search for sensitive experiences, it's true, but it aims for a clear message that everyone can receive.

# Claire Dessimoz

## GRAND MIROIR (2023)

Claire Dessimoz (\*1988) is committed to a practice of smallness and nuance. She works with bodies and what they communicate, whether through their presence on a stage - alone or in a group - or through their words, which she likes to capture and then render with precision. Somewhere between theater, dance and contemporary art, her work is driven by political and community issues. How can we build community with and despite our differences? How can we imagine a cohabitation that leaves room for mistakes and disagreements, without necessarily defusing all tension?

She seeks to bring heterogeneous words into dialogue, while fighting against the temptation of any form of consensus. Without ever falling into dogmatism, Claire Dessimoz proposes complex, but also at times joyful, pieces that seek to destabilize certainties. Her work often involves different moods and ways of being within the same object, like mosaics of political thoughts or multiple representations of oneself. Through these cohabitations, she is particularly interested in showing things in all their complexity, actively combating shortcuts and oversimplifications.

Her major works are *current currents* (2021), *traverser tout entier* (2019), *Invitation* (2018) and *du bist was du holst* (2016). Her first stage play premiered at Sévelin 36 (Lausanne) and Théâtre de l'Usine (Geneva), and the next three at Arsenic (Lausanne), where she was associate artist (YAA - Pro Helvetia) and in residence from 2017 to 2020. She has a support agreement with the Canton of Vaud for the next three seasons (2021-2024). Her company is based in Lausanne and she's currently preparing *FESTIVAL*, a co-creation with artists Clara Delorme and Louis Bonard for the 23-24 season (at La Grange-Lausanne, ADC-Geneva and Festival de la Cité-Lausanne), and *LE RECUEIL DES MIRACLES*, a music piece with the musician Louis Schild in Vidy-Lausanne in 2024.

### CONTACT

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### ADMINISTRATION / PRODUCTION

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