

Les Antliaclastes

Here lies Shakespeare
Directed by Patrick Sims



@JP Estournet

Creation for the International Festival of Neuchâtel in november 2015
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Production : les Antliaclastes

Co-production : MarionNEttes - Festival international de Neuchâtel, Centre Culturel Yves Furet - La Souterraine
and Le K Samka

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Patrick Sims
Direction, design, puppets, performance and puppets manipulation

Josephine Biereye
Masks, costumes, puppets

Richard Penny
Puppets, designer, performance and puppets manipulation

Laure Guillhot
Designer

Camille Lamy
Costume

Oriol Viladomiu / Karine Dumont
Sound creation, designer,

Nicolas Hubert
Designer, performance and puppets manipulation

Jesse Philip Watson
Designer, performance and puppets manipulation

Raül Berrueco
Video creation

Olivier Francfort / Sophie Barraud
Lighting creation

With :

Patrick Sims, Richard Penny, Nicolas Hubert, Evandro Serodio

Stage Manager : Sophie Barraud

Loosely based on Is Shakespeare Dead? by Mark Twain

400 years have passed since the death of Guillem Shaksper from Stratford-Upon-Avon. Many doubt, with good reason, that this man was in fact the true author of the Shakespearean cannon. Shakespeare is often celebrated as the greatest poet ever to have lived, and whose works have been most chosen to represent mankind's posterity. His works have been unanimously voted to travel onboard NASA rockets sent beyond our galaxy in hopes of contacting distant, or future, civilizations. The works of William Shakespeare have been the #1 selection for literature amongst scientists, artists, archaeologists, hobbyists or apocalypticists when making their time capsules. If given one book on a desert island, on a space shuttle, or within a time capsule- Shakespeare is frequently the one confirmed as the voice of our civilization.

The Shakespeare authorship debate continues to rage, 400 years after the death of the alleged author. Rather than enter too far into the details of whether the man from Stratford-Upon-Avon truly wrote the works of Shakespeare, I will state clearly here that I believe he did not. Supposing this is true, would the traces of our civilization sent to future and distant worlds be based on a farce?

What other frauds have we celebrated, what other lies have we told ourselves about our greatness as a civilization? And to what expense? How do we really want to be remembered? Will it be an illiterate who writes the epitaph of our civilization?

Let us not despair, at least we have the works of Shakespeare!

On the other hand, perhaps it does not really matter who wrote these great works.

And if Shakespeare's identity doesn't matter in the long term, whose does?

This is not a lament but a celebration.

And in fact very Shakespearean.

Here lies Shakespeare...

A comic tragedy consisting of a prologue, three short satirical stories, and an epilogue-based on themes surrounding the Shakespeare authorship debate.*

The setting is a hole dug deep inside the earth. It is the site of a great archaeological excavation, a suspicious burial and sandbox full of toys, all at the same time. Shakespeare's corpse is buried amongst the potatoes and brontosaurus bones.

Prologue: Excavators!

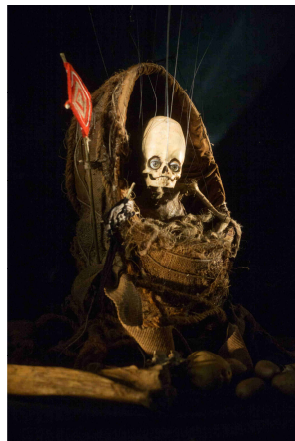
Three giant machines gathered around and dig a hole in the dirt like the three witches from MacBeth. They look like mechanical dinosaurs amidst flames. They dig.

Act 1: O, Potato!

The potato, symbol of eternal slumber, speaks:

*We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.*

From its humble origins in Peru to aboard NASA space shuttles, the history of the potato is the history of western civilization. Peppered with elements from the Tempest, this tableau is a meditation on the origins of the humble spud, and its current global significance. Buried deep below a ufo landing strip on the Nazca lines in Peru, the potato sits in silence and darkness. Conspiratorial, yet budding with hope. Potato-headed mummies harvest their crop. Conquistador clowns arrive. This marks a turning point in the history of civilization. Which is worth more, gold or the potato? The spaceman will decide. The potatoes are placed in a time capsule alongside the works of Shakespeare, in order to nourish the pilot en route to the infinite beyond.



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Act 2. A poem based on the mask from Shakespeare's First Folio

The engraving of the portrait of William Shakespeare published in the first edition of his complete works tells us everything we need to know about his identity. He has an asymmetrical hairdo, two right eyes, a displaced mouth, two left hands and an enormous grotesque potato-shaped head served on a plate. Whoever printed this image was trying to tell us something. This tableau recreates this portrait and explores some themes within Shakespeare's canon that deal with the subject of a hidden author writing behind a mask, and of a puppet frontman taking credit for these great works.

Which will decompose first, the mask or the words? Strengthened by a selection of Shakespeare's most known passages dealing with these concept of the double, the mask, the puppet, this passage reveals the crumbling of armatures under the weight of their idol's image.



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Act 3. Bone Wars

A poem based on the brontosaurus.

Shall I set down the rest of the great Conjecture which constitute the Giant Biography of William Shakespeare? He is a brontosaurus: nine bones and six hundred barrels of plaster.
- "Is Shakespeare Dead?"

Hamlet's gravediggers dig up the brontosaurus, one of the most famous dinosaurs of all. Famous because it does not really exist! The Brontosaurus was the product of media-hype, a fraud. It was the first full dinosaur skeleton on display in a museum for everyone to see. When the Brontosaurus skeleton was put together some bones were missing, even the skull. Bones were used from other dinosaurs excavations that where thought to have belonged to the Brontosaurus. The brontosaurus was in fact the skull of a camarasaurus placed onto the wrong end of an apatosaurus skeleton. The famous gravedigger scene from Hamlet will frame this excavation.

They find the mask of William Shakespeare and put it on their brontosaurus. The brontosaurus comes alive and reaks havoc.

Epilogue:

PT Barnum tours America with Shakespeare's birthplace.

Three tales, three excavations, three corpses. Three silent, immortal giants are celebrated. The potato, Shakespeare and the brontosaurus are placed inside a silver time capsule and buried into a hole in the sky. The solid firmament trickles down dust. The spaceman floats with his potatoes above, Eve feeds an apple to her brontosaurus below. Shakespeare pilots the crypt of civilization towards the unknown infinite.

Here lies Shakespeare... follows faithfully Shakespeare's five act structure in its treatment of the prologue, the three tales, and the epilogue. The show will combine various types of puppets, masks, machines, automats, and projections. Characters will be taxidermied animals in Shakespearean attire.

The decor will be a giant dirt hole filled with bones, roots and various objects buried deep within the Earth throughout the course of civilization. Other holes appear within to reveal other stories and paths.

Music will be experimental electronic Elizabethan, combined with sounds from deep within the earth and as well from distant outerspace.

Patrick Sims



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Patrick Sims / Les Antliacastes

Les Antliacastes are a puppet theatre company based in Maillet, France. The company is under the direction of Patrick Sims, founder and former creative director of Buchinger's Boot Marionettes. Les Antliacastes use a unique blend of puppetry techniques and styles, masks, machines, and original organic soundtracks. The primarily wordless performance moves ahead fluidly through its countless surprises and often violently contrasting images. In Hilum, there are many references to classical, popular, hermetic and contemporary- visual and performing arts, music, cinema and literature. They are all delicately balanced in a highly original way that often eludes verbal interpretation.

Patrick Sims (b.1975, Vermont USA) has been a practicing puppeteer for the past 16 years. He first became involved with puppets whilst studying film and animation at Middlebury College, USA. He has worked with Bread and Puppet Theatre, studied shadow puppetry in Java, and pursued a Phd at Trinity College Dublin with a thesis on the 'Pataphysics of the Puppet, Alfred Jarry and the inhuman performer. For 5 years he was the artistic director, writer, puppet-maker and puppeteer for Buchinger's Boot Marionettes. He is currently artistic director of Les Antliacastes with whom he is engaged with several projects, including film, theatre, installations, music, and a multimedia electronic opera. His next project is being researched and developed with the support of La Chartreuse, Le Centre National d'Ecriture des Spectacles, Villeneuve lez Avignon.

Antliacastes Creations

Hilum - 2010



Photo Jean-Pierre Estournet

The old Man and the Mountain - 2012



Photo Mario del Curto

Acting Bug - 2013

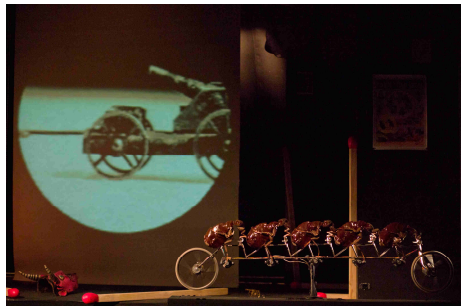


Photo Jean-Pierre Estournet

Here lies Shakespeare - 2015



Photo Jean-Pierre Estournet

The Waltz of Hommelettes - 2016



Photo Jean-Pierre Estournet

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