

Creation  
at Vidy

## MOANDA DADDY KAMONO / MAGALI TOSATO

*Profil*



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## **Text & interpretation**

Moanda Daddy Kamono

## **Direction**

Magali Tosato

## **Scenography & costumes**

Franziska Keune

## **Music**

Rodriguez Vangama

## **Dramaturgy**

Lydia Dimitrow

## **Lighting design**

Théo Sérez

## **With**

Moanda Daddy Kamono

## **Production**

Compagnie Na Kati

Compagnie Mikro-kit

Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne

## **Coproduction**

Théâtre Benno Besson, Yverdon-les-Bains

With the support of the MC93 - Maison de la Culture de Seine-Saint-Denis

**Creation at Vidy October 2020**

Alone onstage with a musician, the French-Congolese actor Moanda Daddy Kamono tells his tale. It's not clear exactly when the events take place. He goes to audition for a role. He desperately wants it; he's been dreaming of it – he will get the role. His desire and urgency for theatre are displayed in his words, his body, and his description of what has him in its thrall.

But as he appears onstage, opposite the director, he isn't listened to. He is instead asked to dance rather than speak. He doesn't match the « profile ». What do people see in him, before he even opens his mouth? What do people know about him, before even listening to him? He falters. This refusal, seen as a denial, opens up an abyss beneath him, in time and space. To redress the imbalance inherent to an audition situation, Moanda Daddy Kamono has imagined how the moment would have continued, speaking out in the form of an autofiction. He describes the experiences that led him to the stage and that fed his need for theatre and his desire to act – those of an adolescence marked by the absence of a father in a war-torn country, a dead brother, exile....

Moanda Daddy Kamono recounts this abyss, which is as much the story of a man confronting life and the accident of birth as it is of an actor confronting the stage. And as for us, listening to him and watching him act, what are we watching, what are we hearing? What is revealed in a relationship with difference, in society's subconscious channelling of norms and fears, in stigmatisation, as well as in encounters, is captured in its entirety in this moment of theatre, in this moment of being face to face with the actor.

Through this personal text brought to the stage (the author's first) and through its dialogue with music by Pytshens Kambilo, Moanda Daddy Kamono describes how his passion is fuelled, sharing his story and dreams with the audience.

Accompanied by director Magali Tosato, who uses documentary theatre as a way of decrypting social prejudices, the actor has constructed a performance which is both the raw exposé of society's unconscious discrimination and the actor's poetic act that underpins the relationship between his memories and fiction. The actor speaks of the rich diversity of these uncommon stories and their power to act against stereotypes. He speaks of the possibility of transcending pain and making life and art even more intense. He says that by listening to those on the other side of the barrier, on the opposing side to the majority, there is strength and joy. He speaks of theatre and encounters.

**ERIC VAUTRIN**

Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne

# AFFIRMING A DESIRE FOR THEATRE DESPITE SOCIAL STEREOTYPES 5

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Originally from the Congo but exiled in France, and now with French nationality, I use theatre as an arena for struggle and affirmation. By forcing my imagination to bring down boundaries and limits, I have found the strength to move from one story to another, without a passport or bureaucratic procedures. As a space for open-mindedness, connections, and synthesis, theatre is a cross-sector territory where I can enjoy living in reality. In *Profil*, I am the actor who addresses the director with clear statements. I am the one who affirms a desire, a theatrical existence.

*Profil* attempts to clear up a persistent misunderstanding, which is perfectly illustrated in the phrase that a director addressed to me after an audition : « You don't match the profile. »

By artificially extending this audition, I'm trying to tell my story, to create my *Profil*. What is hiding behind this word? It is a characteristic specific to each role? Then what I am condemned to? Destined for? Prepared for? What did or didn't he see in me? Is something missing from me? Is this a case of prejudice or a lack of imagination?

By writing a follow-up to this irrevocable sentence, I am giving myself the right to respond. By placing myself in that moment just after having been sentenced, in the silence that heightens one's senses, I have suspended time in order to measure the impact of the blow and sound the depths of the fracture. By asking these questions, imagining, accusing, and over-interpreting, by creating a film in my head, I can call upon a poetic form of language to fight against the shockwave caused by the phrase in all its terrifying banality.



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Can you hear the crackling of that far-away fire  
Shattering the cold and upsetting the balance  
The clamour of ice in the silence of an Arctic realm  
Yes, those days are behind us now  
But the buried world seems to have retained its heat  
These are only words  
And maybe the cry  
Can you hear it  
I am carrying the cry  
And so, let's begin again  
As if nothing had been done  
Repositioning the context and its subsurface  
Recognising indifference  
Looking back at former landmarks  
Identifying boundaries  
Opening or closing  
Tracing a line together  
Reaching the outer limit  
An invitation to the beyond  
That joyous madness  
I am pushing the boundaries  
We can no longer do this any other way

*Profil* is a cry of joy uttered and cast against a wall of indifference, a monologue whose point of departure is the need to exorcise a lingering misconception in the imaginations of those who struggle to recognise difference.

**MOANDA DADDY KAMONO**

*To believe in it is folly  
 My brother, they curse my zeal  
 My words are naive, they say  
 They love me with a warning love  
 I risk being neither for here nor for there  
 "Remember that to lack an origin deprives us of territory  
 We can no longer build nor destroy"  
 Are there no cracks or fissures along these irretrievable traces  
 Where has the gleam of light gone?  
 Half-opened doors?  
 Inhabited spaces?  
 For a new breath  
 Mark the beginning by starting something new,  
 That's what the  
 Origin must be  
 I'll go so I can build a strong foundation and stay standing  
 I'll go so that a part of my pain can be understood  
 Movement must challenge time  
 This chest must burn  
 May the eyes burn for the longest time  
 And crackle  
 The only heat that counts is the fever of action  
 And to persist in this starting again  
 I am not some remains of an era  
 I don't want to be satisfied with a legacy  
 I'm going, while listening to my breath caress the dead  
 My dead  
 And leaving to appear on my hands  
 Irregular signs of our tumultuous destinies  
 Our religion, for us backward vulgar beings,  
 Is to shift the sun's position  
 From where we are  
 Obscurity is light  
 So I'm going there  
 There is here, I was told.*

**MOANDA DADDY KAMONO**, *Profil*, excerpt

Daddy Moanda Kamono uses a poetic form of language, both personal and forceful, to describe and then examine his experience as a French-Congolese actor. Combining a personal account with fiction, he brings us face to face with reality as he experiences it. An event, which may seem trivial, triggers the implosion of someone who does not recognise themselves in the role they have been assigned. Exploiting the tension between an identity defined by external criteria and one's own sense of identity, *Profil* manages to express the indescribable feeling that discrimination causes: a disturbing mix of incomprehension, pain, shame, revolt, suspicion, paranoia, anger, and bad faith, which awakens buried memories and blurs one's sense of self and the world.

## **Internal struggles and parallel battle fronts**

Struck by the evocative power of his writing, I recognised myself in the cry that emerges from beneath an avalanche of questions. The text immediately made me think of gender-based discrimination, which as a woman I am very familiar with. The actor's battle to avoid losing control resonates with all those fought today on other fronts. Taking the example of racial discrimination, *Profil* dissects the interior conflicts that tear apart those curtailed by stigmatised identities.

## **Our meeting on documentary and biographical theatre as a way of reflecting society's unconscious norms**

I met Moanda during the creation of *Amour/luxe* (Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, 2017). Despite our very different backgrounds, we share many similar concerns. Our discussions began with a project combining documentary material with the actors' autobiographical elements: we were interested in society's widespread suspicion regarding foreigners and the so-called « fight against marriages of convenience ». This type of documentary theatre uses individual stories to highlight societal phenomena. By conveying the life stories of actors and protagonists struggling against the system (witnesses or characters), I hope to reveal the human experience imprisoned within abstract notions (legal principles, bureaucratic processes, tradition, etc.). Our conversation is now continuing on the subject of his writing.

In *Profil*, I hear a voice firmly rooted in today's world, attempting to break apart rigid frameworks of thought. I want this unique voice to be heard. I want to hold a multi-faceted mirror up to the audience and spark a debate on difference that is rooted in experience, and in the body.

**MAGALI TOSATO**



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## Text and performance

Moanda Daddy Kamono began theatre at the age of 17 in Kinshasa with the theatre company “Les Bédjarts”. He helped Faustin Linyekula with the direction of his first play in the Congo, *Spectacularly Empty*, before leaving for France. From 2003 to 2006, he trained at the Ecole Supérieure Dramatique du Théâtre National in Brittany, under the direction of Stanislas Nordey. During this time, he worked with many directors, including Claude Régy, Hubert Colas, Serge Tranvouez, Wajdi Mouawad, Nadia Vonderheyden, Loïc Touzé, Marie Vayssière, and Christian Colin.

In 2005, along with the Kabako Studios, he participated in the American tour of *Triptyque sans titre*. Under the direction of Stanislas Nordey, he then acted in *Cris* by Laurent Gaudé in 2006, *Gênes 01* and *Peanuts* by Fausto Paravidino in 2006, *Electre* by Hugo Von Hofmannsthal in 2006, and *7 secondes*, *Das System*, and *Nothing Hurts* by Falk Richter in 2008. He also worked with Philip Boulay in *Top Dog Under Dog* by Suzan-Lori Parks in 2007 and Christophe Rouxel in *Combat de nègre et de chiens* by Bernard-Marie Koltès. In 2009, he participated in the French-Japanese creation *Par-dessus bord* by Michel Vinaver, an adaptation of Oriza Hirata’s *Tori No Tobu Takasa*, directed by Arnaud Meunier. He worked again with Faustin Linyekula in *Pour en finir avec Bérénice*, before presenting a project entitled *Collavocation*, with Japanese dancer Takako Suzuki.

He continued his collaboration with Stanislas Nordey in *Tristesse animal noir* by Anja Hilling in 2012 and *Par les villages* by Peter Handke in 2013, created at the Cour d’Honneur du Palais des Papes in Avignon. In 2014, he performed in the comic opera *Ali Baba* by Charles Lecocq, directed



by Arnaud Meunier; in 2015 in *L’Instant Molière* directed by Bernard Lotti. In 2016, he was seen in *Aide toi le ciel*, written and directed by Aline César and Nkenguegi written and directed by Dieudonné Niangouna and created at the Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne. In 2017, he participated in the creation of *Amour/Luxe*, directed by Magali Tosato at the Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, then in the stage adaptation of Fiston Nasser Mwanza’s novel *Tram 83* under the direction of Julie Kretzschmar at the Festival de Limoges. In 2018, he went on the *Tram 83* tour and performed in a radio fiction based on Eva Joly’s book *French Uranium*, directed by Sophie Aude-Picon for France Culture. In 2019, he was involved with another radio fiction, *Viper’s Dream* by Jack Lamar, directed by Laurence Courtois for France Culture. He played the role of Iago in Shakespeare’s *Othello*, directed by Arnaud Churin at the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris, and in *Congo* by Eric Vuillard, directed and choreographed by Faustin Linyekula (Festival d’Automne, Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, Brussels Kunstfestival, etc.).

## Director

Magali Tosato studied history and French literature at the University of Lausanne before attending the Ernst Busch Academy of Dramatic Arts in Berlin, where she studied theatre directing from 2010 to 2014. During this time, her staging of *Der Auftrag* (The Mission) by Heiner Müller (2013) was invited to the Heiner Müller Festival at Munich's Residenztheater, and was followed by *I Love Italy and Italy Loves Me* (2014).

After moving back to Lausanne, she founded the *mikro-kit* theatre company. In 2015, thanks to the Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne and its support for young artists, she created *Home-Made*, based on a documentary and biographical investigation into the "mother and motherland" relationship, and directed *Hamlet dans les écoles*, which toured schools throughout the French-speaking part of Switzerland. In 2016, she was awarded the Bourse de Compagnonnage Théâtral, a grant for upcoming directors sponsored by the Canton of Vaud and the City of Lausanne. She assisted Denis Maillefer in the creation of *Marla* and then Stefan Kaegi (Rimini Protokoll) in *Nachlass* at Vidy in 2016. *Amour/Luxe* (Vidy, 2017) explores the fallacies associated with marriages of convenience. She then created *Qui a peur d'Hamlet?* (Théâtre Benno Besson, Yverdon, 2018, which went on tour to Vidy Theatre and the Théâtre du Pommier, Neuchâtel), then co-wrote with Lydia Dimitrow and directed *Mettlach* (Saarländisches Staatstheater in Sarrebruck, Théâtre de la Ville de Luxembourg, 2019), before directing a theatre of objects project, *Wilde Wilde Wesen* in Berlin (Schaubude, 2019). She directed *L'Éveil du Printemps* by Frank Wedeking at the Saarländisches Staatstheater in Sarrebruck.



Alongside her directing activities with the *mikro-kit* theatre company, since 2006 she has worked as an assistant director and playwright for many projects, including for the Gianni Schneider, Un Air de Rien, Pasquier-Rossier, Champs d'Action et Full-PetalMachine theatre companies, and in 2016 directed a theatre workshop with the Vidy Theatre and the Etablissement Vaudois d'Accueil des Migrants (EVAM). She lives in Berlin and Lausanne.

## THÉÂTRE VIDY-LAUSANNE

### DIRECTION:

Vincent Baudriller

### PRODUCTION:

#### Director of artistic and international projects

Caroline Barneaud  
c.barneaud@vidy.ch  
T +41 (0)21 619 45 44

#### Production manager

Anne-Christine Liske  
a-c.liske@vidy.ch  
T +41 (0)21 619 45 83

#### Distribution

Elizabeth Gay  
e.gay@vidy.ch  
+41 (0)79 278 05 93

### PRESS:

#### Director of audiences and communication

Astrid Lavanderos  
a.lavanderos@vidy.ch  
t +41 (0)21 619 45 74  
M +41 (0)79 949 46 93

#### Communications assistant

Pauline Amez-Droz  
p.amez-droz@vidy.ch  
t +41 (0)21 619 45 21

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