

PLANKTON

Transdisciplinary theatre for 4 performers, sound islands, orchestra (recorded and remote) and a wandering audience

WEB-PAGE: KOLLEKTIVTOTEM.COM/PLANKTON

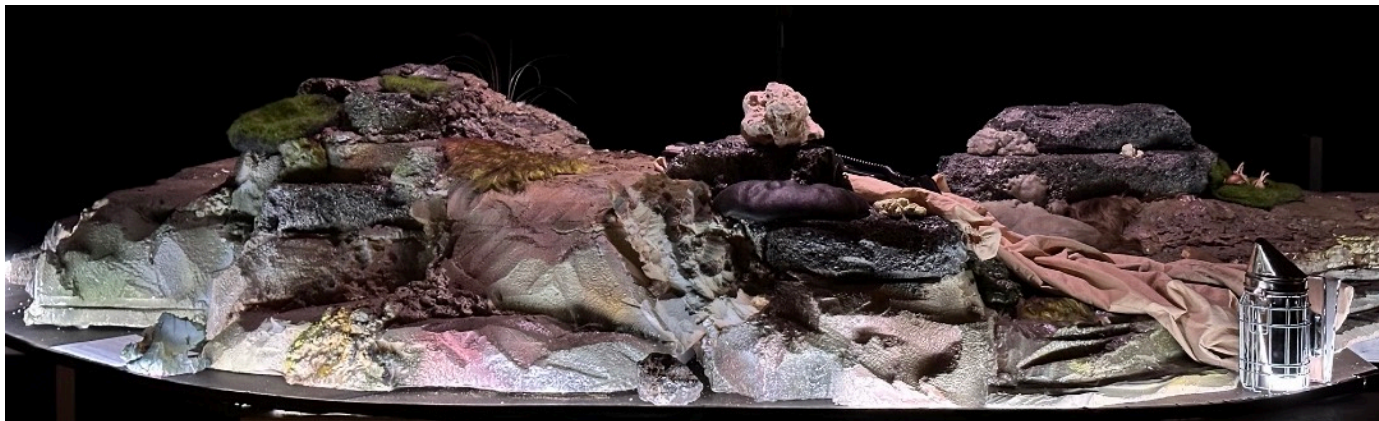
[Trailer](#)



Plankton is a music theatre piece which is based on the story of four vastly different individuals from different corners of the world, united by a single choice: each has withdrawn from society to live in solitude. Loosely inspired by multiple sources, Plankton explores the stories of those who have chosen to leave cities and industries behind to live in the heart of nature. The distance these characters maintain from society allows us to question its contemporary structures and reconsider our connection with the natural world. It cuts through subjects of solution, belonging, loneliness, integrity, marginalism as well as role of artist in contemporary world.



Our research draws from anthropological studies on Siberian shamans and hermits in Alaska to telegram groups of permits and firsthand investigations of people living in isolation in post-Soviet territories. Each of these characters has chosen solitude for different reasons: some to push back against capitalism and privatisation, others to escape past traumas or addictions, and still others to reconnect with nature.



Through these stories, "Plankton" explores reflections on digital life, love, modern systems, industry, capitalism, and our delicate relationship with the natural world. This piece provides a musical translation of the transformation potential of collaborative dreams, sustainable relationships between non-humans and humans, and the isolation from globalization of those who choose to live far from civilization.

SETTING AND DRAMATURGY

The audience moves through the space like a museum or almost aquarium or zoo, observing four performers, each in a distinct "vivarium" (as if like big aquarium for humans, aisles 2-4 m large) representing their environment they chose to belong to. Each vivarium recreates a blend of natural and artificial, mirroring the world's current overload of plastic and pollution, with nature struggling to breathe beneath it. Made entirely from upcycled plastics, foams, polystyrenes it is melted and assembled to mimic the nature in some detailed but also uncanny way.

In isolation of vivarium, the performers reveal their world through routines like hunting, eating, repairing tools, making radio calls, or tending plants, creating a slow unveiling of their psychological landscapes and stories. Their thoughts appear subtitled creating their interior worlds. The texts flows like a film, with each character engaging in subtle conversations or monologues, confiding only in their trusted companions (e.g., Juna with his bees). Time and memory layer together across scenes, inviting the audience to piece together the story as fragments of reality and recollection.

The texts are mainly in English and French (as well as some Russian and Cantonese) with subtitles. Possible to do all in French only.

MUSIC AND SOUND

Each vivarium is itself a musical instrument: filled with resonant, sonorous objects that immerse the audience in each character's world. Nuriia use electro-magnetic microphones to create feedback and resonance with various surfaces, her island is "stuffed" with electromagnetic sources which allows her to use whole island as a huge musical instrument. Kay is a mute character that only expresses herself through strange poetic songs. Another performer repairs and plays self-built, chimerical instruments—crafted from parts of oboes, trumpets, cymbals, and violins—while a fourth operates modular synthesizers, attempting communication through radio and sonar-like tones.

The orchestra, positioned in a separate space for premiere and is diffused in recording on tour, plays a constantly shifting role, embodying society, wild animals, and even nature itself diffused from specific objects, sometimes moving around the space sometimes invading it completely. This soundscape mirrors the surreal, intersecting layers of memory and reality that define each character's inner world or environment.

On tour, there will be only four performers and the orchestra will be playing from sound installation (with integrated hidden directional or transducer type speakers) as if orchestra is talking for trees or rocks or water.



Nuriia

Bikin Valley, Primorsky Krai, Russia

Behavior: Ritualistic, fervent, attuned to patterns

Habitat: Deep forest, near wild hives, moss beds, and buried roots

Distinctive traits: Speaks to moss and hears the answer, quotes anarchist theory, follows insect trails like scripture

Nuriia is the longest-gone hermit — a rebellious activist who stood against the destruction of her forest. A modern-day shaman with a rare gift: the ability to connect, hear and speak with the environments she's rooted in. Inspired by female bees and ants who build without kings, and religiously quoting Kropotkin, she believes in non-hierarchical living and she longs to be just one equal part of a larger, living system. But one day her shortwave radio accidentally connects to amateur radio space station rig and she realises that "bees need other bees".



Kay

Guangdong region, China

Behavior: Solitary, still, attentive to fish

Habitat: Lakeshores, cold forests

Distinctive traits: Whispers to the water, knots nets, rocks stones like children

Everyone tells a different story about who she was and where she came from. Maybe she fled from something (forced marriage, debt, social injustice), maybe for something (protection of endangered species, carrying a child). Kay is a fisherwoman already transitioning to animal behaviour to assimilate, torn between survival and conservation, whispering apologies to each fish and flirting with bears.



Juna

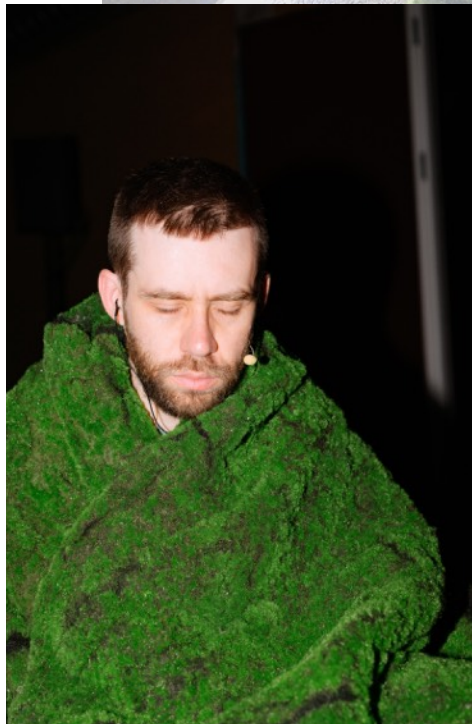
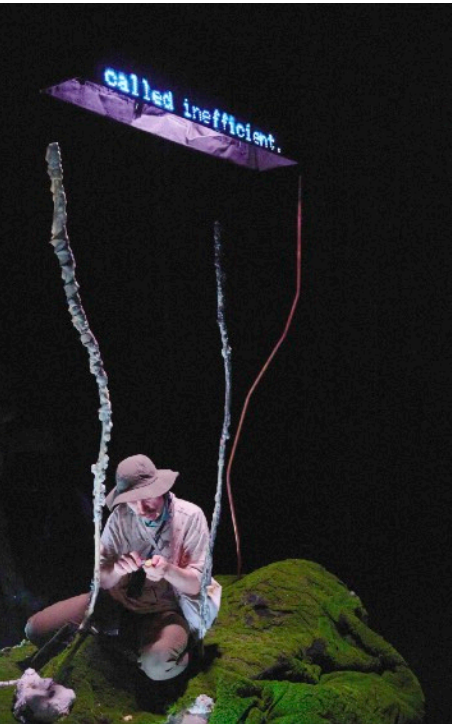
Great Dismal Swamp, Virginia / North Carolina, USA

Behavior: Withdrawn, methodical, reclusive

Habitat: abandoned industrial zones, mossy swamps close to the city skyline

Distinctive traits: communicates with animals and nature through sound and music, builds instruments from stolen scraps from closed by mine

Juna went through a lot and was eventually spit out by a world he never fit into — bullied, dismissed, unable to meet capitalistic requirements. The only thing now anchoring him to what he once was is a small, battered dictaphone, its crackling recordings holding fragments of a life he can no longer return to. He replays them in secret, as if the sound of his lost self might keep him from dissolving entirely into the quiet hum of the insects.



Gilles

Says he is in Siberia, Russia

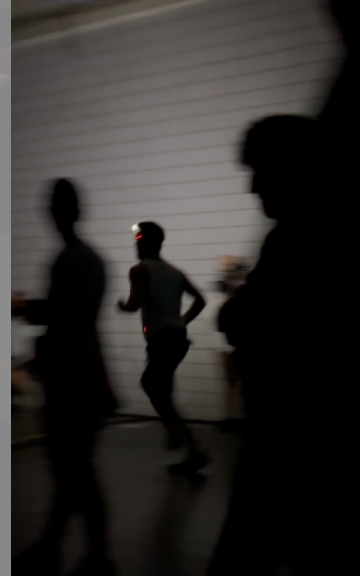
Behavior: solitary, obsessive, agitated, digitally dependent

Habitat: cave, forest edge, abandoned electric station, near signal towers

Distinctive traits: runs to charge from movement his phone or to run away from himself

Gilles is a modern “ermite de jardin” — the digital Thoreau — alone, online. Even though he speaks of past burnout, he recently left the city not to disappear, but to be noticed disappearing, shout about it, taking classical occidental exoticism Transsiberian route to some unknown Siberian location he is claiming to be hiding in or at least claims to.

While retreating from society, he remains tethered to it through Bitcoin schemes, online-dating, social media posturing, and a desperate need for online validation.



PRODUCTION

kollektiv international totem - Zurich
Kassandra collective - Strasbourg
Collegium Novum Zürich (CNZ)
[on tour are in recording]
Co-production
Gare du Nord

CALENDAR

PAST DATES:

19, 20, 21 June 2025 - PREMIERE **Zentral**
Wascherei Zurich
7 September - **Musikfestival Bern,**
Dampfzentrale Bern

UPCOMING DATES:

9, 10 January 2026 - **Gare du Nord Basel**
17 January 2026 - **Pole Nord**

CREATIVE TEAM

Léo Collin concept, dramaturgy, music
Kapitolina Tsvetkova concept, dramaturgy, stage
direction, set design and sculptures

Inès Assoual, set design assistant
Leandro Gianini, technical director
Mariana Grünig, costumes
Meret Roth, production



PERFORMERS

Gilles Grimaître,
Nuriia Khasanova,
Kevin Toksöz Fairbairn,
Kay Zhang

TECHNICAL RESUMÉ

Duration of the performance: 62 minutes - no
intermission; deambulation

ON TOUR:

+ 8-9 people on tour
+ one simple standard struck 20 m³ utility vehicle
+ the ideal performance space is a 20x15m black
box with rigging possibilities. The setup can be
adapted to suit different room sizes and types: any
black box / white box / industrial space with some
possibility of light rig (only 4 points); adjustable, but
size of space will define audience capacity

Technical Planning-Leandro Gianini
gianini.leandro@gmail.com
0792424487

Responsible Production
Léo Collin / kollektiv international totem
mail@kollektivtotem.com

Responsible Stage/Direction
Kapitolina Tsvetkova
kapitopina@gmail.com

Trailer 1: <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/-cwot65Mfcs>

Trailer 2: <https://youtu.be/nn1OhHYQMXo>

TECHNICAL OVERVIEW

Technical Planning-Leandro Gianini
gianini.leandro@gmail.com
0792424487

This is a brief summary of the technical requirements for the production 'Plankton'. For more information, please refer to the [full rider here](#) or contact the technical director.

The ideal performance space is a 20x15m black box with rigging possibilities. The setup can be adapted to suit different room sizes.

Duration of the performance: 62 minutes – no intermission. Performance for 4 Performers and mobile audience. Recommended for ages 12 and over.

As the play is designed for a mobile audience, chairs will only be provided on request for audience members with limited mobility. Please note that some scenes in the play contain intense darkness and flashing lights.

SCHEDULE

Day -1	Day 0
Load In	Sound check rehearsal / run through
Set up	Performance
line check / focus lights	dismantle/Load out

STAFF REQUIREMENTS

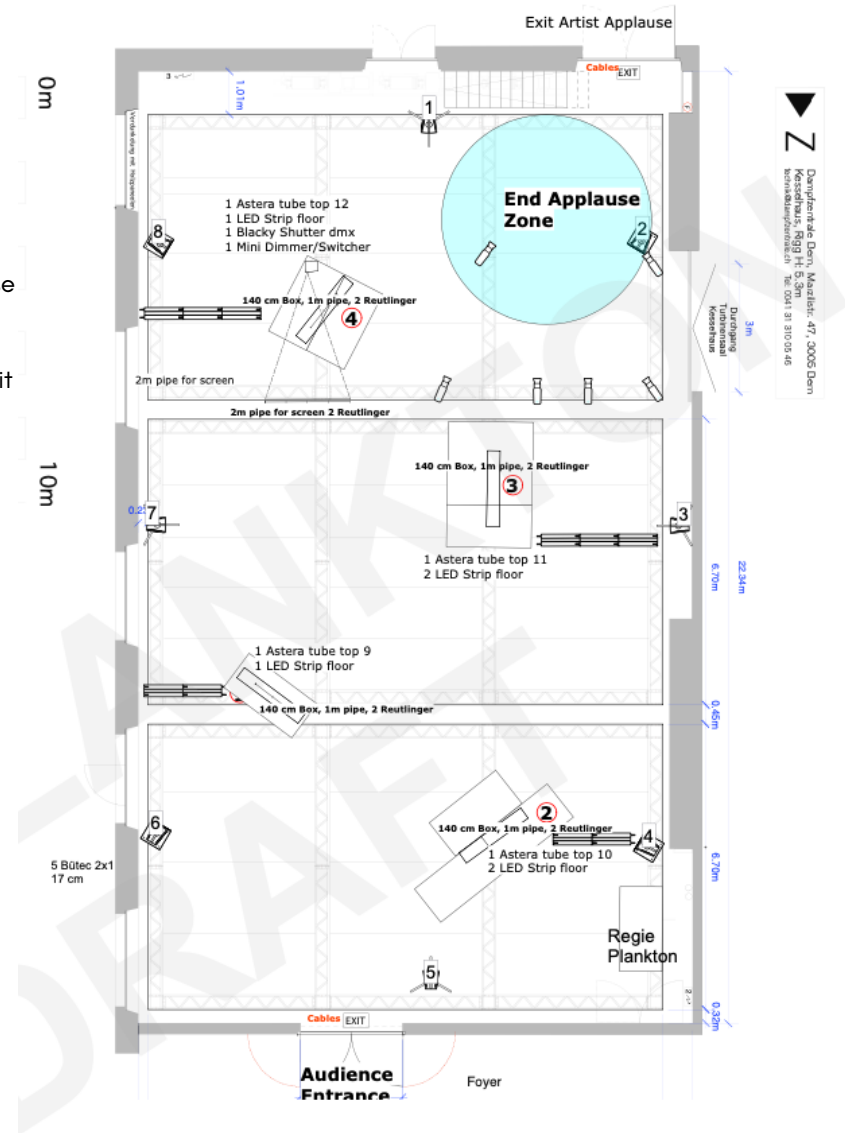
Staff from the venue	
Stagehands	2 Persons Load In/Out
Electrician	1 Person
Sound	1 Person

The staff has to be familiar with the venue and the technical infrastructure

STAFF FROM THE COMPANY

The tour can be carried out with a flexible team of 6 to 9 people: 6 for a series of dates in similar conditions with a strong local crew, and up to 9 if the show has not been performed for a long time, if the venue is complex, the local team is small, or significant scenographic adjustments are required.

Technical Manager/Operator	1 Person
Scenography/Direction	1 Person
Performers	4 Persons
Producer/Composer	1 Person
Assistant director/ set designer	1 Person (depending on location/situation)



Draft for Dampfzentrale Bern

PRODUCTION

KOLLEKTIV INTERNATIONAL TOTEM (CH)

www.kollektivtotem.com

showreel 2024

Kollektiv Totem, dirigé par Kay Zhang, Léo Collin et Nuriia Khasenova, explore la musique contemporaine à travers des performances, arrangements et collaborations transdisciplinaires. Leur série detalk invite des artistes pour des résidences de création, tandis que leurs spectacles intègrent son, lumière, costumes et design, en collaboration avec divers artistes et techniciens. Ils se sont produits dans des salles prestigieuses en Europe, Australie et Asie, avec le soutien de la ville et du canton de Zurich ainsi que de plusieurs fondations suisses.

KASSANDRA COLLECTIVE (FR)

Kassandra Collective, spécialisée dans la production de spectacles vivants, opéra et théâtre transdisciplinaire, a mené une année dynamique, marquée par des collaborations artistiques et des représentations internationales. Le spectacle Kassandra a été présenté en Allemagne (Stuttgart, septembre 2022) et en Autriche (septembre et décembre 2022), recevant un accueil enthousiaste pour son originalité et son impact émotionnel. En mai 2023, nous avons créé TheAlogy avec le Bruch Ensemble (Cologne), une œuvre transdisciplinaire mêlant la musique de Huihui Cheng et la scénographie de Kapitolina Tsvetkova. Cette période a confirmé notre engagement envers l'innovation et l'exploration artistique au sein du spectacle vivant transdisciplinaire.

CO-PRODUCTION

Collegium Novum Zürich (CNZ) [live in Zurich, recording on tour]

www.cnz.ch

Le Collegium Novum Zürich (CNZ), fondé en 1993, est un ensemble de 23 musiciens dédié à la musique contemporaine.

Gare du Nord

www.garedunord.ch

Gare du Nord ist ein kuratierter Produktions- und Aufführungsort für die Schweizer und internationale zeitgenössische Musikszene.

PARTNERS

MUSIKTHEATERTAGE WIEN, City of Zürich, Pro Helvetia, Creative Europe, Zentral Wascherei Zurich, Initiative Freie Musikszene Zürich



CREATIVE TEAM

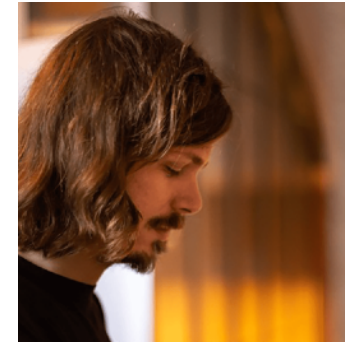


Kapitolina Tsvetkova born in 1992 in Chelyabinsk (Russia), is a stage director and visual artist based in France. I am working across experimental forms of opera, performance, and installation, in which space, object, and body strive to coexist and interact on equal rights. I often employ trans-disciplinary research (working with biologists, chemists, robotechnologists, perfumers, master of arts thesis about olfactory art, "Plant opera" and Cauda projects) and search for a multi-sensorial experience. At the heart of my research are questions of ecofeminism, fragility, memory, animism, and the actualisation of the genre of opera (in the broad sense, as of multidisciplinary art, Total Art).

[website](#)
[Instagram](#)



Léo Collin born in France 1990, studied applied arts in Marseille and Besançon, music composition and image applications in Geneva, Freiburg im Breisgau and Zurich with M. Jarrell, B.Pauset and I. Mundry. His work is based on collaboration (Baleen in 2019, Medusen in 2020 and Corals in 2022). Since 2018 he has been working regularly with composer Jörg Köppl and the ensemble metanoia, and several audio performance pieces have been created (der Pilz im patent, mutter Motor, mono). He also composed electronic music for theatre and dance, such as the Schauspielhaus Zürich and the Deutsches Theater Berlin. He has worked as a performer for the choreographers Alessandro Sciarroni and Sebastian Baumgartner. [website](#)



Leandro Gianini born 1987 in Lugano, studied classical percussion at the Conservatorio della Svizzera italiana with Bernhard Wulff. The development of new performances in connection with sound plays a major role in

his work. In 2018 he completed his Master in Composition and Theory at the ZHDK. After working for the Schauspielhaus Zürich, he is a teacher for Contemporary New Music Practice at the ZHdK/ ICST and works as technical director for the sonic matter festival.



Ines Assoul, born in 1996 in Avignon, lives and works in Strasbourg. Her work explores the connections between architecture, as a witness to the past, and contemporary performative practices

within minimalist installations. A graduate of the École Supérieure des Beaux-Arts de Nîmes (DNAP, 2017) and the Haute École des Arts du Rhin (DNSEP, 2019), she creates ephemeral installations and performances where tension and instability are controlled through a poetic protocol.

Her work has been exhibited in various venues, including the Tour à Plomb center (Brussels), the Musée du Vieux Nîmes, La Chaufferie (Strasbourg), and the Villa Medici, as part of an artistic project conducted with high school students in a professional residency supported by the Grand Est region.

PERFORMERS



Gilles Grimaire is a performer and curator based in Biel. Particularly active in the field of contemporary creation, his artistic work is particularly attached to collaboration, whether with composers or with artists from the visual, literary or performing arts. In 2014, he founded HYPER DUO with percussionist Julien Mégroz.

Kay Zhang is a performer who explores the topics of in-betweenness through sound, performance, curation, and research. Their curatorial work lends itself to 'learning by doing' methods, and experimentation which are intertwined with transdisciplinary art. They work within various projects and coordinate different platforms and have an interest in intercultural identities, queer feminist theories, and sound ecologies. Kay is dedicated to exploring and engaging with others by using sound performance knowledge, curating experiences through works of sound art (field recordings), collective listening, and care practices. Kay is a founding member of Kollektiv International Totem (KIT), River Oracle, The Alchemists' Bruit, and ARKA. Kay fosters collaborations within disciplines, trying to create bridges (in)-between them. Kay is part of the newly formed curatorial team at Les Complices*.



Kevin Toksöz Fairbairn (US/Turkey) is a performer, sound artist, and academic, working at the boundaries of installation, improvisation, composition and craft. He is a regular guest with leading new music ensembles such as Klangforum Wien and Talea Ensemble. An accomplished instrument builder, he gives concerts and creates installations using a variety of instruments that he has designed and built himself. He publishes on sound studies, artistic research, and musicology, and has given masterclasses and lectures in Europe, Asia, and North America. His latest book, *Thinking Sound through Agential Realism*, was published in 2022 by Punctum Books.



Nuriia Khasanova was born in Kazakhstan, raised in Russia, based in Switzerland since 2012. Passionate about exploration and curious of what is unknown to her – what brings her towards new experiences and collaborations. Currently, Nuriia branches her practices between classical music and transdisciplinary practices. She explores techniques of contemporary music, musical theatre, free improvisation, folk music, performance and video editing. As a flute player, she continues to pursue different musical festivals: solo to chamber music and takes part in various interdisciplinary/ transdisciplinary collaboration projects.

