

Kapitolina Tsvetkova (Tola)

Artist, director, author, set designer

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organic

Kapitolina Tsvetkova (Tola) is an artist, director, author and set designer based in France.

Trained in visual arts at EPSAA in Paris and **HEAR Strasbourg**, she has developed a practice at the crossroads of installation, sculpture, video, performance, and musical theatre/opera in new forms. With her company **Kassandra collective**, she develops a personal body of work where matter remains paramount, and where performance acts as the activation of a sculptural world. Her projects include **Plant Opera**, **Kassandra**, **Plankton**, **Petitecouti**, and **Nebula**. For larger-scale projects, she specializes in mass movement and choral conducting.

She began very young as an interpreter in the White Goat puppet theatre and in Slava Polunin's Snowshow, then pursued training in flute, piano, music theory and opera staging at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory.

Her work extends into animation and film with her company **TXORI Animation**, whose films *Pa* and *La Colina* have been selected for and won awards at several international festivals, including **Encounters** and **Clermont-Ferrand**. She then moves into opera and major stage productions as an assistant, associate, and movement director at institutions such as the **Mariinsky Theatre**, the **Deutsche Oper Berlin**, the **Zurich Opera House**, the **Teatro Real Madrid**, **La Monnaie**, the **Opéra national du Rhin**, and the **Opéra de Lille**. There, she collaborates with artists and directors such as Daniele Finzi Pasca, **David Hermann**, **Dmitri Tcherniakov**, **Katie Mitchell**, **Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui**, and **Dimitris Papaioannou**. She also works as an **associate choreographer** and **assistant director** for the ceremonies of the **Sochi Olympic and Paralympic Games**, the **Asian Games**, and the **Fête des Vignerons**. Having been involved in international professional contexts from a very early age, she has built a unique, hybrid and often politically situated career, driven by transdisciplinarity, the fusion of genres, fiction and reality and the rejection of borders.

Her career has been recognized with the **Karlsruhe Opera Prize** at the NANOopera International Opera Directing Competition, an award at the **Kouriokhine Prize for Contemporary Art**, visual arts grants such as AIC and Lumideco, and her selection as an **associate artist at the Aix-en-Provence Festival Academy**, **Music Theatre Now**, and the **Venice Biennale Teatro**. Through environments where objects, bodies, voices, light, and sound interact, she creates sensitive and hybrid forms, exploring themes of memory, heritage, utopia/dystopia, ecofeminism, disappearance, and transformation.

Artist statement

My practice falls within the visual arts and begins with matter: objects, volumes, surfaces and spatial arrangements. I explore the ephemeral, memory, and legacy—what remains, what disappears, and how bodies and materials bear traces. My approach is intentionally gender-fluid: I move from video to sound, from sculpture to painting, not as a label of multidisciplinary, but as a necessity. Each project finds its form by following a material logic, like a body finding a posture.

Some works reach their full form through live activation, but plasticity remains paramount. The performance functions as an activation protocol—time, attention, contact, friction, resonance—through which a sculptural situation becomes legible.

In Kassandra, porcelain acts like skin: a fragile envelope that absorbs impact, vibration, breath. Sound and voice don't hover above the object; they pass through it and allow themselves to be shaped by its weight, texture, and inherent risk. In Plankton, I construct environments from hundreds of salvaged elements—waste collected from recycling centers, melted, deformed, and re-sculpted—until they become habitats. Performers activate these sculptural ecosystems as chosen living spaces: areas of withdrawal, survival, and refusal, inhabited by those who distance themselves from society. It's not about storytelling in the theatrical sense, but about composing a material world—damaged, alive, luminous—where objects carry a politics and a memory.



TRAINING

2018 - 2020	Haute Ecole des arts du Rhin (HEAR), Strasbourg - DNSEP / Master's degree with an art option
2017 - 2018	Haute Ecole des arts du Rhin (HEAR), Strasbourg - M1 scenography
2016 - 2017	EPSAA, Paris - Visual Arts
2009 - 2014	Saint Petersburg Conservatory - Specialization (Bachelor's + Master's), opera and musical theatre directing
2007 - 2009	Chelyabinsk Academy of Music - Music Theory and Composition
1999 - 2007	Chelyabinsk School/College of Music - Flute and Piano
2011 - 2013	Opera Directors Spring Lab - Conferences, courses and masterclasses with opera directors and specialists

SELECTED AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS, RESIDENCIES AND PROGRAMS

2021 and 2024	Venice Biennale Academy - Associate Artist
2023 - 2024	MusicTheatreNow and MusikTheaterTage Wien - Associate Artist
2021 - 2022	Aix-en-Provence Festival Academy - Associate Artist; mentored by Katie Mitchell
2022	Kassandra - Supports Impuls neue musik, Kulturamt Stuttgart and Fonds Transfabrik
2022	Caude - Grand Est grant for research and creation of objects
2021	Mue[t] - AIC grant from the Ministry of Culture and HEAR diploma project grant
2021	CHIMERAS Program - Associate Artist; Ministry of Culture / Le Lieu unique / Theatre Nouvelle Generation / CND
2021	Georges Aperghis Project - Recitations - Selected Directing Team, Academy of Theatre and Music
2020	Alice - XXLumideco Contemporary Art Grant
2020	Plant Opera - Nominated for the Contemporary Art Prize Kouriokhine, Art-Science category
2015	Pa - Official Selection: Encounters, Motion +, Clermont-Ferrand; Audience Award at Encounters
2015	La Colina - Official Selections: Future Short, Animalada, Victoria Film Festival, Amarcort, Zero Plus, NIM; special mentions to Amarcort, Zero Plus and NIM
2014	Asteroid 62 - Longlist for the National Theatre Award Golden Mask
2013	International Opera Directors Competition NANOopera - Winner and Prize of the Opera Theatre of Karlsruhe for Lulu
2012	PLATFORMA, Moscow - Award for Best Performance for The Human Voice

ARTISTIC PROJECTS, AUTHOR'S WORKS AND TOURING PRODUCTIONS

2026	Nebula - Staging and set design. Premiere February 12-14, 2026 at Bords 2 Scènes, Vitry-le-Francois; Mini Musica / Musica Strasbourg March 30-31, 2026. Executive production: Cesare CNCM/Reims; co-productions: CCAM Vandœuvre-les-Nancy, Cite musicale-Metz, HANATSUmiroir, Musica Strasbourg and Bords 2 Scènes
2025 - 2026	Plankton – Concept, direction, writing, set design, and sculpture. Premiere June 19–21, 2025 in Zurich; tour January 9–10, 2026 at Gare du Nord Basel and January 17, 2026 at Ton sur Ton / Pole Nord, La Chaux-de-Fonds. With Leo Collin, Collegium Novum Zurich, Kollektiv International Totem, and the Kassandra Collective
2025	Murmur - Scenography and sound objects with Stephane Clor. Musica Strasbourg Festival, September 27-28, 2025. Production Dreieck Interferences; co-production CNCM Cesare Reims
2025	Nothing Lasts Forever - Performance-installation, Opera by Lille, November 5-9, 2025, echoing L'Ecume des jours
2025	Parade - Staging for the opening of the Lille Opera season, September 20-24, 2025
2023	It Disappears - Set design and artistic collaboration for the illusionist duo Stupefy. Premiere December 7-9, 2023; co-production La Villette, Scène nationale de Cavaillon, Le Totem
2023	Theology – Staging, set design and concept for the musical theatre of Huihui Cheng; Ensemble BRuCH, Cologne
2022 - ongoing	Ptitecouti - Set design, sound object design and staging with Ayako Okubo / HANATSUmiroir; created in 2022 and touring since 2023
2022 - ongoing	Caude - Research in speculative anatomy; active/performing sound object
2022 - ongoing	Recitations - Scenography and staging in tandem with Clement Debras; Academy of Theatre and Music / Theatre of Nîmes
2021 - on tour	Kassandra - Scenography, objects and staging. Bijloke Summer Academy; Kunstraum 34 Stuttgart; MusikTheaterTage Wien; OperaNow Graz
2020 - on tour	Alice - Set designer, sculptor and director for the sound installation with activation; HANATSUmiroir
2019 - ongoing	Plant Opera - Artistic direction, staging and visual arts practice for interdisciplinary installation-performance; Archstoyanie, KALT, Longevity Festival, Biennale Saint-Omer, KAB Paris
2019	What's Up 6 / SA4 - Set design, sculptures and staging for HANATSUmiroir, Espace K Strasbourg
2019 - 2020	The Machine / Nothing Lasts Forever - Set design, sculptures and performance for a physical theatre and puppet show; FITZ Stuttgart and festival Showers
2018	Fish and Boar - Concept, text, scenography, video and staging; Opera Stanislavsky / Archstoyanie
2018	A Richer Dust - Video art and objects for Nigel Clark Strasbourg Academy of Music

2018	Public Bodies - Set Designer and Performer; Tehran Theatre Festival
2018	Fat white fogs. Little black stripes - Film - text, concept, camera and design
2018	The Monkey's Lie - Co-Scenographer; TAPS Strasbourg
2017	Kolodetz - Staging and set design for an opera for young audiences; Mariinsky Theatre
2015	Objectarium - Direction, choreography, sculpture and scenography; OperaLab Berlin / Acker Stadt Palast
2013	Asteroid 62 - Staging, sculpture and scenography; OPERgruppa, Moscow

CURATORIAL PROJECTS, FILM AND ART DIRECTION

2016	Alice: The Return to Wonderland - Art direction, script and illustration assistance for the interactive HelloComputer exhibition, developed between Moscow, Vienna, China and Spain
2016 - present	TXORI Animation - Art direction, production and writing. Projects: Hope (2017, co-director / animation assistant), BlueSound Inc. (2015, director), Pa (2015, director / concept / scenario), La Colina (2015, director / concept)
2012 - 2013	Skorohod, Saint Petersburg - Curator of the contemporary music and musical theatre program; co-founding context / artistic direction
2011 - 2013	Re:music and microtonal music festivals - Programming and production projects in Saint Petersburg
2011 - 2013	co_OPERA_tion - Artistic director of an independent collective of composers, conductors, directors, and artists. Principal works: La Voix humaine and La Serva Padrona

MAJOR PRODUCTIONS, ASSISTANT DIRECTORS AND COLLABORATIONS

2025	Mood Indigo - Assistant Director (Anna Smolar), Lille Opera
2023 - 2025	Tsar Saltan - Assistant to Dimitri's Director Tcherniakov and Joel Lauwers; Opera national du Rhin, La Mint Brussels, Real Madrid Theatre
2023 - 2024	The Human Voice - Assistant Director to Katie Mitchell; National Opera of the Rhine
2023	Aus einem Totenhaus - Assistant director of Dimitri Tcherniakov; Ruhrtriennale
2019	Fête des Vignerons - Associate choreographer, assistant director, showcall and choreographic team coordinator; Vevey
2017	Opening Ceremony of the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games - Mass Movement Assistant and Team Coordinator; BWS, Ashgabat
2015	Singing in the Rain - Assistant director; Internship Entertainment, Moscow
2015	La Traviata - Movement Director and Assistant Stage Director to David Hermann; Zurich Opera

2014 - 2015	Primal Matter / Sutra - Stage management and tour assistance for Dimitris Papaioannou and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui
2014	DAU - Post-production Assistant Director; Phenomenon Films, London
2014	Orestia - Assistant to the stage director and movement director David Hermann; Deutsche Oper Berlin
2014	Boris Godunov - Assistant Director and Movement Director; Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe
2013 - 2014	Sochi Olympic and Paralympic Games - Mass movement assistant (Nathan Wright), assistant stage director, aerial and acrobatic coordinator for the ceremonies
2011 - 2012	Compagnie Finzi Pasca - Assistant director / translator on Aida, Requiem, Rain and Pagliacci; Theater Mariinsky and Teatro San Carlo
2010 - 2011	Cirque du Soleil - Management internship on Corteo and Saltimbanco

FIRST SCENOGRAPHY AND COSTUME DESIGN PROJECTS

first projects	La Fanciulla del West, G. Puccini - Concept and scenography
first projects	Aida, G. Verdi - Concept, set design and costumes
first projects	Rusalka, A. Dargomyzhsky - Concept and scenography
first projects	William Ratcliff, C. Cui - Concept, set design and costumes
first projects	The Nose, D. Shostakovich - Set Design
first projects	Skupoi (The Miser), V. Pashkevich - Set and costume design

FIRST INTERPRETATION PATHS

1998 - 2000	Snowshow by Slava Polunin - Performer ('Little Clown')
1997 - 2006	Magical Theatre White Goat - Performer in puppet and visual theatre productions, including The Magic Flute, Carmen and Women's Songs