



# À la recherche des Antigones





## **ANCIENT MYTH** AND SHADOW THEATER WORKSHOP

This creative experimentation project explores Greek mythology and its contemporary resonance.

In 2023, Anima Théâtre embarked on a cycle of research building on the experiments carried out in Beirut, Athens, Amiens, and Martigues during the creation of LATERNA.

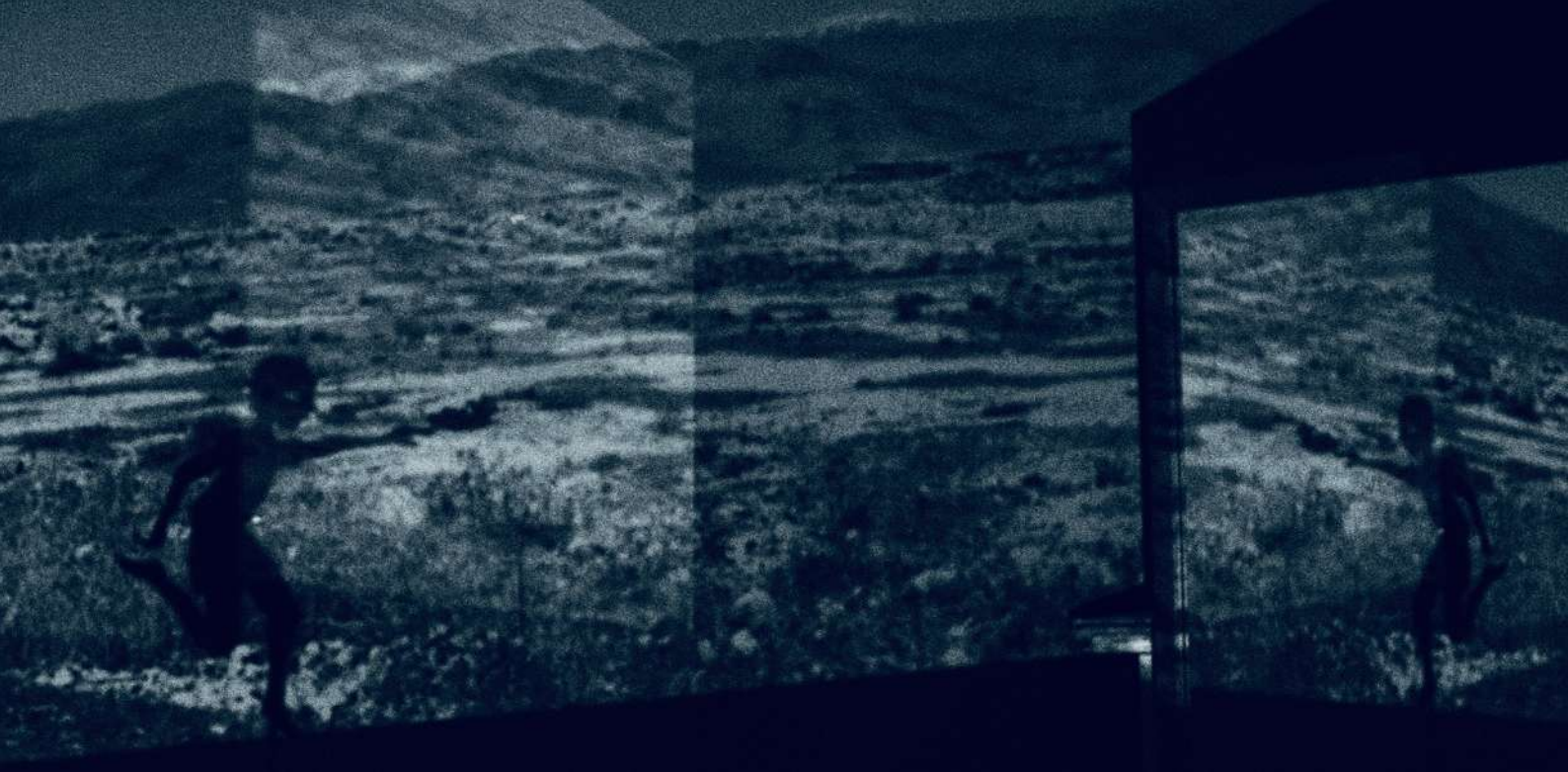
Conceived in collaboration with people experiencing exile or forced displacement, this project highlighted the richness of shared experiences.

Within this framework, we envisioned developing a research protocol linking Greek mythology and puppet theatre. Greek mythology, a source of universal narratives, has been reinterpreted through the centuries—from the Renaissance to Walt Disney, and even Marvel productions. We treated it as a living material to tell personal stories and transform the universal into the intimate.

In collaboration with academics, the project was structured around creative and mediation laboratories. These labs brought together a diverse group of participants, including displaced people as well as students in fine arts and drama.

This collaborative approach fostered exchange and co-creation while strengthening artistic skills.





In 2024, our work continued with a return to Lebanon to conduct creative laboratories centered on the *MYTHOS* project.

This process was enriched by the collaboration of Professor Effimia Karakantza and artists Eric Deniau and Yiorgos Karakatzas. Together, they worked with a group of Palestinian women from the Borj el-Barajneh camp as well as young Syrian puppeteers from the Shatila camps. Their research focused on the reappropriation of mythology through the creation of short shadow theatre plays.

In February 2025, Eric, Effimia, and Yiorgos led a master class at the Department of Classical Studies at the University of Patras, entitled *ANTIGONE IN SHADOWS*. This shadow theatre workshop brought together theatre students, classics students, and professors. For the first time, we worked around the figure of Antigone under the guidance of Yiorgos Karakatzas (Marseille, France), the Kahraba collective (Hamana, Lebanon), and Effimia Karakantza (Patras, Greece).

By bringing together art, research, and social engagement, we aim to foster a rich and meaningful intercultural dialogue, offering a space for creation and expression.



## IN SEARCH OF THE ANTIGONES

### IN THE SHADOWS

In continuity with our research and the enriching encounters we have had with diverse audiences, we are delighted to collaborate with Effimia Karakantza, Professor of Ancient Literature, Éric Deniau, Artistic Director of HAH and the Kahraba Company, and Yiorgos Karakatzas, Artistic Director of Anima Théâtre. Together, we have already conducted several workshops in Beirut and Patras, aimed at creating a dialogue around universal themes.

In light of current events affecting our societies, it seemed particularly relevant to refocus our workshops on the notion of “Contemporary Antigones.” This choice reflects our desire to explore and shed light on present-day female figures who, like the emblematic character of Antigone in Antiquity, embody the struggle for truth and justice in the face of oppression. These figures, often forgotten or overlooked, testify to unshakable resistance and exemplary courage, reminding us that the struggles of the past still resonate today.

These workshops are intended, whenever possible, for a mixed and diverse audience: students of art and theatre, as well as people experiencing displacement. Our approach seeks to foster an atmosphere of exchange and sharing, where each participant can contribute their voice and perspective, while discovering the echoes of Sophocles’ Antigone in today’s feminist and social struggles. Through practical exercises, open discussions, and artistic creations, we aim to encourage collective reflection on the condition of women today, while rediscovering classical texts that continue to inspire and feed our imagination.

Ultimately, our project is meant as a tribute to all those who, throughout the ages, have dared to defy authority and claim human dignity. Together, let us set out in search of these Antigones who, in the shadows, continue to shine through their resilience and commitment.



## REFLECTIONS ON THE SHADOW THEATRE WORKSHOP

Shadow theatre is intimately linked to the origins of humanity. It is easy to imagine shadows dancing on the walls of prehistoric caves, or in Plato's famous Allegory of the Cave. In ancient Greece, shadow was used at the Sanctuary of Delphi to create a mystical atmosphere, enhancing the power of stories and oracles.

Since the very beginning, shadows have evoked other worlds within the collective imagination. Seers and fortune-tellers have "spoken" with them, "listened" to them, establishing a form of communication with the world of spirits and the invisible.

Today, through the combination of multiple light sources and video projection technologies, theatre explores new narrative dimensions by playing with shadows and their spatial arrangement. Shadows enrich storytelling, amplifying the spectacular while freeing dramaturgy from linear constraints. They endow characters with a unique vitality, while new spaces and landscapes emerge from the simple encounter between light and silhouette.

As part of the workshop, the two artists will explore shadow projection as a powerful tool of contemporary theatrical storytelling, restoring to this millennia-old tradition a central place in the scenic imagination.





## **ANTIGONE:** A MYTH IN PERPETUAL TRANSFORMATION

The myth of Antigone is marked by a constant dynamic of transformation. Like all stories originating from ancient Greece, her tale has been reshaped, reinterpreted, and redefined in modern times—more so than any other myth of classical antiquity. The forces of metamorphosis surrounding her seem inexhaustible.

Across the world, the figure of Antigone has been used to tell new stories of resistance against oligarchic, totalitarian, or colonial regimes, as well as narratives of personal empowerment and the fight for gender equality. Antigone continually reinvents herself, giving rise to a multitude of new “Antigones” striving to emerge from the shadows and make themselves heard.

It is within this space of transformation that shadow theatre and the many contemporary Antigones converge, projecting onto the stage the persistent echoes of an ancient struggle that remains strikingly relevant today.



# **WORKSHOP STRUCTURE:**

## SHADOW THEATRE AS A MEANS OF EXPRESSION AND SPEAKING OUT

**Duration: 12 hours, spread over three days**

### **DAY 1: INTRODUCTION AND EXPLORATION OF SHADOWS**

#### **1. Introduction to Modern Shadows**

- Presentation of the essential concepts of shadow theatre.
- Discussion on the various possibilities offered by screens (fabrics, paper, walls, etc.), light sources (projectors, lamps, etc.), and the use of shadows for storytelling.

#### **2. Practical Exercises**

- Activities designed to explore the various ways of using shadows, including body and silhouette games.
- Experimentation with different types of screens and light sources, allowing participants to become familiar with the tools at their disposal.



## **DAY 2: DRAMATURGY AND CREATION**

### **3. Shadow Dramaturgy / Encountering Antigone Through Shadows**

- Reflection on the narrative and emotional impact of shadows.
- Analysis of dramaturgical and stage presentation elements specific to shadow theatre, with a focus on how shadows can convey emotions and conflicts.

### **4. Experimentation**

- Participants will have the opportunity to select excerpts from Antigone or other stories meaningful to their community and adapt them using shadow play.
- Creation of a collaborative shadow theatre space where each group can work on a sequence.

## **DAY 3: PRESENTATION AND FEEDBACK**

### **5. Presentation of Creations**

- Each group will present their work to the other participants, using shadows to tell their story.
- The presentations will be followed by a discussion on the artistic and narrative choices made.

### **6. Feedback and Discussion**

- Exchange of feedback on the creations, allowing each participant to share their impressions and learn from others.
- Discussion on lessons learned, emotions evoked by the use of shadows, and how these experiences can enrich their own artistic and personal expression.





## EXPECTED OUTCOME

- This workshop will offer participants a unique opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of shadow theatre, enriching their theatrical practice through an innovative and creative approach.
- Participants will gain new skills and a deeper understanding of the use of shadows in theatrical storytelling, while developing their ability to express themselves and share their stories meaningfully through an accessible and visually engaging art form.

## ADDITIONAL OBJECTIVES

- Encourage personal expression and public speaking through an artistic medium.
- Create a space for collaborative sharing and learning, strengthening the connections between participants.
- Use shadow theatre as a tool to reflect on themes of identity, memory, and lived experience, allowing for catharsis and emotional connection.



## DIORAMAS

As a testimony to our exchanges and creative laboratories, we turn to a storytelling technique that closely resembles puppet theatre. These dioramas are indeed closely linked to the Japanese kamishibai art form and traditional “picture boxes.”

Composed of images and sometimes enriched with sound recordings, the dioramas are artistic installations designed to be experienced by a single viewer at a time. They can be exhibited both in collective exhibitions and in more intimate settings, allowing them to be visited before or after a performance.

This immersive approach offers a unique experience where visual art and storytelling meet, inviting the viewer to dive into a captivating narrative universe.



## THE SHORT PLAYS :

### *A JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF CONTEMPORARY ANTIGONES*

Through immersive workshops and enriching encounters, we had the opportunity to engage in dialogue with diverse groups, each bringing their own story and experiences. These exchanges resonate with the figure of Antigone, a timeless symbol of resistance and defiance in the face of injustice. Inspired by these multiple contemporary Antigones, we embark on a poetic, political, and puppetry-based exploration of struggle and hope.

This project takes the form of a poetic biopic, tracing the stories of courageous women who, like Antigone, dare to stand against oppression and claim their rights. Each of these women, through her words and actions, embodies a facet of resistance. Through the medium of puppetry, we will bring their stories to life, creating a space where the audience can feel the intensity of their struggles.

The “petites formes” (short plays) we will develop are conceived as capsules—poignant moments capturing the essence of struggle and hope. Each performance will be an invitation to reflect on our own relationship to resistance and justice. By weaving together past and present, we aim to shed light on the strength of these women who, like Antigone, defend essential values while challenging societal norms and expectations. By uniting art and activism, we pay tribute to voices that, though often silenced, continue to inspire and mobilize. The petites formes will become both the reflection of a collective struggle and a call to action—a symbol of hope for all those who dream of a fairer world.

Puppetry, by its very nature, lends itself beautifully to the creation of self-contained works that can inhabit a variety of spaces, far from the traditional stage. This art form, rich in creativity, makes it possible to explore diverse visual and aesthetic worlds, captivating a wide range of audiences. Freed from the constraints of conventional theatre, puppetry can unfold in unexpected places—parks, schools, cultural centers, or even urban spaces. This geographical accessibility not only broadens the audience but also fosters authentic encounters between artists and spectators. Puppets, with their unique ability to transcend linguistic and cultural barriers, prove to be powerful tools for telling stories that resonate with everyone.





## The Facilitators

### **YIORGOS KARAKANTZAS**

Puppeteer, Director

A stage director trained at the Academy of Theatre in Prague (Czech Republic) and later at the École Supérieure Nationale des Arts de la Marionnette in Charleville-Mézières, he founded Compagnie Anima Théâtre in 2004. Based at La Friche Belle de Mai in Marseille, he creates performances, short forms, and transmission projects within his company, while also collaborating with other companies and artists, including Théâtre de Cuisine, Compagnie Pseudonymo, Compagnie Paramana (Athens, Greece), and Compagnie Alama d'Arame (Portugal).

### **EFIMIA KARAKANTZA**

Professor of Ancient Greek Literature

Efimia Karakantza has been a professor at the University of Patras and the head of its department since 2022. She is also a Fellow in Hellenic Studies at the Center for Hellenic Studies, Harvard University. She studied in Thessaloniki (undergraduate), Reading (PhD), and has been a visiting researcher in Paris and Austin. Her recent publications focus on meta-feminist and political readings of ancient Greek literature, particularly Homeric poetry and Greek tragedy, as well as their contemporary reception in literature, performing arts, and cinema. Among her recent works are *Who Am I? (Mis)Identity and the Polis in Oedipus Tyrannus* (Harvard, 2020), *Antigone* (Routledge, 2023), and *Ancient Necropolitics: Maltreating the Living, Abusing the Dead in Ancient Greece* (co-editor), *Mnemosyne Supplement 492*, Brill, 2025.

### **ÉRIC DENIAUD**

Puppet Maker

A graduate of ESNAM, Éric has worked as a director, performer, and set designer for Drolatic Industry, Jean-Louis Heckel, and the Vietnam National Puppet Theatre. He regularly collaborates with Kaze Theater in Japan and co-founded the Kahraba Collective in Lebanon, where he has created more than 15 productions. He co-directs the Nehna wel Amar wel Jiran festival as well as the Hammana Artist House. His production *Geology of a Fable* won the awards for Best Production and Best Direction at the Lebanese National Theatre Festival in 2020.