



FABULATION

Constance Bugnon & Gianna Sutterlet

Circus & Stunt
Fall 2026



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Fabulation (noun)

The action of presenting purely imaginary facts as if they are real, or giving a fictional version of the facts. To this, we add our own definition: fabulation does not meddle with reality, it leaves space for certain aspects of reality to be more salient. It can make things that have gone previously unnoticed perceptible.

Two circus-stuntwomen warm themselves up, shoot themselves into the air, fly and land. In Fabulation, we question our relationship to doing circus and performing stunts. In our fantasies, we can be seduced by the idea of boldly surpassing ourselves, but in reality, is there space to openly acknowledge the inherent vulnerability that arises while doing such feats?

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We bring these spectacular forms of expression into dialogue with one another, and break down what unites and differentiates them. Circus is a live experience, both immediate and ephemeral, whereas the cinema stunts are experienced by the audience long after the stunt has been performed. We are interested in playing with these timeframes to confuse both ourselves and the spectator, creating expectations at incongruous moments.

For this creation a motorcycle will be on stage with us. The motorcycle for us is a common apparatus to both circus and stunt, it will allow us to shift between techniques and registers. We are also inspired by the human cannon, a traditional circus discipline that uses propulsion techniques resembling those used in stunts. Rarely practiced by women, we want to take these two disciplines and revisit the audience's potentially gendered expectations.

Fabulation seeks to explore the extraordinary, while skillfully questioning the thin line between reality and fiction. Playing with the sensational, Fabulation invites us to reconsider what lies beyond the feat.

The stunts performed will transform the space and play with the perception of what is real. This will allow us to pretend, to stunt-double for each other, and to divert reality...

Fabulation is an invitation to joyfully 'fabulate' : to make the unseen visible and to reveal new narratives around these daring physical exploits.



The Fabulation project was born from the dialogue between two points of view, two artists' circus paths. **A high-flying acrobat** and **a climbing acrobat** - sometimes climbing on a chinese pole, sometimes on other people - always questioning their respective relationships with their circus practices, hoping to define what makes them acrobats. As circus artists, if we leave our apparatus/object, what is left? What has the work with these disciplines given us? What traces have they left in our bodies/our minds?

Gianna The high-flying acrobat

"I've learned to set my body in motion in the air, to understand and master take-off and landing. But above all, I've learned how to land without dying or getting hurt. Is landing an end in itself? The punctuation mark of the acrobatic gesture? From this reflection came a desire to research materials and elements that could accommodate a falling body. It's all very well to know how to get yourself into the air, but what goes up must always come back down, so who will be there to catch you? "

Constance The climbing acrobat

"I learned how to go up and down a pole. To move my body by leaning on this rigid bar, to reach heights, and let my body fall, stopping before reaching the ground. From this observation arises the need to experiment with dimensions other than verticality. To rethink the rigging systems so that they are more artisanal and elemental, allowing the pole to be used as a portable and imperfect object."

THOUGHTS ON ACROBATICS AND STUNTS

With Fabulation, we want to create spaces where our points of view come together to open up the field of possibilities. Exploring new dimensions of acrobatics, ingeniously using stunt mechanisms to modify our gestures, stage our falls, or rig our jumps.

It's a creative adventure, but also a tribute to the female figures who have marked the history of the circus. In London in 1877, Rossa Matilda Richter, known on stage as Zazel, debuted her new act. Projected by an enormous spring in a tube, she was the first ever to perform the human cannon, showing that all genders can be daring and courageous. In Fabulation we address the representation of women in stunting.

Stuntwomen are essential to the film and entertainment industry. They intervene at key moments to carry out action scenes and risky stunts in place of the actors. As an understudy, they ensure safety and bring realism to perilous sequences. Stuntwomen often remain in the shadows, out of the spotlight, where women are still poorly represented. There are few female leads in action films, like Lara Croft or Wonder Woman, and these heroine characters are often sexualized (wearing revealing clothing is never practical for performing stunts !). And their roles often double for female characters who are victims of violence/abuse.

We start from the point of view that films are nothing more than mirrors of society... With Fabulation, we believe that by transforming representations, we transform (on our own scale) this society. By appropriating disciplines where women are less visible, we want to create new narratives and open up new possibilities together.

Fabulation is a celebration of every miss, every feat, every moment when we defy gravity and expectation, while honoring those who have paved the way before us. It's an intimate journey to the heart of acrobatics, where courage and respect meet at the center of the stage.

"To express the imagination is to work for reality."

Sylvie Chastain



RESEARCH LABORATORIES

Fabulation is an ambitious project, combining circus and physical stunts. The creation process began in winter 2022, and from our very first meeting, we decided that it was important to build the show within a realistic timeframe. The creation will take place in two phases. The first phase will focus on experimental laboratories and table work. Alongside these labs, we also attend cinema stunts workshops given by the CUC (Campus Univers Cascade).

Intelligent, measured risk-taking is essential to our creative process. We are well aware of the risks inherent in motorcycling and physical stunts. Every flight and jump is meticulously planned, with appropriate protective equipment and landing surfaces specially designed to ensure our safety.

With these laboratories we aim to experiment with physical and aesthetic materials. For these laboratory sessions, we will call on resource collaborators.

Lab #1 Landing surfaces

This first stage of research will enable us to test :

- different landing surfaces: mat, net, airbag, foam, cardboard.
- materials to pass through with our bodies: fake glass, paper, fabric, etc.
- different starting points: falling from heights, propulsion, falling down stairs, etc.

We wanted to start our research around the landing surface/material, which is a decisive acrobatic and scenographic factor. This will provide us with answers about the technical possibilities and limitations of these materials. We'll then be able to start thinking about specifications together with competent professionals (stunt coordinators, scenographers, etc).

Lab #2 Protections and stunt double

Which protections for which actions and which actions for which protections?

- tests with different types of specialized stunt protection
- costume padding tests with: foam, fabric, paper...

Doubling techniques

- doubling trials with foam dummies and inflatable dummies
- experiments on doubling: mimicry (identical costumes and masks), optical illusions, diverting the viewer's attention...

In this laboratory, we will be approaching the safety, aesthetic and material aspects of the project. We'll be accompanied by a stuntwoman for the protection and a costume designer for the doubling.

Lab #3 Motorcycle, object of convergence

- testing different motorcycle models
- adapting the work done on a duo bike to a motorcycle
- physical impact, falling with the rolling object

The motorcycle is one of Fabulation's flagship apparatuses. For us, it marries circus and stunt. We want to approach this object from both perspectives.

We will be adapting an preexisting acrobatic bicycle vocabulary to the motorcycle. This work will be carried out at low speed, with care and in search of a familiar way of balancing.

In contrast to the acrobatic bike's measured balance, the motorcycle will also be the center of crashes and impact. Through bursts of speed and stunt movements, the motorcycle will be used to create a place of tension and collision...

CALENDAR

The show is scheduled to be released in fall 2026. We are planning a creation time in two phases :

- BETWEEN SPRING 2023 AND FALL 2025
10 week of research laboratories and writing residencies
2 to 4 weeks of stunt training
- BETWEEN FALL 2025 AND FALL 2026
12 weeks of creation residencies

27 - 31 March 2023 *Research and writing residency*
Wolubilis - Brussels (B)

26 december 2023 - 7 January 2024 *Lab #1 Landing surfaces*
LeZarti'cirque - Sainte-Croix (CH)

12 - 16 February 2024 *Writing residency*
BAMP - Bruxelles (B)

19 - 25 February 2024 *Research and writing residency*
Latitude 50 - Marchin (B)

26 February - 3 March 2024
Lab #2 "Landing surfaces and stunt double"
Cirklabo (B)

18 - 30 August 2024 *Stunt training*
CUC - Cascade - Le Cateau-Cambrésis (F)

14 - 31 October 2024
Lab #3 Motorcycle, object of convergence

Looking for residencies in 2025-2026



BIOGRAPHIES

Gianna Sutterlet trained in korean teeterboard at ESAC and in circus dramaturgy at CNAC. With her two partners, they created Tripotes la Compagnie. Based in Brussels, the company presented "Encore une fois", which was nominated for the Prix Maeterlinck de la critique. She currently performs with Side Show on their creation "Permit oh permit my soul to rebel" and with El Nucleo on "Salto". She accompanies the Be Flat company on various projects and will be part of their new creation "Living". In November 2022, Gianna became artistic director of Collectif Curieux. It is under this name that "Fabulation" will be created.



Constance Bugnon is a multi-faceted circus artist. She has evolved in the artistic world as a performer, author and teacher. She trained at the Ecole de Cirque de Québec, specializing in Chinese pole. Constance has worked as a performer for Company Idem and Cirque Entre Nous. In parallel, she has collaborated with Compagnie Ici'Bas, as author and performer on several projects. She is currently working with the collectif Sous le Manteau and acts as an outside eye for the Compagnie Courant d' Cirque. Constance also teaches chinese pole at various professional schools, including CODARTS, ESAC, CRAC and Ésacto'Lido.



CREATION TEAM

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Project leader · *Creation & interpretation*

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Project leader · *Creation & interpretation*

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