

# **THE LIVING AND THE DEAD ENSEMBLE**

**CV & Works 2017-2024**

## BIOGRAPHY

**The Living and the Dead Ensemble is the stage name for a group of artists, performers and poets from Haiti, France and the United Kingdom.** The members of the Ensemble began their collaboration in Haiti, in 2017, with the staging in Haitian Creole of the play «Monsieur Toussaint» by the Martinican thinker and poet Édouard Glissant. The Ensemble's first film, «OUVERTURES», had its world premiere at the Berlinale 2020, where it received a special mention before being screened at more than fifty international festivals.

**Their works by The Living and The Dead Ensemble are designed and written collectively. They are interested in modern and contemporary history, issues of identity and memory, borders and travel, ecology and climate crises by offering to observe the world from a Haitian perspective.** Anticipating the revolts of the Black Live Matter movement of 2020, the creation of « The Wake », emblematic work of the Ensemble, was interrupted by the COVID pandemic. However, the collective persevered and managed to complete the creation of a play and installation that continue to circulate in the world today as a testimony of this troubled period. The Ensemble produces texts, performances, films, installations and sound works. **Its work has been presented since 2017 in museums and art centers (Z33 in Belgium, Badischer Kunstverein in Karlsruhe, Savvy Contemporary in Berlin, Serpentine Gallery in London) in dance, theater and film festivals (KunstenFestival des arts in Brussels, DañsFabrik in Brest and Festival Parallèles in Marseille in 2022, Berlinale, BFI London Film Festival, New York Film Festival) and prestigious contemporary art biennials such as the Sharjah Biennale (United Arab Emirates - 2023), São Paulo Biennale (Brazil , 2023), Dream City (Tunis, 2023) and also as part of Ghetto Biennale (Port-au-Prince, 2017)**

Under the stage name The Living and the Dead Ensemble are produced individual and collective works by: **Mackenson Bijou, Rossi Jacques Casimir, Dieuvèla Cherestal, James Desiris, Louis Henderson, Léonard Jean Baptiste, Cynthia Maignan, Sophonie Maignan, Olivier Marboeuf, Zakh Turin (James Peter Etienne) with the participation of the actress Sachernka Anacassis.** In seven years of collaboration, The Living and the Dead Ensemble has produced a remarkable work on the international scenes of art by inventing a vocabulary at the crossroads of languages and cultures, bodies and images that speak of the chaos of the world and its rebirth.

**website :** <https://thelivingandthedeadensemble.com/>



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## **PERFORMANCES & THEATER PLAYS**

## **MONSIEUR TOUSSAINT**

PERFORMANCE FOR 8 ACTORS

DURATION : 60 MIN

WRITING & CREATION : 2017

LANGUAGE : HAITIAN CREOLE

This play written in 1959 by the Martinican thinker and poet Edouard Glissant is presented as a general recomposition of the revolutionary atmosphere in Saint-Domingue (the future Haiti) from 1788 to 1803, date of the death of Toussaint-Louverture at Fort of Joux, in French Jura. He led the revolt of the island's slaves and founded the first black government. His lieutenant Dessalines proclaimed Haiti's independence in 1804. The play was first staged in 1977. In a bare setting, she presents the last days of Louverture, tragic hero, struggling with the ghosts of history. The Living and The Dead Ensemble offers a free adaptation of fragments of this text translated for the first time in Haitian Creole. The performance was presented at the cemetery of Port-au-Prince (Haiti) as part of the Ghetto Biennale 2017.



Performance views at the cemetery of Port-au-Prince – Haiti - 2017

# THE WAKE

PERFORMANCE FOR 8 ACTORS

DURATION : 50 MIN

WRITING & CREATION : 2019-2020

LANGUAGE : HAITIAN CREOLE, FRENCH

Night has fallen on a burning world. Demonstrations, earthquakes, forest fires, fire is everywhere. Fire of struggles and pain, rebirth and chaos. Men and women speak and « de-speak » to honor the dead and save the living. While General Feu struts about in the middle of the assembly and his interpreter repaints the suburbs of the world with the color of flames, they try to resist madness and see a new day rise.

«The Wake» is a piece that restrains an exploded geography, like the broken mirror of a chaotic world. Intimate stories and fables, cries of revolt and songs, demands and delusions, an assembly tries to be heard. Is there a possible future beyond the repetition of disasters of all kinds? Is there a common fire to share with those who have lost the word or never had it? During the writing of this uncertain journey in space and time, interrupted by the COVID health crisis, the authors of The Living and The Dead Ensemble also seized fragments of the play «Melovivi ou le piège» of the Haitian writer Frankétienne. By re-reading and updating a work anticipating the earthquake that would ravage Haiti ten years ago, The Ensemble made the wake a visionary space that, in turn, foresaw the global fire of the Black Lives Matter movement.

## **The Wake - performance online**

**March 2021** : Théâtre de l'Usine, Geneva, Switzerland.

**April 2021** : Ateliers Médicis, Clichy-sous-bois, France

**May 2021** : Kunstenfestival des arts, Bruxelles, Belgium

## **The Wake – performance live**

**January 2022** : Atelier Médicis, Clichy-sous-bois, France

**January 2022** : Festival Parallèle, Marseille, France

**February 2022** : Festival DansFabrik, Brest, France

**July 2022** : Badischer Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, Germany

**February 2023** : Sharjah Biennial 15, UAE

**August 2023** : Serpentine Gallery, London, United Kingdom

**November 2023** : São Paulo Bienal, Brazil

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Performance views at DañisFabrik à Brest – France - February 2022





Performance view at Serpentine Galleries – London – August 2023



Performance views at Sharjah Biennial - 2023

## **II FILM & VIDEO INSTALLATION**

## THE WAKE – INSTALLATION

VIDEO INSTALLATION

3 SCREENS SYNCHRONIZED + SOUND

DURATION : 35 MIN

CRÉATION : 2021

**LANGUAGES** : HAITIAN CREOLE, FRENCH / **SUBTILES** : ENGLISH, GERMAN, PORTUGUESE, ARABIC

**PRODUCTION** : SPECTRE PRODUCTIONS, LES ATELIERS MEDICIS, THEATRE DE L'USINE, KUNSTENFESTIVAL DES ARTS, Z33

**Written by** : The Living and the Dead Ensemble **Images & Editing** : Louis Henderson / **Music** : João Polido / **Sound** : Victor Donati / **Art direction and production** : Olivier Marboeuf

The Wake is a video installation where the space of the night is thought as the possible place of recomposition of a community that dreams of flight, travel, alliances between diasporas and restless souls that haunt our electronic worlds. Shot between Port-au-Prince and Clichy-Montfermeil, the sequences of The Wake compose an imaginary territory of hope and revolt.

### Public presentation of the installation

**May 2021** : Savvy Contemporary, Berlin, Germany

**September 2021** : Z33, Hasselt, Belgium

**February – March 2022** : Forum Expanded, Berlinale, Germany

**Mai 2022** : Ateliers Médicis, Clichy-sous-bois, France

**June-November 2022** : Badischer Kunstverein Karlsruhe, Germany

**February 2023** : Sharjah Biennial 15, UAE

**September 2023** : Dream City, Tunisia

**September 2023** : São Paulo Bienal, Brazil

**November 2023** : Concordia Gallery – Montreal – Canada

**Juin 2024** : “Sons mêlés” (collective) - Musée d'art de Rouyn-Noranda (Canada)





Installation views at Z 33 (Hasselt – Belgium) - 2022



Installation views at Badischer Kunstverein (Karlsruhe) - 2022  
and at Sharjah Biennale - 2023



## OUVERTURES - FILM

FICTION, 132 MIN, COIOR, 16:9, 2019 (FRANCE, UK, HAÏTI)

LANGUAGES : HAITIAN CREOLE, FRENCH

SUBTITLES : ENGLISH

Moving from the frozen landscapes of the Jura mountains to the urban centres of Port-au-Prince, *Ouvertures* brings the Haitian revolutionary Toussaint Louverture back to life. In France a Haitian researcher tries to read the past within the stratigraphic layers of Jurassic limestone, whilst in Haiti a group of young actors translate and rehearse scenes from *Monsieur Toussaint*, a play written by Édouard Glissant, that recounts the last days in the life of Louverture dying in exile in a prison cell in the Jura, 1803. Ghosts from the pantheon of Haitian history visit Louverture on his deathbed and put him to trial. As the play proceeds the actors become possessed by their characters, and eventually the ghost of Louverture joins the group and takes them on a voyage for a new kind of exile.

### **a film by The Living and The Dead Ensemble**

**with :** Atchasou, Leonard Jean Baptiste, Mackenson Bijou, Dieuvela Cherestal, Jephthé Carmil, Rossi Jacques Casimir, James Desiris, James Fleurissaint, Cynthia Maignan, Sophonie Maignan, Zakh Turin

**Written by :** The Living and the Dead Ensemble

**Directed by :** Louis Henderson and Olivier Marboeuf

**Cinematography :** Louis Henderson, Diana Vidrascu

**Sound :** Jean Marcaisse Bellegarde, André Fevre, Roudie Rigaud

**Image editing :** Louis Henderson

**Sound editing :** Gabor Rippli

**Mix :** Mikaël Barre

**Grading :** Sergi Sanchez

**Music:** João Polido

### **a film produced by Spectre Productions**

**Coproduction :** La Fabrique Phantom

**Producers :** Olivier Marboeuf & Louis Henderson

**Associated producer :** Cédric Walter

**With the support of :** HOME, Arts Council England, Centre National des Arts Plastiques, la Procirep et la Région Bretagne

### **Screenings & festivals (selection)**

#### **2019**

BFI London Film Festival (work-in-progress)

#### **2020**

Berlinale - Forum - Germany (world premiere) / **Special Press Award - Prix Fipresci**

CPH Dox - Denmark

Kunstenfestivaldesarts - Belgium  
Thessaloniki Documentary Film Festival - Greece  
Durban International Film Festival - South Africa  
Indielisboa – Portugal  
Trinidad et Tobago Film Festival  
New york film festival - USA  
Kaunas International Film Festival  
Cinema Galeries - Bruxelles - Belgique  
CinéMartinique - Martinique  
Belo Horizonte International Film Festival  
Kasseldocfest - Germany  
Rencontres internationales du Documentaire de Montréal - Canada  
Kassel Docfest - Germany  
Torino International Film Festival (international competition) – **Italy Jury's special Prize**  
International Documentary Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) -  
TEA Tenerife Espacio de las Artes  
28th Annual African Diaspora International Film Festival - USA  
Moscow international film festival - Russia  
Pravo Ljudski Film Festival Sarajevo - Bosnie-Herzégovine

## **2021**

Festival del Nuevo Cine Latinoamericano de La Habana – Cuba  
Third Horizon Film Festival – Miami

## **2022**

Festival Travelling – France  
African film festival – Stockholm  
Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum – Frankfurt – Germany



Stills from OUVERTURES - 2019



Stills from OUVERTURES - 2019

### **III**

## **EXHIBITIONS**

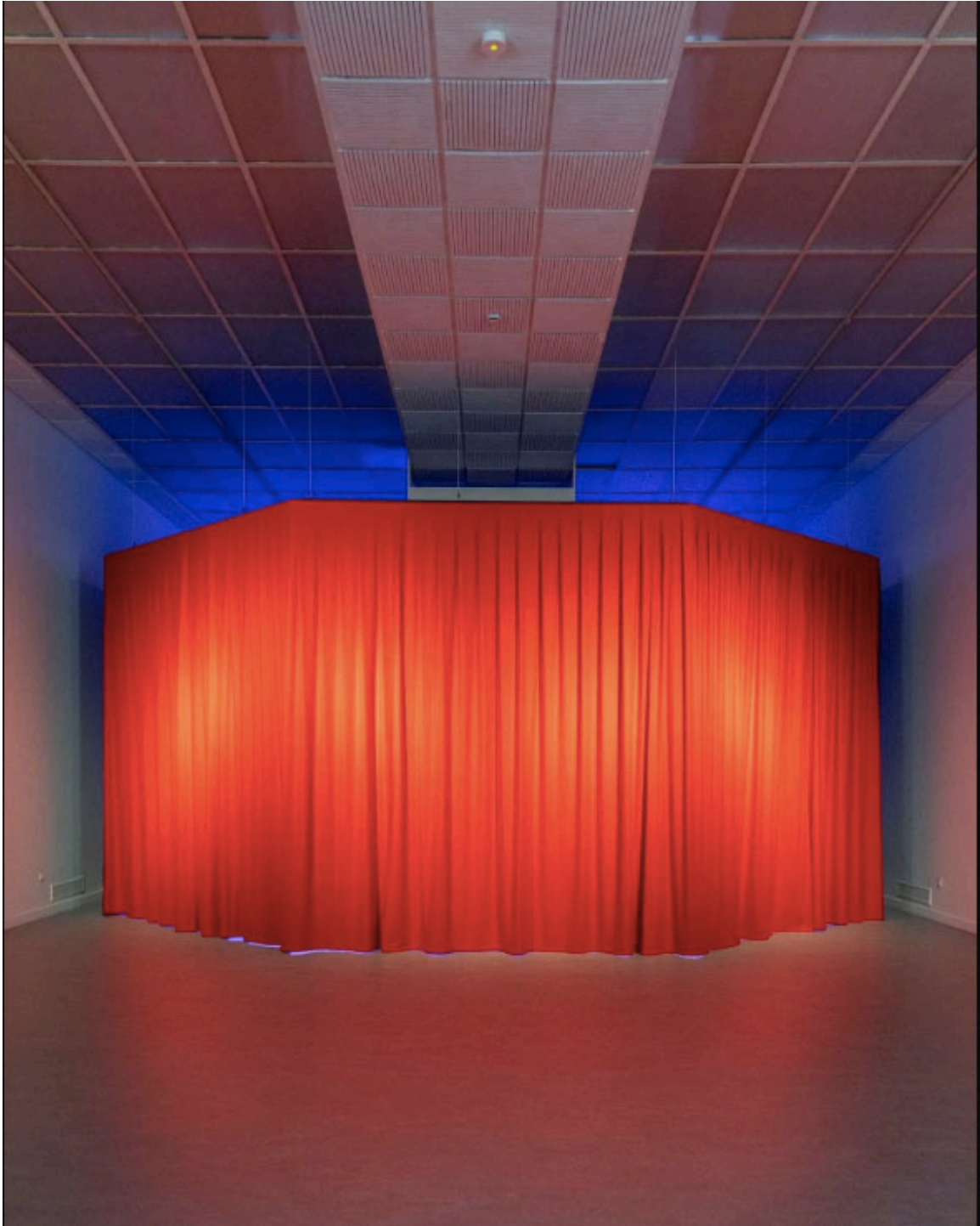
**EXHIBITION VIEWS**  
**OVERTURES (solo)**  
**Home Manchester (Angleterre) – 2018**







**EXHIBITION VIEWS**  
**IN THE EYE OF THE STORM (Collectif)**  
**Z33 – Hasselt (Belgique) – 2021**



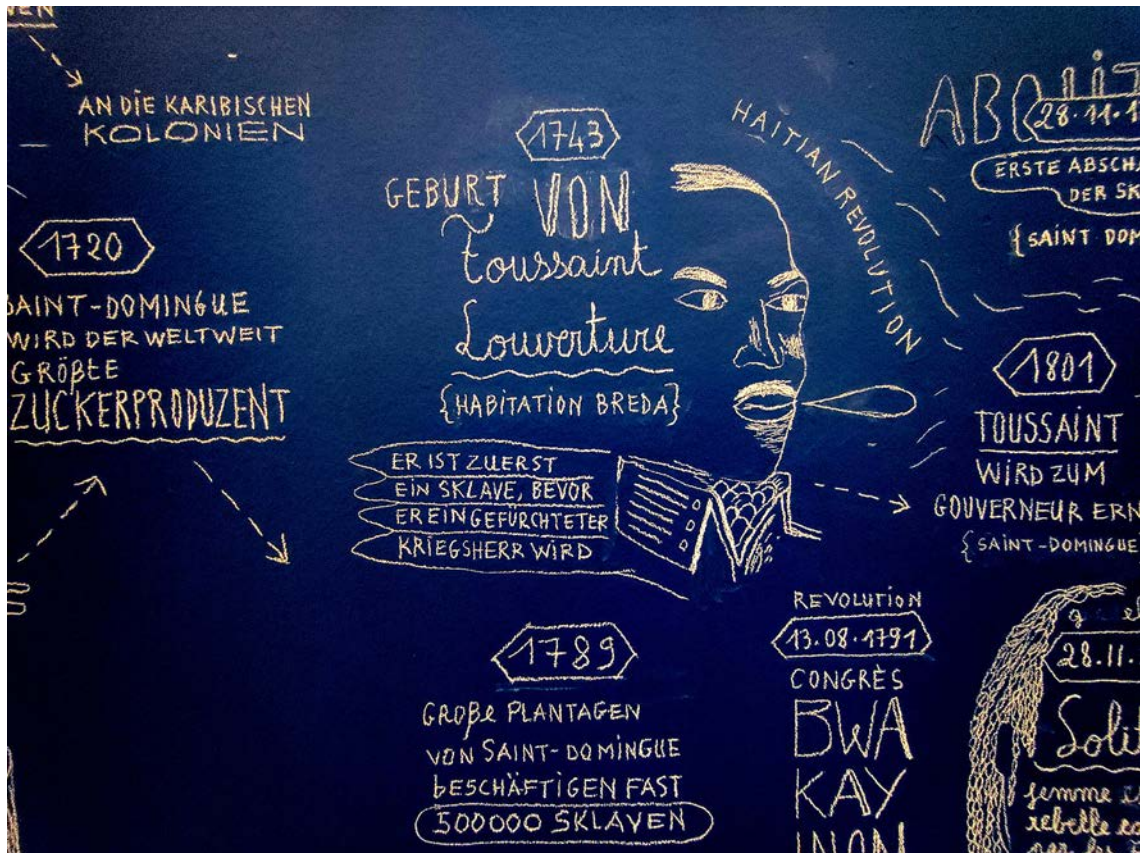


EXHIBITION VIEWS  
**THE WAKE (solo)**  
Savvy Contemporary – Berlin (Allemagne) – 2021



















**THE LIVING AND THE DEAD ENSEMBLE'S EXHIBITIONS  
COMBINE AUDIOVISUAL WORKS, PLASTIC AND GRAPHIC  
INSTALLATIONS THAT PLAY AS MUCH ON THE  
NARRATIVE AS ON THE SENSATIONS FROM AN  
APPROACH OF COLOR AND THE TEXT IN SPACE.**

**They are also an opportunity to invite artists, authors and  
intellectuals to come and share the time of a talk, but also to  
organize workshops, readings and listening sessions.**

**Important figures of art and thought were associated with  
the Ensemble's career, such as Kader Attia, Françoise  
Vergès, Malcolm Ferdinand and curators such as  
Bonaventure Soh Ndiung (director of the Haus der kulturen  
der welt in Berlin) or Hans Ulrich Obrist (artistic director of  
Serpentine Galleries in London)**

**Other shows :**

**Berlinale Forum Expanded (Germany) - 2022  
Ateliers Médicis – Clichy-Montfermeil (France) - 2022**

#### **IV. Sound works and online productions**

**During the Covid 19 pandemic, The Living and the Dead Ensemble developed audiovisual works online to continue its transnational activities and dialogues in a period of isolation. Sound and radio practices are now an integral part of the collective's artistic writing.**



**THE WAKE / LES VEILLÉES  
A TAPESTRY OF SOUNDS AND VOICES**

**MAY 2021**

**Duration : 3h52**

**Online poetic seminar conceived by The Living and The Dead Ensemble**

**avec Kader Attia, Françoise Vergès, Kaiama I. Glover, Rasha Salti, Bonaventure Ndikung...**

**WINNER OF THE PERSPEKTIVE PROGRAM PROMOTING CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC COLLABORATIONS  
BETWEEN FRANCE AND GERMANY/ WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE FRENCH INSTITUTE**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzqfB2Up9Uk>

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**THE WAKE  
A CONVERSATION WITH THE LIVING AND THE DEAD ENSEMBLE**

**A radio programme recorded at Rennes in March 2022**

**Duration : 1h40**

<https://www.r22.fr/antennes/tout-monde/the-wake-entretien-avec-the-living-and-the-dead-ensemble>

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**JOURNAL SONORE**

**Work created in residency at BADISCHER KUNSTVEREIN - KARLSRUHE**

**DURATION : 1H00**

**a sound work by The Living and the Dead Ensemble**

**Production : Badischer Kunstverein**

**Sound design : Victor Donati / Traduction : Liz Young / English voice : Shela Sheikh**

**Journal d'Haïti, de Karlsruhe, de Paris et d'ailleurs : des textes de The Living And The Dead Ensemble (Bijou Mackenson, James Desiris, Dieuvéla Cherestal, Zack Turin, Rossi Jacques Casimir, Léonard Jean-Baptiste, Cynthia Maignan, Olivier Marboeuf, Sophonie Maignan).**

## **V. PUBLICATIONS**

## **THE WAKE**

**2019 - 2023 (ENG)**

The booklet of the play « The Wake » was published in English on the occasion of its presentation at Serpentine Galleries in London in August 2023

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### **« Qui a connu le feu »**

**Published by Versopolis Magazine – 2020 (FR / ENG)**

January 2020. For many months the burning heart of Haiti has been agitated by the demonstrations. We denounce the corruption of the State in the Petrocaribe affair. Port-au-Prince, capital of fire, epicenter and echo chamber of global revolts. It is here that the members of The Living and The Dead Ensemble gather to live an endless night and imagine a vigil populated by the living and the dead, hopes and ashes in the wake of the furious figure of fire. «Qui a connu le feu» is the montage of the fragments of a work in progress, a chaos where the images of an upcoming film are made, a polyphony of voices that is inspired by the shattered stories of the great Haitian poet Frankétienne.

[https://thelivingandthedeadensemble.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/qui\\_a\\_connu\\_le\\_feu\\_fr-1.pdf](https://thelivingandthedeadensemble.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/qui_a_connu_le_feu_fr-1.pdf)

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### **The Unfolding of Life in a Spiral**

**Paru dans la catalogue H E R E A F T E R / Sonic Acts /  
Amsterdam / 2019 (FR / ENG)**

[https://thelivingandthedeadensemble.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/hereafter\\_the-living-and-the-dead-ensemble.pdf](https://thelivingandthedeadensemble.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/hereafter_the-living-and-the-dead-ensemble.pdf)

