



BABEL



Jordi Galí
Creation 2019

BABEL

_Sharing creation



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« With BABEL the necessity to work together in order to accomplish a task is not an abstract principle but a physical need to join forces and share the load between all the participants. So that the dream of building a 12 meters high structure from the ground up becomes a reality. »

Marie Pons – *A collaboration with strangers*

Arrangement Provisoire . 3



BABEL is part of the ongoing process at the source of Jordi Galí's work: exploring the relationship between gesture and object in relation to a specific environment. Like his previous pieces, BABEL is an ephemeral architecture created for public spaces, built live in front of an audience.

The project reflects Jordi Galí's desire to combine creation and transmission and to shift his habits and practices in order to explore new modes of interaction and ways of meeting. It is also about putting in motion new dynamics during the time of research and creation.

As a participatory project BABEL is an immersion into Jordi Galí's universe, enabling a fine and acute approach of what is at stake in his work. The aim of the project is to share a creative process from start to finish with the participants, from the research phase until public sharing.



A committed and curious community

At the heart of BABEL there is a group of individuals in movement, each person having his or her own body, past and desires. When everyone is gathered, present and united in order to build the structure the utopia is made possible for a moment.

BABEL takes the shape of a 12 meters high tower, built then handled by twenty-five people under the spectators' very eyes. From raising the tower up to bringing it down, the tower every move and oscillation reflects what is happening amongst the group operating on the ground, in strong relation with all these presences interconnected and focused, working together.

BABEL seeks to gather a committed and curious community of people through the achievement of a gesture that is architectural, monumental and frail all at once, in the public space. The oversize structure sustains the utopian dimension of the project, which becomes a reality thanks to the joint efforts and common wish of the group. This technical exploit is possible because each individuality fits in, becomes responsible and is fully involved in the collective aestere.

The tower is made of pieces of wood and ropes, light materials, with in mind the manoeuvrability of all elements by most people. The process of raising the structure works with stacking small units shaped like simplexes from the bottom up, tensegrity holding it all together.

In architecture tensegrity allows a structure to stand up thanks to an even repartition of forces, with tensions and compression balancing each other and being evenly distributed. Tensegrity structures are stable via the balance and repartition of mechanical constraints, distributed within the whole structure.



Workshop and performance

BABEL takes place during a three-day workshop (or an equivalent amount of time) ending with the final performance. The project requires a group of 20 to 25 people who are accompanied by three members of the company.

During the workshop, the participants can experiment the different steps leading towards setting up the performance, they get to become familiar with using the materials that are at the core of BABEL and engage a group dynamics by:

- making together the units that form the pieces of the tower
- handling the tower to apprehend its amplitude and weight
- practising coordination and non-verbal communication exercises
- learning and rehearsing a specific score in preparation for the performance.

These steps are articulated together with times dedicated to physical practices. Through simple and playful exercises the aim is to experiment the physical principles at work with tensegrity - the phenomenon of traction and compression that rules the tower's structure - and to develop trust and active listening among each members of the group.

The performance has a duration of 50 to 60 minutes and is presented at the end of the workshop, in the public space. The goal at this point is for participants to be as autonomous as possible. The three members of the company stand in support discreetly from the periphery, ready to jump in if need be.

BABEL is like a parenthesis in the course of everyday life, uniting participants and spectators together in a moment of shared attention and awareness.

With BABEL, Jordi Galí wishes to unite the joined efforts of a group of individuals, giving each of them a way to grasp and stimulate their own creativity.

From the workshop to the public presentation, the different steps make the existence of an equal relationship within the group possible, as well as between the participants and the artists. Each person is invited to share, receive or pass on a skill, depending on her or his desire to take action.



Construction principles

The tower is made of twelve units of 1 metre high each. Each unit is made of five wooden rods holding together in tension via a system of ropes and knots. Once built the units are connected two by two for better handling ability.

Each set of two units is stacked on top of each other, starting from the bottom, then tied together as the raising of the tower progresses. The tower is strengthened with a cable system wrapped all around the structure, to reinforce and rigidify it, giving it the appearance of a zeppelin.

The participants are spread out in a star-shaped pattern on the ground, all around the tower, forming a network. They are divided into groups of 5 people and each person holds a rope. Each group is connected to and responsible for one level of the tower, so that the structure is entirely secured.

This repartition also allows a very fine perception of the tower's movements and helps organise its coordinated manipulation. At this point, the tower can be set in motion, following a scrupulous score that indicates when to change its orientation. During this phase the participants slightly shift places on the ground, while taking care of the tower's verticality or inclination.

To do so, the group shares simple and precise gestures in order to communicate silently. Everyone is active, responsible and in relation to everyone else. It is in everyone's hands to engage a shift in the tower's trajectory, to correct it, to make the tower lean on one side and then to bring it upright again, or to let it oscillate slightly and to bring it down to the ground...



SET UP

Participants

The size of the group must absolutely be based on a multiple of five, with 20 or 25 people involved, so that everyone can be active and play a specific role. It is of the utmost importance that everyone is present during the whole duration of the project so that the group is always complete.

Adults and teenagers from sixteen years and over can participate. No specific skills, experiences or dance background is required.

The final group can mix individuals and several smaller, already functioning groups, this way the project wholeheartedly stimulates encounters and collaboration between people from different age groups and different life stories (adults and teenagers, migrants and locals, students and teachers...).

Schedule

Timeframe of the workshop:

3 days in a row (or an equivalent amount of time, spread over several consecutive days) + 1 day of preparation beforehand for the team.

The performance lasts 50 to 60 minutes and is presented on the last day of the workshop.

The content of the workshop goes like this:

- Warm-up and exercises to build trust, attentiveness and a quality of presence among the participants
- Fabrication of the units, the parts of the tower
- Putting the tower together, learning how to unfold it in the space and how to apprehend its volume
- Rehearsal of the performance
- Performance

Space and material

BABEL is made for public spaces. The tower reaches 12 meters high and the participants are spread all around the tower in a star-shaped pattern. The project requires a 22mx22m clear and flat space, on the ground and in height, considering also the presence of the audience spread out around this area.

We also need access to a studio or a room indoors, for warm-ups and the first steps of the workshop. This space can also be used as the dressing room and rest area for the participants, as well as storage space for the pieces of the tower during the workshop.

Technical equipment is supplied by the company. Do not hesitate to ask for the technical rider for more details.



BABEL AS SEEN BY...

Marie Pons, *A collaboration with strangers*

Some of the participative workshops of BABEL took place in the framework of the European Project, Migrant Bodies - Moving Borders, at la Briqueterie CDCN du Val-de-Marne, French partner of the project at Vitry-sur-Seine. Here is an extract of the final publication, about BABEL:

“BABEL is not a set project, but a work in progress. From the first day of meeting at La Briqueterie, choreographer Jordi Galí shares a process with the group, actively looking for solutions and adjustments as the work unfolds and in response to the needs of the tower and participants. (...)

There is a horizontal process at work in BABEL, during which a proposition made by an artist becomes our material to work with. It is an example of how a collective action of learning a new-skill set creates equality and inclusion from the very start. You don't have to know beforehand how to dance, draw, cook or craft, but every-one is invited to learn and practice in the here and now.

To build the tower in BABEL, everyone must learn how to tie different types of knots. At first glance, only Jordi and Katia, who are making the proposition, appear to be experts. They must first equip all the participants with the same tools and the principle of action is simple: observe the gesture, try, try again, help someone along the way – so that the action is inscribed in everyone's gestures. At its core, this simple action of tying a piece of rope around a stick quickly erases a form of hierarchy between who is knowledgeable, or skilled, and who is not. Anyone can become a teacher or receiver of information quite rapidly. During the workshops at La Briqueterie, Khademullah knew very well how to tie knots and the techniques Jordi was showing us. Khademullah immediately became a resource, in spite of the fact that we could not really communicate in French or English with him, and Jordi quickly engaged Khademullah to help share his knowledge with the others.”

More on www.migrantbodies.eu

TEAM AND PARTNERS

Concept Jordi Galí

In collaboration with Katia Mozet

Created with the hundred of people of the workshops and the team of Arrangement Provisoire : Anne Sophie Gabert, Lea Helmstädter, Konrad Kaniuk, Jérémy Paon, Jeanne Vallauri, Julia Moncla, Julien Quartier

Collaborators Balyam Ballabeni, Bruno Chauvin

Partners for the construction : De facto, ACTS

Teaser: Vincent Laisney

Production

Arrangement Provisoire

Coproduction Le Pacifique / CDCN Grenoble-Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, La Briqueterie / CDCN du Val-de-Marne in the framework of European Project Migrant Bodies-Moving Borders, Les Ateliers Frappaz / CNAREP Villeurbanne, L'Abattoir / CNAREP Chalon sur Saône, Format Danse Ardèche.

With the support of Lycée professionnel Georges Lamarque / Rillieux-la-Pape, Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (aide à la création).

BABEL was created during 8 participative workshops that gathered a hundred of people over a year.

Teaser:

<https://vimeo.com/124595799>

Photo gallery that recounts the project:

www.flickr.com/photos/babel_jordi_gali/albums

A double premiere

> June 2019, 22th at La Briqueterie, CDCN Val-de-Marne and at Festival Les Invites, Ateliers Frappaz - CNAREP Villeurbanne

BIOGRAPHY

Born in Barcelona, Jordi Galí trained in contemporary dance. He has performed with notable choreographers such as Wim Vandekeybus, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, and Maguy Marin.

Simultaneously, he has developed his personal creative projects, which in 2007 led him to establish Arrangement Provisoire, co-directing with Vania Vaneau since 2012.

He served as an associate artist at Ramdam from 2011 to 2014. From 2016 to 2020, he was an Associate Artist alongside Vania Vaneau at Le Pacifique CDCN in Grenoble, and they continued as Associate Artists at ICI-CCN de Montpellier from 2020 to 2022.

His work explores the interaction between the body and materials, between gestures and objects, primarily unfolding in public spaces. His monumental, ephemeral creations introduce a unique temporality into both urban and natural landscapes, offering new perspectives to the inhabitants and spectators.

Among his notable works, two are currently touring: CIEL and ANIMA:

- T (2008): A solo performance on stage where a balancing act between an object-machine and body-gear unfolds.

- CIEL (2010): A solo that navigates the tension between complexity and simplicity, where the builder's gestures interact with the public space and landscape.

- Abscisse (2012): A trio that delves into teamwork dynamics, where the body manifests in multiple and complementary forms.

- Maibaum (2015): A quintet focused on an architectural approach, constructing and volumizing a monumental rope structure, requiring meticulous coordination between performers and materials.

- ORBES (2018): A quintet for a choreographic installation, where bodies collectively strive for harmonic balance.

- ANIMA (2022): A performance involving six performers, two bagpipers, and a monumental elevation in a public setting.

Jordi Galí also spearheads projects where community involvement is integral to the creative process:

- PAVILLON FULLER (since 2017): A two-day public event to construct a wooden pavilion.

- BABEL (since 2019): Following a collaborative writing and building process with over a hundred participants, the final presentation involves 25 volunteers constructing and operating a 12-meter high tower.

- 20 WATTS (2021): A monumental, illuminated wooden structure, created with 30 volunteers from an employment integration program, presented at the Lyon Festival of Lights.

- TRAMES 2023/2024: A large-scale woven artwork and exhibition, crafted over a season with participants from ANEPA Tremplin and France Horizon in the Feyzin region.



CIE ARRANGEMENT PROVISOIRE

Compagnie Arrangement Provisoire supports the projects of choreographers Vania Vaneau and Jordi Galí. The dialogue between body and matter, in relation to the surroundings, is at the centre of their respective pieces. Their approaches are based on breaking down the barriers between dance and other disciplines, and their practices cross architecture and visual arts among others. Their performances are designed for various contexts, for the public space and for the stage, aiming to create some singular space-time of encounter with the public.

The creation side of the company's activity is completed by workshops and participatory projects which are a way of sharing what is at the core of their approach. They also develop Atelier des Idées – Ideas' workshop – that is an active pause in the company's activity, being a workshop meant to explore their own practice differently in dialogue with artists and researchers from various fields.

Jordi Galí and Vania Vaneau are both Associated Artists at Pacifique CDCN Grenoble – Auvergne Rhône Alpes from 2016 to 2020, then at ICI – CCN de Montpellier from 2020 to 2022, in the framework of the programme from Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication.

La Compagnie Arrangement Provisoire is supported by DRAC Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, the City of Lyon and the Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes.



arrangement provisoire

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Arrangement Provisoire est conventionné par la DRAC Auvergne Rhône-Alpes, soutenu par la Région Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes et la Ville de Lyon, et par l'Institut Français pour ses projets à l'étranger. Jordi Galí et Vania Vaneau sont Artistes Associés au Pacifique - CDCN de Grenoble (2016-2020) et à ICI - CCN Montpellier-Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée (2020-2022), dans le cadre du dispositif du ministère de la Culture et de la Communication.

