



# WAX

how to break free from the mould

RENAUD HERBIN

For all audiences aged 3 and over

A production by the TJP Centre Dramatique National d'Alsace Strasbourg  
A co-production with the MA Scène Nationale de Montbéliard  
First performed in Strasbourg on 2 October 2016

# WAX

Created by: Renaud Herbin  
In collaboration with Anne Ayçoberry  
Performed by: Justine Macadoux, Stéphanie Félix (alternately)  
Stage design: Mathias Baudry  
Sound: Morgan Daguenet  
Lighting: Fanny Bruschi

Technicians: Thomas Fehr and Christian Rachner

Public performance (aged 3 and over) / 40 minutes  
First performed on 2 October 2016 at the TJP Centre Dramatique National d'Alsace  
Strasbourg

On tour from November 2016  
Contact: Bérangère Steib, Production Manager  
bsteib@tjp-strasbourg.com  
+33 (0)3 90 23 68 20

Wax is a material that can be transformed.  
When hot it is perfectly malleable.  
And it can easily be poured into a mould.

At the centre of the stage, Justine Macadoux (*Stéphanie Félix*) invites us into her workshop: a factory where wax figures are made, all of which look alike. She invites us to experience this material as she sculpts it into various shapes and to question the way convention is manufactured.

Her desire to organise these figures, which must be stored and arranged carefully on the stage, will give her a taste for power. But the material itself slips away and does not defy order; despite herself, a quickly thwarted Justine (*Stéphanie*) becomes embroiled in a wave of spilled wax and discovers the pleasures of disorder and the surprises of the unexpected.

Within this simple dramatic plot the pace is governed by the rhythm of her changing moods and the capricious nature of the material. Together we shall subtly taste the art of transgression.

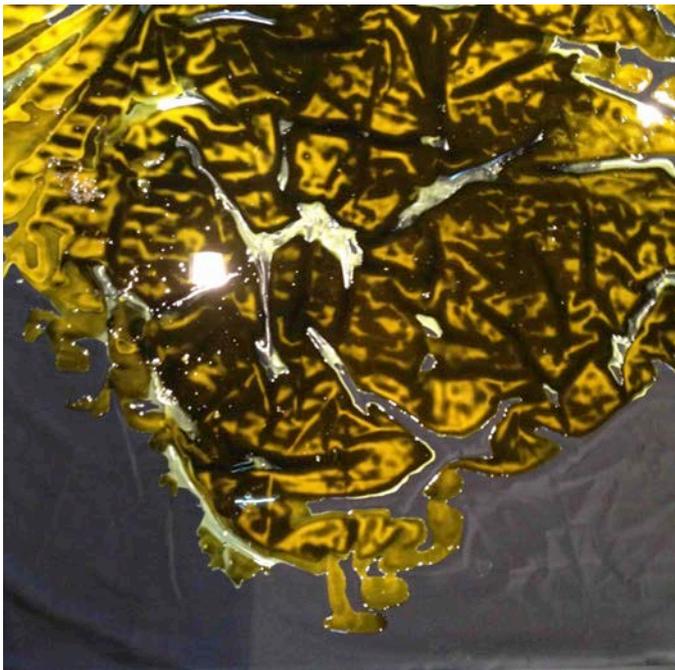
*Wax* questions how we can break free from the mould. To what extent can we define our own free will? Why is our own identity surprised by its own shape that transgresses the social ideal?

## WAX SPEAKS OF TRANSITION

Wax is a natural, organic material. At body temperature it begins to change shape.

The collective imagination associates it with life. Bees secrete it and use it to store their honey, and to build shelters to protect their larvae. Paradoxically, humans use it to make anatomical models, embalm the departed or produce effigies of them. Wax transcends the cycles of life and death.

As it is constantly changing shape - now liquid, now solid - it invites us to go with the flow from shape to shape. Wax is disconcerting for us as it never stops morphing into something different. Like a never-ending dream, its ability to be reborn time and time again lends it an air of the eternal.



Whether it is abstract or crude, or whether it takes shape and adopts a personality to the extent that we feel we can speak to it, wax is ambiguous - it seems docile but never ceases to surprise us.

Wax binds, tears itself apart and fits together like a Meccano set. Between animation and inertia, it perpetuates and transforms the body. Wax speaks of transition.

## ON STAGE – A WORKSHOP

Wax as a plaything.

Wax starts in the workshop, where it is being heated in a large container, ready for anything. A few tools allow the process of transformation to be speeded up – things to warm it up, things to cool it down. This is the workshop of Justine (*Stéphanie*).

With the dexterity of a craftsman, potter or builder, Justine (*Stéphanie*) plunges into the material with no preconceived ideas.

Forms and figures emerge from her rapport with the worked wax - the building blocks of some kind of game. Everything is there for us to see, with the material presented in all its shapes and forms. The happenings are sometimes unexpected. The pace and enjoyment of this rhythmic game are bolstered by the sudden surprise of a sound, something falling or an accident, and the ensuing excitement. The performer's mood becomes erratic and spontaneous because she takes everything born on the stage into consideration with the result that her awareness sharpens.

In this three-dimensional game mixed with vivid emotions, Justine (*Stéphanie*) develops ambivalent registers where situations are born, creating contradictions that she has to resolve.



## BREAKING FREE FROM THE MOULD

Convention and the power of invention

Children develop through experience and play. They shape their personality by means of imitation – from the similar to the singular they gradually learn to assert their identity. The art of differentiation is at work here, culminating in the emergence of a unique individual.

From a very early age, children are confronted with norms of behaviour and conventions. What path do young children take to build confidence in their ability to ascertain what they consider to be failure or success beyond external expectations?

Experience develops attentiveness and the ability to interpret - creativity and invention become the best defence against conformity.

In *Wax*, Justine (*Stéphanie*) works hastily which allows her to create multiple and replicable things. But situations gradually evolve which bring the uncertain, the unexpected, the accidental or the surprising into play, bringing the visible result of an experiment face to face with the result that convention expects.



With *Wax*, we may well make some amazing discoveries by leaving the ordinary and the familiar behind, and experimenting with the unusual, the uncharted and the indefinable.

## IN THE FOLDS - THE POSSIBILITY OF SOMETHING NEW

The body and its image: playing with identity

Body image develops and redevelops in the psyche. Our sense of self is built through a process of dissociation from the outside world.

How can we explain what it means 'to be in the world'? We explain it by addressing the definition of our own identity, and through the emerging awareness that we are unique and distinct from others.

Wax - that tactile, generous material so welcoming for the body – enshrouds and encourages contact. It becomes a skin, a new hide, flesh or shell and eventually a habitable cocoon. It is metamorphosis incarnate, offering new limits for the body, and the possibility of other identities.

Justine (*Stéphanie*) takes on multiple guises to the point of absurdity and a body that is impossible to bear, an enhanced and fanciful body where the imagination takes over and adds the finishing touches to what appears before it.



## FOR CHILDREN

Residency at nursery school

Young children have this phenomenal ability to see things for what they are. State, texture, colour and form – all are sensory events providing a context for experimentation and discovery.

From the age of three, children develop the ability to tell stories. The interplay of forms is based around figurative and narrative situations, and writing can be based on dramatic events.

*Wax* addresses all ages, and the issues raised relate to adults and children alike. The aim is to provide an uncompromising explanation of the content without detracting from the meaning.

In between rehearsals, time is spent with 3-5-year old children from Annick Girard's class at the Saint Jean school in Strasbourg where the themes of the performance are introduced and discussed.



Working directly with children allows us to gather their thoughts and hear what they have to say about our subject matter. This allows us to fine-tune any issues relating to comprehension, rhythm and the length of the performance – a real test indeed! The work feeds on the porosity of what is done and what is said.

