

# **DISTRESS FLARE**

*BRUSSELS  
ISTANBUL  
BARCELONA  
MILAN  
LISBON  
RENNES*



ARTISTIC DOSSIER  
September 2019

—  
L'ÂGE DE  
LA TORTUE

## CONTENTS

- p.4 — Context
- p.5 — L'âge de la tortue
- p.7 — The roots of the project:  
*The Encyclopedia of migrants*
- p.8 — Paloma Fernández Sobrino
- p.9 — Antoine Chaudet
- p.11 — The artistic project
- p.12 — Partners
- p.18 — Productions
- p.20 — Actions
- p.22 — Schedule
- p.24 — Contacts

# DISTRESSES

# FLARE

# CONTEXT

We live in a globalised, increasingly multicultural society, where immigration helps to create more diverse populations and where people from different cultures live alongside one another, shaping composite identities. How can we ensure that this cosmopolitanism is seen as something positive, a factor aiding development as opposed to a source of tension or inward-looking attitudes? In such a context, the conditions that we are able to create in order to promote inter-cultural dialogue, how we welcome representatives from different cultures and how we encourage diversity and identify common reference points will all be of vital importance.

Europe is faced with a paradox: it needs immigration in order to cement its place on a global level, but the significance of immigration has been blown out of proportion in political discourse. This has been intensified by events since 2015, resulting in an increased militarisation of the continent's borders. Promoting immigration as a key factor in both human and economic development is a major challenge, and one which will involve an ability to empathise with otherness - what makes people different - an understanding of the history of migration flows, highlighting diversity among immigrant stories and recognising the place of people from immigrant backgrounds in our European society.

Harmony within Europe is under threat as a result of significant uncertainty with regards to economic growth and the rise of populism. With this in mind, what multilateral schemes could be introduced in order to strengthen cohesion within Europe and to begin rebuilding a sense of unity? How can we rethink the way in which regions work together in order to create new synergies, all the while drawing on existing regional networks?

Faced with the economic crisis, Europe has set itself the objective of devising new strategies when it aimed at developing intelligent growth. Collective intelligence, which involves developing knowledge together as well as sharing expertise, will be a vital resource comes to imagining new values for the Europe of tomorrow. The ability to design meeting places, to experiment with new modes of governance and collaboration and to breathe life into creative communities will all involve mobilising resources.

Opening a paper or switching on the news seems only to add further credibility to the notion of a crisis of confidence in political elites at both a national and international level. This has resulted in the rise of extremist movements, whose values are at odds with those of Europe as a whole. How can we restore people's faith in politicians? How can we get people to focus on the challenges facing us and reactivate democracy? What shared projects can we come up with in order to promote recognition of diversity among citizens at a local and European level?

# L'ÂGE DE LA TORTUE

L'âge de la tortue is an organisation that designs and produces artistic projects in the field of visual and performance arts. Drawing on critical thinking with regards to modern society and a respect for cultural rights, the aim of L'âge de la tortue is to encourage us to question our relationship with our political and societal representatives and to rethink how we view the world. Working processes play a vital role in the production of art projects, with a cross-disciplinary think tank run by artists and operating on a long-term basis (think tanks involving different fields within the arts, discussion groups, and participatory think tanks engaging with people living in a particular region).

Based in the Blosne district of Rennes, L'âge de la tortue develops its projects from a micro-local level in conjunction with other regions in Europe. L'âge de la tortue is an association (1901 law) that was founded in 2001 in Rennes.

## European cooperation projects

Since 2010, L'âge de la tortue has coordinated 3 European cooperation projects as lead partner: Civic Relationships in Europe (2010-11), Expeditions (2012-14) and The Encyclopedia of migrants (2015-17). Its network of partners currently includes bodies and local authorities in Spain, Portugal, Gibraltar, Poland and Romania. This international dynamic is set to continue from 2018 onwards with the development of the Distress Flare project, which is based on recommendations from an assessment of The Encyclopedia of migrants carried out by Erasmus+, an excerpt from which can be found below:

*"The Encyclopedia of migrants in Europe is an extremely high-quality project, the initial objectives of which have all been either reached or surpassed. The project is entirely in keeping with the priority targets set at a European level, particularly with regards to the inclusion of migrants. The range of resources developed, most notably the encyclopedia itself, have all been produced to a very high standard, rendering them worthy of widespread distribution. [...] it can clearly be seen that this project has had and will continue to have a strong, positive impact on all of the relevant stakeholders, and we would encourage you to continue to disseminate your methods and results. Our agency will promote your project as best as we possibly can, including the resources you have produced and the best practices you have devised, all of which deserve to be distributed as widely as possible. We would like to extend our congratulations to you for this project and your commitment to Europe and we would encourage you to continue in the same direction."*

## The team

**Paloma Fernández Sobrino** - Stage director and auteur of cross-disciplinary projects

**Antoine Chaudet** - Director of production and communication

**Sophie Archereau** - Administration manager



---

---

ENCYCLOPÉDIE  
DES  
MIGRANTS

---

---

TOME I  
A-F

---

---



---

---

ENCYCLOPÉDIE  
DES  
MIGRANTS

---

---

TOME II  
G-M

---

---

# THE ROOTS OF THE PROJECT:

## The Encyclopedia of migrants

The Encyclopedia of migrants is an artistic project containing 400 intimate testimonies from migrants.

It is the fruit of the work undertaken by Paloma Fernández Sobrino, stage director and auteur of cross-disciplinary projects, to collect stories in the Blosne district in Rennes, which began back in 2007. In 2014, the artist made a proposition to L'âge de la tortue to continue with the existing scheme but on a larger scale in order to produce this iconic object, the Encyclopedia.

What sets The Encyclopedia of migrants apart is the sensitive, intimate way in which it tackles the question of immigration through the theme of distance. Each individual was asked to write a letter and address it to someone having remained in their home country, most often in their native language. The letters would answer the following questions: What effect does separation have on an individual? How are your bearings affected by the process of abandoning your home country?

The team made the decision to roll-out the project in one particular region: Europe's Atlantic coast. In 2015, eight partner towns, all located between the northwesternmost point of Brittany and Gibraltar, came together to begin working on this ground-breaking Encyclopedia - Brest, Rennes, Nantes, Gijón, Porto, Lisbon, Cadiz and Gibraltar - as part of a European cooperation project, with a physical copy of the Encyclopedia housed in each town. Within the framework of the production process, each partner was responsible at a local level for presenting this Encyclopedia to the general public, as well as raising awareness of it by developing a long-lasting dynamic: organising exhibitions, readings, debates, connected projects and any other initiatives they may have wished either to implement themselves or to support.

Similar to Diderot and Alembert's famous 'Encyclopédie', this Encyclopedia was the result of a cooperative effort, made possible through the formation of a network of stakeholders from a range of different fields (artists, community activists, citizens, public decision-makers, etc.) - including researchers in the field of human and social sciences, who were responsible for sixteen original texts contained within the Encyclopedia - and European organisations (associations, local authorities and institutions based in France, Spain, Portugal and Gibraltar). From the outset, this network encouraged contributions from all participants, with particular focus given to those most affected: migrants themselves.

The Encyclopedia of migrants is the result of an artistic endeavour and is available across a range of media, chief among these being its paper and digital formats. A website, a documentary film, a set of benchmarks and a user manual - these resources are all available in the four languages of the countries of the partner towns - French, Spanish, Portuguese and English - and can be found on the project website.

# PALOMA FERNÁNDEZ SOBRINO

STAGE DIRECTOR AND AUTEUR OF CROSS-DISCIPLINARY PROJECTS

— Paloma Fernández Sobrino is stage director and auteur of cross-disciplinary projects. She was born in Spain but has lived in France since 2004.

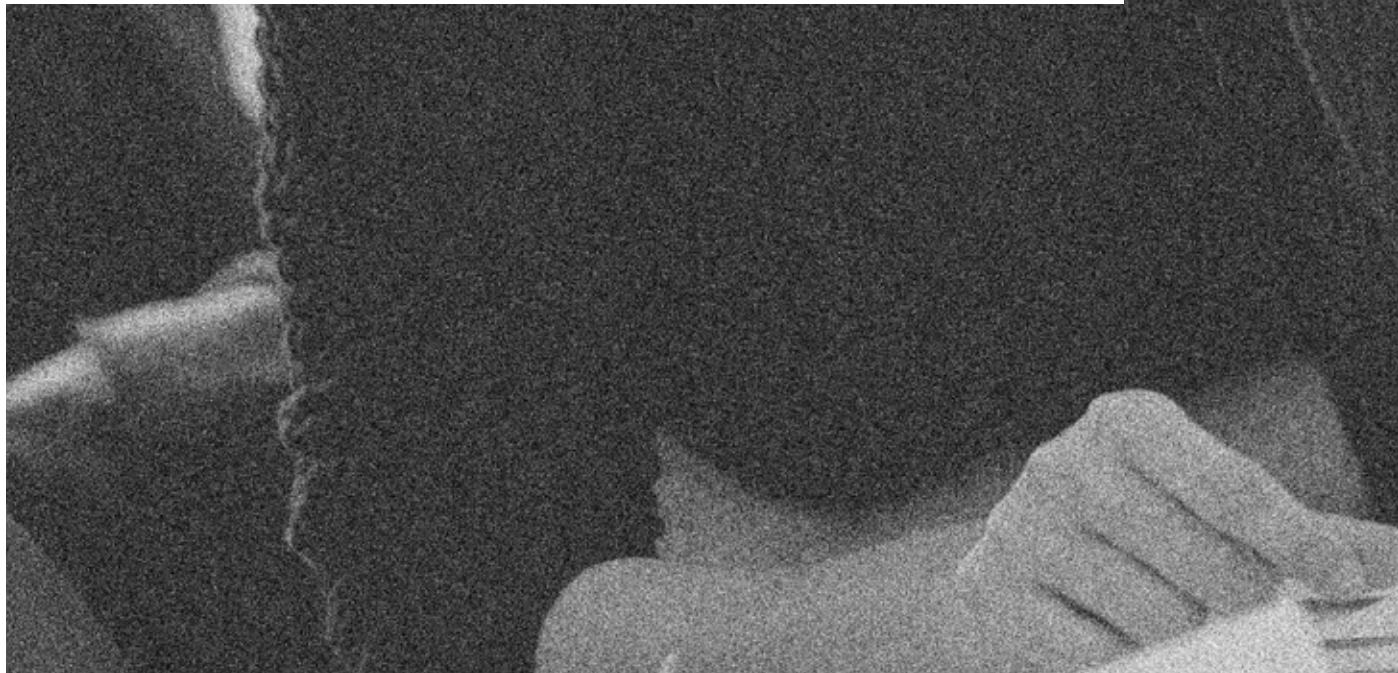
She has been working with L'âge de la tortue as an artist since 2007.

— She played a part in the *Correspondances Citoyennes* (2007-2011) project and was responsible for *Partir* (2008) and *Partir...esguards, miradas, regards* (2010), projects which brought together two collections of personal letters written by migrants living in France and Spain, as well as the poetry volume *On dit de moi que je ne suis pas étrangère* (2012).

— In 2009, she wrote, directed and performed the play *Déroute*, a physical theatre piece played in a caravan in front of one spectator at a time. The play drew on testimonies gathered from women on the subject of the female condition and featured a free interpretation of the poem *Défaite* by Khalil Gibran. That same year, she was also behind the European cooperation project *Civic Relationships in Europe* (France, Spain, Romania), a project she directed with Nicolas Combes.

— In 2014, having graduated with a degree in performance arts, she wrote and directed *Déroute (2)*, a follow-up to her first piece, accompanied by the opera singer Justine Curatolo and with help from Nathalie Élain for stage direction. In 2015, she adapted the short story *Manuscript found in oblivion* by Alberto Méndez, taken from *Blind Sunflowers*, for a new play: *Trouvé dans l'oubli*, performed by Benoit Hattet, Nathalie Élain and the flamenco singer Pere Martínez.

— Paloma Fernández Sobrino was the auteur and artistic director of the European cooperation project *The Encyclopedia of migrants* between 2014 and 2017.





# ANTOINE CHAUDET

## GRAPHIC DESIGNER AND PHOTOGRAPHER

Antoine Chaudet divides his time between communication, graphic design, photography and involvement in cross-disciplinary projects. He is director of production and communication for the association L'âge de la tortue and is lecturer at the University Institute of Technology at the University of Rennes 1 (a post he has occupied since 2014).

His work draws on his background in human and social sciences, focusing on personality features within our hyper-modern societies, particularly symbolic networks. For the most part, his work involves documentary photography, but he also leaves a lot of room for experimentation, incorporating an artistic approach to the medium. His style favours time being devoted to reflection and implementation (incorporating silver halide techniques and craft manufacturing). He considers artistic projects as being meeting places, which promote discussions between different disciplines and clashes between different perspectives on the world as well as being potential spaces for participative conversations.

**Résidence secondaire** (art project directed by Paloma Fernández Sobrino) - co-director of the project - L'âge de la tortue - since 2016

**The Encyclopedia of migrants** (art project directed by Paloma Fernández Sobrino) - Head of photography, head of graphic design and tasked with taking 25 photographic portraits - L'âge de la tortue - Rennes - 2014-2017

**Kyrielle** - Collective publication of 70 photographs - Éditions Incertain Sens and Bureau d'Investigation Photographique - Rennes - 2017

**Déroute(2)** - Video and graphic design for the Paloma Fernández Sobrino performance - Rennes - 2015

**La Ronde** - A series of 9 photographic portraits - Bazouges la Pérouse - 2012

**Carnet de Trichromie** - A collection of three-colour shots taken in Pont-Aven - 2011

**Je me souviens** - A collection of family memoirs - Participatory project - self-published 2009

**Si proches et pourtant si loins** - Series of 5 photographs - Rennes 2006

**Je suis sûre que tu m'as trompée** - Script (transcribed based on a television report) - self-publication 2007

**Konzum** - Series of photographs on the opening of a supermarket in Croatia - 2005

**Nol** - Exhibition involving videos being projected onto the outside of a television licensing building - 2005 - Rennes



# THE ARTISTIC PROJECT

The Distress Flare project was born out of a desire to open up a dialogue involving the wide range of groups that make up our modern societies (citizens, public decision-makers, the media, etc.) on the subject of the political and social experience of migrants in Europe today. The goal is to use artistic means of expression to give citizens a voice and to send a clear signal, one that should concern us all, with regards to the gradual loss of certain human values (hospitality, gratitude, caring for others).

The symbol of the distress flare is central to this project. Although it might appear at first as a somewhat negative image, there is also that sense of it being a beacon of hope, lighting the way towards a brighter future. Fired from the ground, when a distress flare lights up, it becomes a new marker, a focal point for perspectives and, above all else, a way of grabbing the attention of all of those present in order to encourage them to take action, to change their behaviour and to work together on “the people who need saving”. Fired from the ground towards the sky, the vertical trajectory of a distress flare also symbolises the way in which the project aims to force public decision-makers to consider the current plight of migrants.

The project follows up on the work carried out during the production of *The Encyclopedia of migrants*. The original idea was to create meaningful artworks that would encourage people to consider an eminently political matter using a sensitive, personal approach. The aim is to get us to question ourselves, both collectively and as individuals, about the future of our societies and the values that we want to defend, with the artistic research for the project (set design, stage direction, music) guided by this principle throughout its development. The texts contained in *The Encyclopedia of migrants*, as well as the methods used for their publication, will be used a starting point for all artistic creations.

The following countries have been selected for the development of the project at a European level: France, Belgium, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Turkey.

The artistic creation processes developed throughout the life cycle of the project will bring artists together with individuals from a variety of different fields. Artists, citizens, researchers in the fields of human and social sciences and students from the different partner towns will all contribute to the project during the collective work period to varying extents, depending on their expertise and availability. For example, individuals from the community could be invited to participate in discussion groups in order to work on the project’s methodology or invited to participate in the performance and to learn musical and theatrical techniques alongside the artists themselves. In addition, researchers from the humanities will be asked to bring a critical perspective to the project from their individual disciplines, with particular attention paid to cultural rights. Lastly, students from art schools will participate in the creation of the project’s graphic image. This will see the formation of an international, cross-disciplinary team, who will be tasked with running the project from the design phase right through to its release and will be based on a participatory model, with the goal being to work together to create a space where knowledge and expertise can be shared and exchanged.

# PARTNERS

SEPTEMBER 2009

EU ARTISTIC DOSSIER 14

DISTRESS FLAIRE

P.02

## Belgium

- The CIFAS, the International Centre for Training in the Performing Arts (Brussels)
- Eurocities, network of cities (Brussels)

## France

- L'âge de la tortue (Rennes)
- The city of Rennes
- Les Tombées de la Nuit festival (Rennes)
- University Rennes 2 (PREFics urban sociolinguistic laboratory, Visual Arts Department, Center of Audiovisual Ressources)
- Incertain Sens editions (Rennes)
- Le Triangle, city for dance (Rennes)
- Regional Music Conservatory (Rennes)
- The TOPIK sociology association (Rennes)
- The National Museum of the History of Immigration (Paris)

## Italy

- Company Effetto Larsen (Milano)
- Nuova Academia di Belle Arti

## Spain

- Art&Coop, cultural and social cooperative (Barcelona)
- City of Barcelona, Culture department
- Agenda 21, The Committee on culture of the world organization of United Cities and Local Governments (Barcelona office)
- NGO Ariadna (Tarragona)
- Faculty of Fin Arts (Barcelona)

## Portugal

- NGO Renovar a Mouraria (Lisbon)
- The City of Lisbon, Culture Department



## Turkey

- The University of Galatasaray, humanities department
- Theatre Company of students of the University
- French Institute of Istanbul

# PRODUCTIONS

## The Reference Kit

The reference kit contains all the various reference materials and an ethics charter that will guide how the actions are implemented. It includes existing documents selected by all the project's partners, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights. As the project progresses, the kit can be cooperatively expanded and enriched with documents created by the project team (to include, for example, the ethics charter, manifesto, guides and so on).

## The Performances

Six performances will be created as part of the project, one in each partner city. They will use extracts from *The Encyclopedia of migrants* as their starting point, and they will take place in the public space. The performances will be acted out by a group of amateur readers, and designed and directed by local stage director (see: schedule, p.16).

## The Academic Analysis

The analysis will be written once the project has drawn to a close in 2022. It will feature two types of academic contributions. The first will be six documents, each one produced by a researcher during his or her residency. The papers will be linked to the observations they have made and their reflections on the project process. The second contribution will be documents written by associate researchers throughout the project, touching on its themes such as artistic creativity, migration, citizenship and informal education. The publication will also include a documentary section featuring photographs taken during each phase of the project. This analysis will be co-published by *Editions Incertain Sens* and *L'âge de la Tortue*.

## The Guides

A series of guides will be produced when the project launches and as it unfolds. Their role will be to help the team of directors, operational partners and researchers with their work, but also to inform audiences and public decision-makers about the approach used for this project. These guides will be freely available on the project website.

## The Website

The website will act as a showcase for the project and offer a springboard for widely disseminating information about its approach and initiatives. It will also serve as a shared platform for any partners who might help to create and spread content about the project and its themes.

## The Visual Resources

In each city, a group of visual arts students will be asked to create resources such as posters and prospectuses, which will be distributed in public spaces and contain information about the project and performance. These resources will all be based on a shared visual identity designed before the project begins and adapted to suit each city.

## The Documentary Series

The documentary series will be recorded over the course of the project and will be made up of short episodes of around ten minutes long. Each creative residency will feature in its own themed episode in which the documentary-maker will focus on a particular aspect of the project. Episodes will be broadcast on the project website and on social media platforms as and when they are produced. Once the project is complete, the documentary series will provide a comprehensive insight into how the project was carried out, and capture it for posterity.

## The Public Decision-Makers' Day

A training and information day will be organised in June 2022 for European public sector decision-makers. The aim will be to feed back observations participants made over the course of the project, establishing as we do so a direct link between civil society and European elected representatives, communicating the former's recommendations to the latter.

## The Manifesto

An artistic manifesto will be written collectively once the project has been completed. Its role will be to state the ethical and aesthetic principles that have gone into our artistic and participatory projects. Groundwork for the manifesto will be done during seminars scheduled after each creative residency. The published manifesto will be based on this collective work, with the consensus of all project co-organisers. The manifesto will be available to access once the project is over, and will help to share the participants' feedback.

# THE ACTIONS

## STARTING POINT

Texts in *The Encyclopedia of Migrants* form the starting point for the six performances that will be written during the creative residencies. They are available via the project website:

[www.encyclopedia-of-migrants.eu/digital/](http://www.encyclopedia-of-migrants.eu/digital/)

Day  
①

Day  
②

Day  
③

## Creative Residency

*Who is taking part in the creative residency?*

### → THE STAGE DIRECTOR

His or her role is to use the letters in *The Encyclopedia of Migrants* to design a performance for a public space. Their work should factor in the local social and political context. The stage director prepares and manages the creative residency, prepares and supervises the public performance, and contributes to the seminar. To ensure the processes of designing the performance and the visual resources are strongly linked, the director will work alongside the visual arts students.

### → READERS

Members of the public will form a group of readers in each city. They will be involved in the project on a voluntary basis throughout the creative residency, and at the performance and seminar. The group will be guided by the director, whose role is to support them and share his or her expert knowledge of vocal techniques and body language.

### → A SOCIAL RESEARCHER

A social science and humanities researcher will be on hand throughout the creative residency to observe how it progresses. Once the residency is over, the researcher will attend the performance and contribute to the seminar. Lastly, each researcher will write an article for the academic analysis published when the project closes.

Day  
⑥

## The Performance

The performance will be held in a public space as part of a local cultural event.

Day  
⑦



Day  
④

Day  
⑤

#### → THE FILM-MAKER

The documentary film-maker will be on hand throughout the creative residency and during the performance and seminar. His or her objective will be to make a short film lasting a few minutes, which will focus on a different aspect of the residency each time. The short film will be published on the project website and on social media platforms a few days after the residency as part of a documentary series. Once the project has been completed, the six films will form a whole that provides a comprehensive record of the project.

#### → VISUAL ARTS STUDENTS

During each city's creative residency, a group of visual arts students will create, produce and publish various resources. Their objective will be to represent and communicate about the project in public spaces and advertise the performance. The resources will be specific to each city, but based on a shared visual identity. There will be a meeting with the performance team (the director and readers) at the start of the residency so that the performance and artwork are created in step with one another.

## The Seminar

The seminar will take place on the seventh day of each residency with the aim of bringing an analytical perspective to the entire project process. Attendees will include the director, the amateur performers, the social science and humanities researchers, the art students and the local coordinating team. It is also open to anyone else who wants to take part. The seminar's objective is to give different participants the chance to share their knowledge and observations of the creative process. Their conclusions will be written up and sent to the other five city teams, and will feed into the public decision-makers' training day in June 2022.

# SCHEDULE

2019

## SEPTEMBER

- Launching the first version of the website
- Creation and diffusion of the kit of referentials
- Creation of the kit for communication
- Creation of guides for operational partners, stage managers and researchers

### BRUSSELS, Urban Academy (CIFAS)

- > 1<sup>st</sup> transnational meeting, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> of september
- Action n°1 (cf p.16-17) in frame of the Urban Academy organised by the CIFAS :
  - \* Creative residency (22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> of september)
  - \* Performance (27<sup>th</sup> of september)
  - \* Seminar (28<sup>th</sup> of september)

## NOVEMBER

- Workshop for the students in visual arts, University Rennes 2

2020

## JANUARY TO JULY

- Launching the final version of the website

### ISTANBUL (February)

*The week of february 24<sup>th</sup> - Action n°2  
(creative residency + performance +  
seminar / cf p.16-17)*

### BARCELONA (July)

*Period to be confirmed with the partner -  
Action n°3 (creative residency + perfor-  
mance + seminar / cf p.16-17)*

## SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER

### MILAN (October)

*Period to be confirmed with the partner -  
Action n°4 (creative residency + perfor-  
mance + seminar / cf p.16-17)*

2021

## JANUARY TO JULY

### LISBON (February)

*Period to be confirmed with the partner*

- Action n°5 (creative residency + performance + seminar / cf p.16-17)

→ 2<sup>nd</sup> transnational meeting (place to be confirmed)

### RENNES, Festival Les Tombées de la

#### Nuit (July)

- Action n°6 (creative residency + performance + seminar / cf p.16-17)

## SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER

→ Finalization of the scientific publication

→ Finalization of the documentary series

→ Finalization of the manifesto

2022

## MARCH

→ Diffusion of the scientific publication

→ Diffusion of the whole documentary series

→ Diffusion of the manifesto

## MAY

- Creation of the kit of transmission for the public decision-makers

## JUNE

→ Seminar for european public decision-makers (Paris)

→ 3<sup>rd</sup> transnational meeting (Paris)

# CONTACTS

## ARTISTIC DIRECTION

**Paloma Fernández Sobrino**  
→ [paloma@agedelatortue.org](mailto:paloma@agedelatortue.org)  
→ 06 71 63 77 70

## DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION AND COMMUNICATION

**Antoine Chaudet**  
→ [antoine@agedelatortue.org](mailto:antoine@agedelatortue.org)  
→ 06 68 08 83 69

## ADMINISTRATION

**Sophie Archereau**  
→ [sophie@agedelatortue.org](mailto:sophie@agedelatortue.org)  
→ 06 61 75 76 03