

# Flying bodies across the fields

A dance piece for 4 performers and a swarm of autonomous mini-drones

Concept & choreography : Veronika Akopova

Length : 50 minutes



bok o bok

## ARTISTIC STATEMENT

***Flying bodies across the fields* is a contemporary dance piece for four performers and a swarm of drones, exploring the phenomenon of the disappearance of bees and the use of pollinating drones to compensate for this loss.**

The piece attempts to answer this crucial question in a poetical way: can the machine create life and save us from ecological disaster?

In a field, we see moving bodies. Above them, pollinating drones who came to compensate for the disappearance of bees. As a conductor, a beekeeper-programmer of drones, master of fertilizing algorithms.

Through dance, we are showing innovative living beings, who try to adapt to the new bee, and bodies which reinvent themselves in front of this palliative, in search of their form and their survival.

We work the body in its capacity for morphogenesis, as an entity generating infinite algorithmic mutations to evolve into the next form. Tangles, touches, undulations cross a set of bodies sometimes liquid, sometimes honeyed, sometimes aerial. States of abandonment, vacillation and tension reflect the transition from one evolutionary phase to another. The body is subject to a perpetual transformation and perceived in the multitude of its forms: body-insect, body-machine, body-flower.

Irrigated by the reflections of Jacques Tassin on the sensitive interactions which govern the living world, the choreographic writing makes visible, through movement, the sensitivity of plants, their astonishing capacity to extend into the other and to compose between the exterior and oneself. The choreography features bodies demonstrating a form of sensitive intelligence, inspired by plants.

The original music, between organic and technological, joins this research on the artifice of life. We use an experimental method, which consists of scanning an image, extracting its geometric and colorimetric properties by multiple processing, to transform it into sound, using computer software. In this piece, the images used to produce sound are images of beehives.

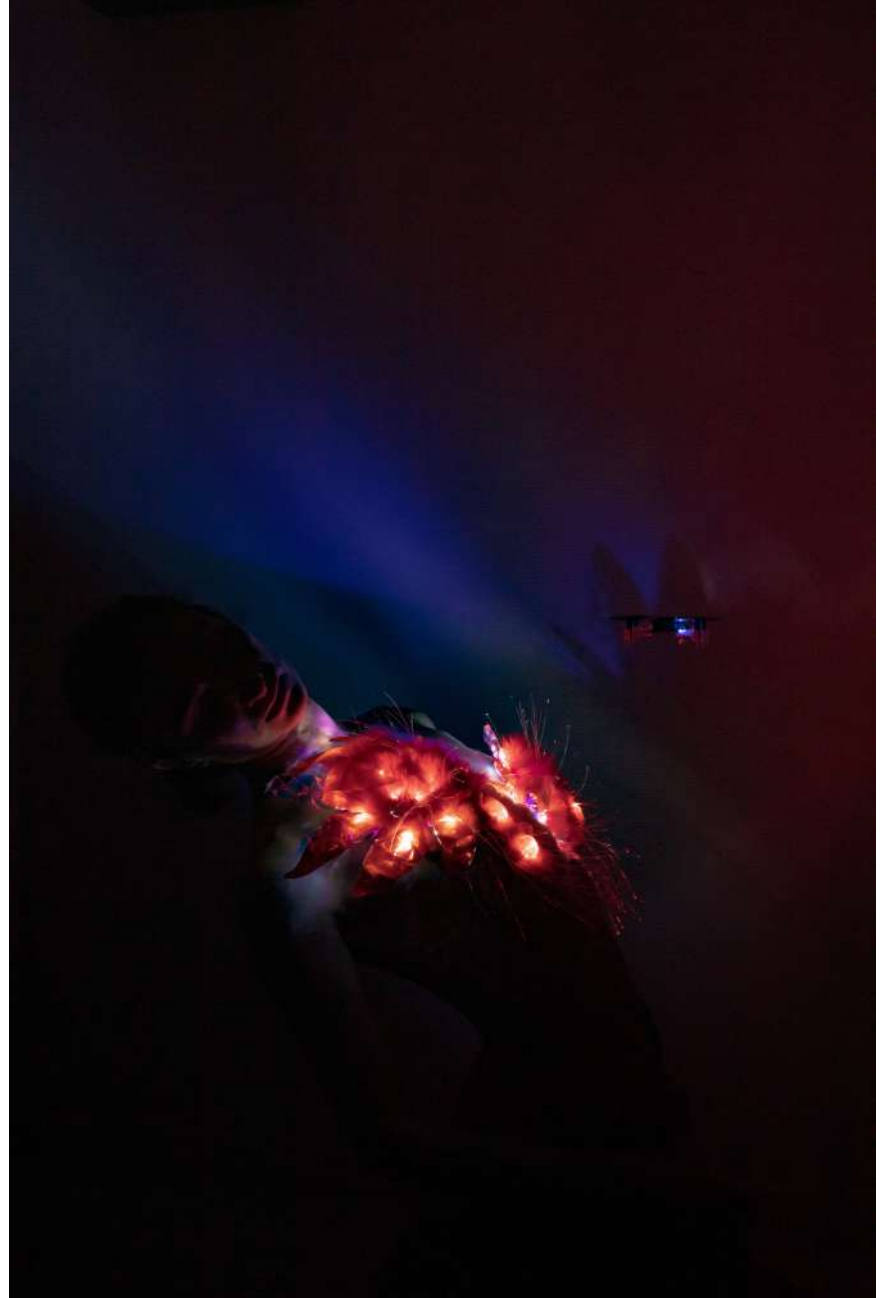
The dance resonates with this music composed of raw melodies, taken from the computer program, but also rather instrumental, Apollonian melodies, as well as the disturbing noise produced by the propellers of the drones.

Beyond symbolizing current attempts to use drones to pollinate fields, the presence of programmable mini-drones, initially designed for scientific research, supports the back and forth between nature and technology. We integrate a swarm of synchronized drones, performing complex choreographies, which refer to the functioning of a beehive, including the famous "bee dance", discovered by Karl von Frisch, which is used to transmit information on the food sources. Far from having a spectacular performance as its only goal, the synchronization of autonomous drones highlights bio-inspired computer techniques, focused on collective intelligence.

The costumes, signed Clara Daguin, integrate luminous floral shapes, made up of reflective materials, LEDs and optical fibres, in an alliance between manual know-how and emerging technology.

With *Flying bodies across the fields*, I would like to create a response to contemporary reality, question the ecological path of humanity and deliver a metaphorical reflection on the place of living beings in a world where the machine would be responsible for the reproduction of plants, and therefore for the creation of life.

Trailer (2021 version) : <https://youtu.be/ZDV147sIT6Q>



## DISTRIBUTION

Concept & choreography: **Veronika Akopova**

Performers: **Veronika Akopova, Joan Cellier, Florian Goralsky, Clara Lou Munié**

Drone programming: **Florian Goralsky**

Original music: **Andrei Karasev**

Costumes: **Clara Daguin**

Scientific collaboration: **Jacques Tassin**

Production: **bok o bok**

Coproduction: **Scènes & Territoires, Gdansk Dance Festival / Klub Żak, Dance Theatre Heidelberg / Theater und Orchester Heidelberg**

Partners: **Île-de-France Region, DRAC Grand Est, DRAC Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Caisse des Dépôts, Théâtres du Val d'Yerres, Brunoy City, CCN of Roubaix / Ballet du Nord, Obernai City, Centre National de la Danse, Laboratoire Chorégraphique in Reims AFA - Grand Est, Bitcraze**

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## **Veronika Akopova**

CHOREOGRAPHER, DANCER

Veronika Akopova is a dancer and choreographer, who is interested in the sensitive relationships between dance, nature and technology. Born in Tbilisi, Georgia, and graduated from Moscow State University, she received a scholarship from the French government and moved to Paris in 2010, to study poetry in its relationship to dance at Paris-Sorbonne.

Veronika trained as a dance artist at ACTS School of Contemporary Dance in Paris and at the Centre National de la Danse, with the Adami scholarship. As a performer, Veronika worked with Iván Pérez at Dance Theater Heidelberg, Germany. She also collaborated with the Israeli company C.a.t.a.m.o.n dance group and with the choreographer Sylvain Groud for his dance project in the hospital environment.

In 2015, she co-founded bok o bok, with the director and developer Florian Goralsky, and created her first solo, *Entrelacs*, finalist of the Solo-Tanz-Theater festival (Germany), Dance Fest Skopje (Macedonia), and presented at the Gdansk Dance Festival.

In 2016, she directed the video-dance *Catharsis*, best student film and opening film at the Cinedans festival (Amsterdam), also awarded at the Bestias Danzantes (Santiago de Chile) and at InShadow (Lisbon).

Veronika is a 2020 laureate of the Regional Fund for Emerging Talents (FoRTE Île-de-France) with *Flying Bodies Across the Fields*, a dance creation that explores disappearance of bees and attempts to replace them with pollinating drones, first part of a trilogy on the extinction of living species. The piece was presented at the Center Pompidou (Paris) during the Environment Forum 2021.

Veronika is a guest artist of the GAES (Artistic Group for Scientific Exploration) around artificial intelligence, organised by the Atelier Arts Sciences (L'Hexagone Scène Nationale Arts Sciences), in collaboration with the Quai des Savoirs in Toulouse, the MIAI Grenoble and ANITI.



**Florian Goralsky**  
DEVELOPER

Florian Goralsky is a director and developer, co-founder of bok o bok. Until 2012, he worked in Strasbourg with Films de l'Europe for films for Arte and European institutions.

In 2012, he took classes at the Conservatoire Libre du Cinéma Français in Paris. His digital skills led him to develop projects combining art and new technologies. He participated in the creation of the Virtual Reality division of the neostory agency (axxess Group) as a technical and artistic advisor.

In 2016, Florian collaborated with Veronika on *Catharsis*, video-dance screened at the opening of the Cinedans festival in Amsterdam, alongside *Womb* by Gilles Jobin. In Moscow, they co-directed the video-dance *Rand()* (2018), produced by ProDvigenie (Russia), special mention at the In Out Festival in Gdansk.

In 2019, Florian directed two short films: *Bathers*, an experimental fable screened notably at the Mykonos Biennale, and *Unstable Seasons*, Brochet d'Or at the Lyon Young Film Festival 2019, in the official selection at the International Short Film Festival of São Paulo, and at Mecal in Barcelona.

In 2021, Florian developed the drone choreography for *Flying Bodies Across the Fields*, a dance piece by Veronika Akopova, presented at the Center Pompidou in Paris, as part of the Environment Forum.



**Andrei Karasev**  
COMPOSER

Andrei Karasev is a Russian composer, winner of the Nika Prize, the main national cinema award in Russia. He composed the music in particular for the films *Silent Souls*, *Celestial Wives of the Meadow Mari* and *Angels of Revolution* by Aleksey Fedorchenko, which won awards at international festivals such as the Venice Film Festival, the Rome International Film Festival, and the Rotterdam International Film Festival.

Andrei has been working with Veronika since 2015. He composed the music for her solo *Entrelacs*, as well as for the video-dance *Rand()* and for *Flying Bodies Across the Fields*.



**Clara Daguin**  
COSTUME DESIGNER

Clara Daguin was born in France and raised in Silicon Valley. After a Master's degree in graphic design and a trip to India, she joined the National School of Decorative Arts in Paris. She conducts different types of research on textiles and materials. Being surrounded by new technologies since childhood, she works on interactivity in matter, to reflect on the human-machine relationship and to give shape and appearance to what we do not see, the waves that surround us.

Her artistic practice is an artisanal approach based on the combination of manual know-how and technology, mainly through interactive "experiential" pieces made using embroidery and electronics. Through her creations, she talks about the symbiosis of the organic and the artificial that we experience daily, which is both fascinating and terrifying.

Awarded at the 2016 Hyères Festival and presented at a Première Vision exhibition in 2018, Clara Daguin combines technological prowess with aesthetic rigor.

## BOK O BOK

Bok o bok was founded in 2015 by Veronika Akopova (choreographer and dancer) and Florian Goralsky (director and developer), as a platform for projects exploring different artistic forms, with a focus on dance and cinematographic art.

Established in Lyon since 2019, the company is developing a trilogy project, exploring the phenomenon of the extinction of living species, by combining dance and new technologies. The first part, *Flying Bodies Across the Fields*, is a 2020 laureate of the Regional Fund for Emerging Talents (FoRTE Île-de-France) and the Sponsorship of Caisse des Dépôts, and was presented at the Center Pompidou, as part of the Environment Forum on October 1, 2021, then at the EXPERIMENTA Biennial, and at the French Institute of Côte d'Ivoire for Novembre Numérique. The second part, *Murmurations*, is a laureate of "New Worlds" program, implemented by the Ministry of Culture, in collaboration with National monuments centre.

## CONTACT

<https://bok-o-bok.org>

[cie.bokobok@gmail.com](mailto:cie.bokobok@gmail.com)

+33 6 84 55 26 46

