

02.12.2025
> 23.01.2026

FIRE & ASHES

THOR

PRESS KIT

FIRE & ASHES
2.12.25 > 23.1.26

THOR.BE
T +32 (0)2 223 26 00
info@thor.be

THOR – Thierry Smits **FIRE & ASHES**

2.12.25 > 23.1.26 | 8:30 pm | Studio Thor

Thierry Smits conceived of “Fire and Ashes” as a solo performance for a dancer-singer, set within a vast, dystopian stage installation. The space is an abandoned, man-made structure where all activity has ceased. Inside this forlorn, decaying environment, bathed in harsh light and filled with eerie echoes, an epic collage of movement, action, and sound unfolds driven by the constant barrage of catastrophic news.

This production has been heavily shaped by the terrifying events that dominate recent headlines: war in Ukraine, genocide in Gaza, and climate disasters. While not following a linear narrative, it weaves together compelling visual images, abstract gestures, unexpected dances, performative actions, sounds, and songs, evoking sensations such as panic, escape, survival, disaster, trauma, confinement, alienation, self-destruction, and disappearance.

The dancer-singer-performer’s body navigates these shifting states and moods—hopeless yet resilient. Ablaze with intensity, destined for destruction, yet carrying a youthful vibrancy that confronts adversity head-on and embraces the world’s pain.

Thierry Smits, with the support of Vincenzo Carta, continues to explore his daring, theatrical approach that began with “WaW [We Are Woman]” (2018), followed by his solo “Vanishing Act” (2023) and the duo “Pinkie Ponkie” (2024). At the heart of “Fire and Ashes” is Mimbi Lubansu, a recent graduate of P.A.R.T.S. who first worked with Smits at just sixteen years old.

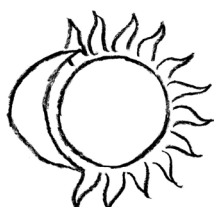
The stage design, created specifically for the Thor studio by scenographer Stéphane Arcas, enhances this immersive experience. The eclectic soundscape, composed by musician Matteo Melan, blends a wide range of influences, with music that physically engages the audience. It also features four songs co-written with Mimbi Lubansu and dramaturg Antoine Pickels spanning crooner ballads, rap, catchy pop hooks and cold wave.

Lighting, designed by Nicolas Simonin, and costumes by Charlyne Mispion add the finishing touches to this constantly shifting, dynamic visual experience.

STUDIO THOR

49, rue Saint-Josse
1210 Saint-Josse-ten-Noode

Production: Thor. Co-production: La Coop asbl and Shelter Prod.
With the support of Taxshelter.be, ING, the Tax Shelter of the Belgian Federal Government.



FIRE & ASHES

Team

Concept, choreographer
Thierry Smits

Assistant choreographer
Vincenzo Carta

Performer, co-author of the songs
Mimbi Lubansu

Composer, sound designer
Matteo Melan

Dramaturg, co-author of the songs
Antoine Pickels

Set designer
Stéphane Arcas

Lighting designer
Nicolas Simonin

Costume designer
Charlyne Misplon

Vocal coach
Jean Fürst

Sound engineer
Maxence Obein

Lighting engineer
Bruno Gilbert

Production
Elena Frau

Communication
Romane Carmon

Coordination, Public Relations
Michel-Ange Vinti

Studio Management
Brahim Sahli

Administration
Zakaria Zohrat

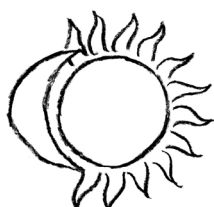
Human Resources
Régis Remigy

Ticketing manager
Juliette Ban

Graphic designer
Kidnap Your Designer

Photos
Hichem Dahes

Teaser
Les Meutes

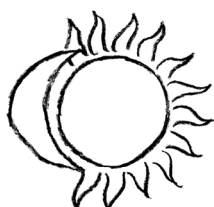


FIRE & ASHES

Path & inspirations

The show is structured around 12 stations, including four “songs” (in the sense intended by Bertolt Brecht: songs that create distance). The sequence of these stations does not follow a chronological or narrative logic: their order is primarily choreographic, and more sensory than intellectual.

1. **Fear eats the soul.** This title of a Fassbinder film also served as the choreographic driving force: how do you flee from bombs and bullets? What are the gestures of fear?
2. **Disaster song.** A possible account of what might have preceded is conveyed by a crooner – whose singing has been interrupted by the war, and who takes refuge here and now, at this precise moment of *disaster*.
3. **Soldier – robot.** Faced with the threat, the gestures of combat are both tragic and burlesque, whether brandishing a useless weapon or mimicking military technology.
4. **Fire and ashes.** A combination of performative acts that poetically and aesthetically evoke the future to come, using fire, ashes, the colour red and movement.
5. **Trapped song.** A song that borrows from the rebellious lyrics, rhythms and gestures of rap to highlight the trap: an arid space from which it is impossible to escape.
6. **Gills** or blood vessels sweeping through space. An attempt at conjuration, a breath before the countdown begins.
7. **Right in the heart.** As a result of anxiety or the rarefaction of the air, the body is seized by spasms as the explosion approaches.
8. **Earworm song.** Music does not save us from alienation: it contributes to it, when the familiar tune that remains in our memory becomes an earworm that ‘gnaws at our ears’ and twists our brains.
9. **The mask’s hold.** The body is possessed by a ritual dance, between resistance and outright madness.
10. **Towards execution.** One must prepare for the final torment, contemplate it, contain the nausea, struggle – hopelessly – with the immediate environment. A corpse in the making struggles with a car corpse.
11. **Burnt song.** With punk energy, ‘No Future’ nevertheless has a future: that of a body whose ashes will soon be scattered by the winds in a hollowed-out world.
12. **Immolation and combustion.** Between Saint Sebastian, a Buddhist monk, a fist raised in vain, a slow collapse to nothingness. The music no longer plays for anyone.



FIRE & ASHES

Songs

DISASTER SONG

I was singing
When the ceiling
Fell down

Public clapping
Started yelling
At once

It was the war
Starting
Outside

I jumped offstage
Left my audience
In tears

Out in the street
There was no street
No more

An awful smell
Burnt flesh and blood
Floated

Kids were dying
Suffocating
Around

I was running
Dogs were barking
Behind

Fire Shots were
Whistling
Around my ears

I came to find
Some shelter here

How long will I
Need to hide
Here alone ?

How long will I
Need to hide ?

A disaster
Is taking place
Right now

The World's a stage
Where is raging
A war.

TRAPPED SONG

I'm trapped
I'm chained
I'm fucked
I'm jailed
I'm gone
I'm lost
I'm bound
I'm done
I'm dust
I'm changed
I'm dirt
I'm damned
I'm nearly dead
and I will never be saved

Can't drink the water is poisoned
Can't eat 'cause the dust can't feed me
The pain defeats me
Nothing to heal me
My tears are burning

I'm chained

The end of the beginning

No music just screams

No windows no screens
It's just what it seems
Only walls I can see

Attached like a slave
Who remembers my name
In this cage I am damned
I am damned
I am damned

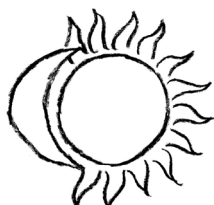
I'm alone I can't escape
I could go fucking insane
Nothing to heal the pain

I'm damned

I can't remember the sun
Or fill out my lungs
Only devastation

And the sounds of the guns
I might just eat the dust

I'm nearly dead
and I will never be saved.



FIRE & ASHES

Songs

EARWORM SONG

Maybe you are just a fantasy
Maybe you're a bug inside of me

I keep hearing you here and there
You seem at home
I try to stop you
But the tune goes on

This song is eating me
It is all around I cannot breathe
I should get rid of
this dumb earworm love
but it's occupying
All of my daydreaming

Leave me alone
Just stop right now

Go away

You eat my soul

By myself in the dark

No room for you in my death

Please get out of this dream

Your fake voice hurts my ears

When the darkness extends

It will not set me free

Maybe you are just a fantasy...

You're right inside of me
A painful memory
Must get rid of that madness
leave that presence

What's the name
Of this persistent pain

It's a dark obsession
A vicious melody
Multiplies in my brain
and occupies it all

I have lost all my will
I cannot free myself
From your earworm in me

Becoming totally sick
I'm really getting ill

On repeat there's nothing new
I got something in my head and it's all I want
to lose

This song is eating me ...

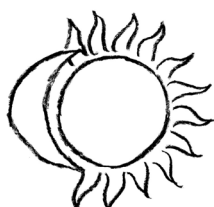
BURNT SONG

I'm burnt I'm dust I turn into ashes
A ghost speaking from after the burning
A ghost calling long after combustion
The pain goes on while there's no more body
The pain goes on, inhabits all of me
I'll fade away

I'm grey I'm off
The ashes are cold now
But the wind
The wind will come
The wind will blow me
The wind will scatter my ashes
All over the desert
That is this planet
Burnt
And dead
All over the void
That is the world today

I don't belong here anymore
I'm north I'm south I'm east and west
I'm nowhere and everywhere
Spread all over the planet
by the nuclear winds
I have disappeared
Disappeared
In the void

I fade away
Fade away...



FIRE & ASHES

Artistic team



THIERRY SMITS

Concept, choreographer

With the Thor company, Thierry Smits is one of the leading figures in Belgian contemporary dance. Over more than 30 years, the choreographer has established an artistic approach that is extraordinary in many ways, often controversial and frequently bucking trends.

Alternating between pure dance performances and more performative pieces, his creations explore the relationship with the body – an object of desire, pleasure and finitude – which he now considers more than ever to be a political space and ‘the only territory of freedom we have left’.

Since launching Thor in 1990, Thierry Smits has created more than 30 dance performances, including *Eros délétaire* (1991), *Red Rubber Balls* (1999), *D'ORIENT* (2005), *V.-Nightmares* (2007), *To the Ones I Love* (2010), *Anima Ardens* (2017), *Toumai* (2022) and, more recently, *Pinkie Ponkie* (2024).

His creations, characterised by a keen sense of imagery, draw on aesthetics that are sometimes pop and queer, deliberately provocative, and sometimes refined and contemporary. Whatever their form, his works demonstrate an omnipresent technical rigour and gestural creativity.



VINCENZO CARTA

Assistant choreographer

Italian dancer and choreographer Vincenzo Carta was born in Syracuse. He discovered dance while studying architecture in Florence, perceiving movement as an extension of spatial thinking. He trained at the CEM Contemporary Art Studio in Lisbon before joining P.A.R.T.S. in Brussels.

In 2004, he created *Audience with Solo* and began collaborating with Benjamin Vandewalle on *We Go*, the winning project in the Moving Movimento competition (2005), followed by *InBetween*. In 2006, he developed *Urban Project X*, a performance designed for urban passageways.

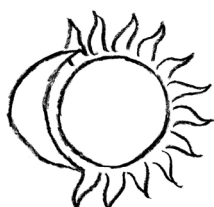
As a performer, Vincenzo Carta has worked with Andy Deneys, Giorgio Rossi and David Hernandez. For and with Passerelle (Kortrijk, BE), he created *We All Go* and *Gnosis*. With *Gnosis#1* (2011), in collaboration with Ongakuaw (Andrew Ferrara), he won the European Focus on Art and Science award.

Between 2013 and 2018, he collaborated with Adrien Monfleur on several projects, including *Secret Garden*, a multimedia and interactive creation at the intersection of cinema, performance and installation.

From 2019 onwards, he developed the performance series *In Your Hands* and *Disco Balls*, inspired by BDSM practices and exploring the relationships between power, vulnerability and pleasure.

In 2023, he founded Finocchietto Selvatico, a queer cultural centre located in the Sicilian countryside, dedicated to artistic research, well-being and experimentation with body language and community.

Since 2018, he has been collaborating with the Thor/Thierry Smits company as assistant choreographer on the creations *WAW – We Are Woman [WAW]*, *Toumai* and *Summertine*.



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Artistic team



MIMBI LUBANSU

Performer, co-author of the songs

Mimbi Lubansu is a multidisciplinary artist, dancer, choreographer and singer. Born in Brussels in a family of actors, he grew up in the world of theatre, where he discovered contemporary dance, a discipline that immediately captivated him.

He began his training at Dancingkids before joining, at the age of 12, the As Palavras company of choreographer Claudio Bernardo. He took part in the productions *Giovanni's Club* and *Après les Troyennes*, marking the beginning of his career as a performer. He then continued his career by collaborating with Radouane Mriziga and joining the Thor company in 2020 for Thierry Smits' piece *Toumai* (2022).

Alongside dance, Mimbi Lubansu is developing a musical career. He has released two projects, *Lilithet* and *Magie Noire*, in collaboration with Belgian and international composers such as Young King and YZ. His music, which explores urban genres such as trap, RnB and new wave, stands out for its strong and ambitious narrative approach.

In 2022, he enrolled at the P.A.R.T.S. school for a three-year course, where he refined his approach to contemporary dance and began choreographing. This period was marked by the creation of his first piece, *.NEMO*, co-produced by the Théâtre Marni and the Espace Magh.

Today, Mimbi Lubansu continues his career as a dancer and choreographer, while remaining actively involved in cultural life. He is a member of the Brussels-based artist collective UMAMI, participating in projects that combine choreography, music, events and cultural entrepreneurship.



MATTEO MELAN

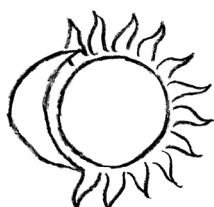
Composer, sound designer

A highly creative and self-taught artist from a young age, Matteo Melan took his first steps in music composition alongside hip-hop artists. It was with them that he refined his sound, developed a unique artistic identity and professionalised his skills as a sound engineer.

Marked by bass lines inherited from hip-hop and intriguing melodies with soulful accents, his music unfolds in space like an immersive material. It is listened to as much with the ears as with the body, evoking sensations that are both physical and sensitive.

Designed for the stage, his compositions now accompany fashion shows, exhibitions, performances, plays and experimental projects. Matteo also produces under his alias ROUGE, a personal project that fully embodies his universe: deep, visual, intriguing and captivating.

Driven by the idea of creating a direct connection with the audience, he designs his pieces as immersive experiences, such as the piece *Fire & Ashes*, where he offers sounds that plunge the spectator into the heart of the piece.



FIRE & ASHES

Artistic team



ANTOINE PICKELS

Dramaturg, co-author of the songs

Antoine Pickels is a visual artist, performer, experimental filmmaker, set designer, director, playwright, essayist, curator and editor. He moves in diverse circles, including rock music, literature, academia, theatre, dance, cinema, fashion and the visual arts.

He regularly contributes to magazines, collective works, catalogues and symposiums in Europe. He teaches the history and current events of the performing arts and performance art at La Cambre (Brussels).

He was programme coordinator at Les Halles de Schaerbeek from 2004 to 2006, director of La Bellone from 2007 to 2011, artistic director of the Trouble festival at Les Halles de Schaerbeek from 2005 to 2013, and artistic advisor to Cifas from 2009 to 2018 (*Klaxon* magazine, SIGNAL festival). Since 2019, he has once again been curator of the Trouble Festival, now produced by Studio Thor and held biennially, alternating with the (Pas si) Fragile! springboard.

Antoine Pickels has worked regularly with Thierry Smits since his first creation, often as a dramaturg. *Fire & Ashes* marks his thirteenth collaboration with the choreographer.



STÉPHANE ARCAS

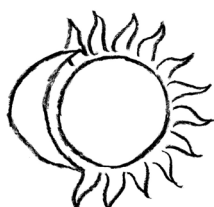
Set designer

Stéphane Arcas is a French visual artist, director, set designer, actor and writer. Originally from the Toulouse countryside, he studied at the Beaux-Arts in Toulouse, where he was a student of Jean-Pierre Gillard, then in Marseille, where he met sculptor Toni Grand and writer Brice Matthieussent. These encounters shaped his career, encouraging him to explore the boundary between literature and the visual arts.

From the 1990s onwards, Stéphane Arcas established himself as an active artist, exhibiting in both institutions and alternative venues, some of which he himself founded. His work, described as "conceptual punk", blends classical art with rock culture, reflecting a generation marked by crisis and consumerism.

From the 2000s onwards, Stéphane Arcas turned his attention to theatre, participating in projects as a videographer, set designer, actor and then director. He moved to Brussels in 2005, where he founded the Black Flag theatre company. His shows, often politically engaged, give a voice to the "people at the bottom", the sons of the working class, criticising liberalism and dominant ideologies.

The son of Italian and Spanish immigrants, he claims to be self-taught and politically engaged, using his art as a tool for rebellion and reflection on contemporary society.



FIRE & ASHES

Artistic team



CHARLYNE MISPLON

Costume designer

Based in Brussels, Charlyne Mispion trained in Jean Glibert and Ann Veronica Janssens's light-space-colour course at La Cambre, as well as in sewing at F.P.S. in Uccle.

Charlyne Mispion creates costumes for theatre and dance (Varia, Gallafronie, École de la Scène, Studio Thor) and for visual artists (Olivier Goka, Roberta Giante, Anna Raimonda, Christophe Terlinden, Aline Bouvy, Michiel Ceulers, Frederic Biesmans). She also creates accessories (clutch bags, bags, etc.) for theatres using upcycled promotional tarpaulins.

In parallel with her textile work, Charlyne Mispion is developing, in collaboration with photographer Patricia Bouteiller, a project of performances and installations in situ based on the principle of the Camera Obscura.



NICOLAS SIMONIN

Lighting designer

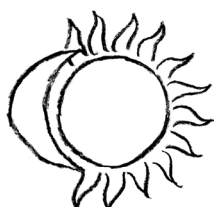
Trained at the Théâtre National de Strasbourg, Nicolas Simonin has been designing lighting for theatre, puppetry, dance, opera and many other forms of live performance in France and internationally since 1991.

Fascinated by light since childhood, he has enriched his work with images, first through photography and then through video, which he has been exploring on stage since 2003 in order to examine the relationship between image and light in live performance. He also designs control room software, video software and autonomous lighting systems.

For the past ten years, he has also been creating stage designs that combine light, space and image in a coherent and comprehensive visual approach.

Nicolas Simonin has collaborated with numerous directors, choreographers and institutions (Opéra de Bordeaux, Opéra de Lausanne, etc.), establishing a sensitive, dramatic and colourful stage design style.

In May 2018, he collaborated with Thierry Smits on the piece *We are Woman (W.A.W.)*, presented at the Théâtre Varia and then at Studio Thor (Brussels), for which he was responsible for the lighting design.



FIRE & ASHES

Artistic team



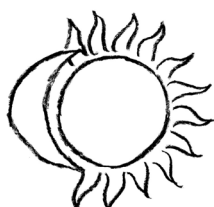
JEAN FÜRST

Vocal coach

Jean Fürst studied and then taught photography. After several years exploring movement, he turned to the stage as a performer for numerous theatre/dance, theatre and performance companies.

He began studying classical singing and went on to meet numerous vocalists with whom he explored other techniques: David Moss, Meredith Monk, John Giorno, Phil Minton, Joan La Barbara, Alessandro Bosetti and Yannick Guédon, among others.

Jean Fürst collaborates with video artists as a performer or singer and lends his voice to radio dramas. He currently continues his work as a performer and provides vocal training for theatre and dance productions, while once again devoting himself to photography.



FIRE & ASHES

Practical informations

PERFORMANCES

02 > 06.12.2025 (8:30pm)

09 > 13.12.2025 (8:30pm)

16 > 20.12.2025 (8:30pm)

06 > 10.01.2026 (8:30pm)

13 > 17.01.2026 (8:30pm)

20 > 23.01.2026 (8:30pm)

Limited capacity (50 people/evening)

Pay what you want (10€ — 18€)

PLACE

Studio Thor
rue Saint-Josse, 49
1210 Saint-Josse-ten-Noode

CONTACT

Interviews, texts, photos, videos
Romane Carmon - communication@thor.be

Booking
Juliette Ban - tickets@thor.be

