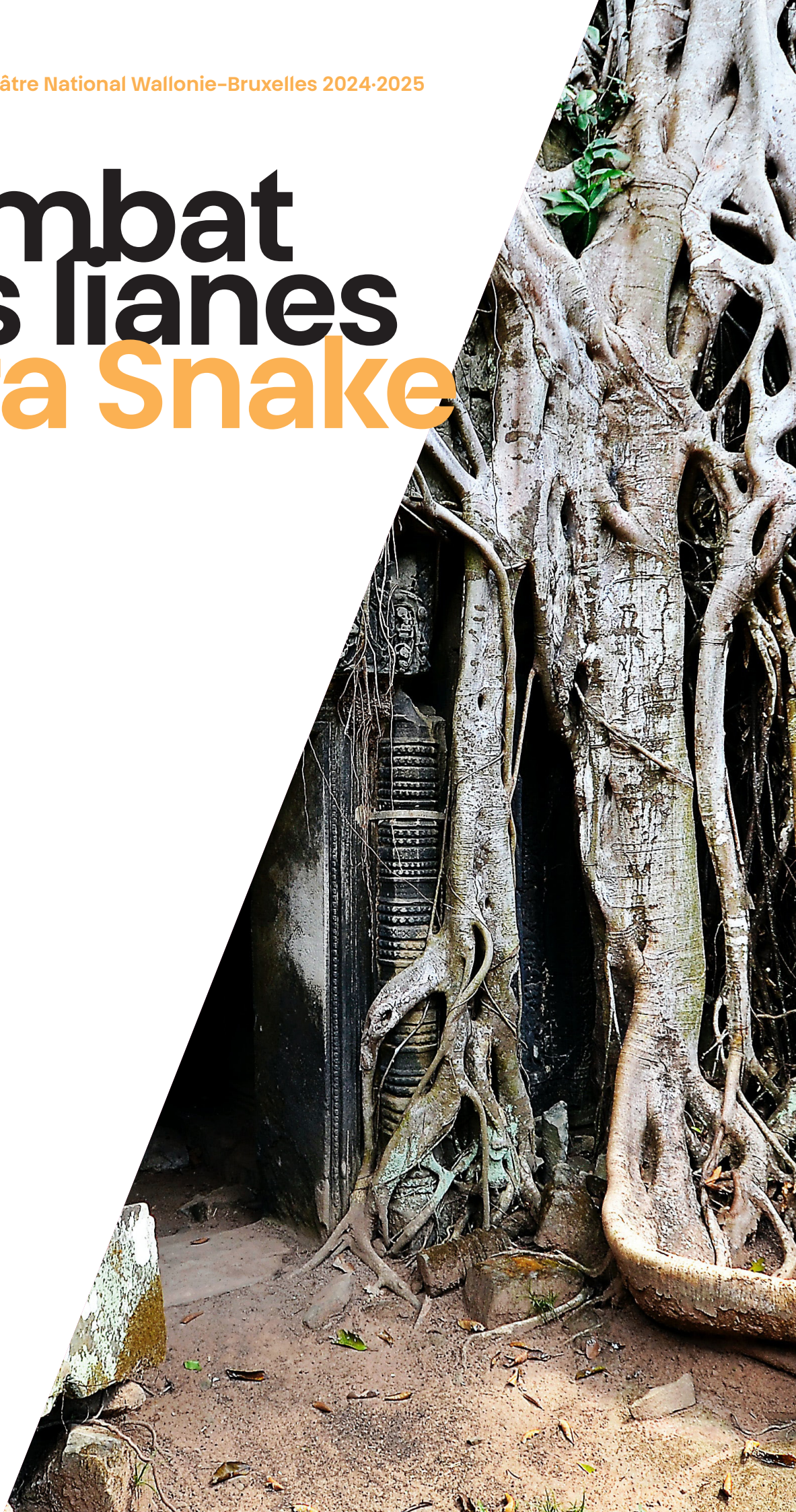


Création Studio Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles 2024-2025

# Combat des lianes Zora Snake







# At the origins... the all-powerful vines

For those who know Zora Snake, it's hard not to see in *Combat des lianes* the forces that drive him. It brings to mind the powerful cry of the pygmy peoples of southeast Cameroon, who are disappearing, but also deforestation. We think of his village in the high mountains of West Cameroon and the virgin forest that is his refuge, his breath. We think of the book *Sagesse des lianes - Cosmopoétique du refuge I* by Dénètem Touam Bona, somewhere between the polished image of the film *Greystoke, the legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes* by Hugh Hudson, shot in the remote heart of the Ekom Nkam falls in Cameroon and the subversive wisdom of the indigenous peoples against the capitalization of the living.

As a dance performance, *Combat des lianes* should not be seen as a thinly-veiled, targeted indictment, but rather as a poetic and visionary metaphor for the brutal state of the world today. The violence suffered by the Pygmies is not so far removed from the violence suffered by the Bororos in northern Cameroon, the homeless, or Afro-descendants. And ultimately, the violence suffered by all those who are invisible in the city and elsewhere, because of their geographical origin, gender, age or sexuality.

Zora Snake not only looks the catastrophe in the face through the eyes of people who suffer it, but also scrutinizes issues of immigration, discrimination, social and climate justice, borders, and the power of the works of art that are exhibited in museums to the greater glory of (neo)colonizing forces. The artist works through the imagination of lianas, links and tensions. He believes in the omnipotence of fiction and form to speak to us.

## Dance: body and vines

If there is a story to be found in *Combat des lianes*, it is the story of struggle. Even more so here, it's all about resistance, beyond dreams, on the side of the living, whether it takes the form of a roar, sublimation or nightmare. How can we draw inspiration from all the ideological struggles that have defined the conditions of peoples under capitalist and colonial domination?

How can we use lianas to tell the story of social struggles, discrimination and deadly prejudices? How do danced and dancing bodies tell the story of the victorious, united and endless struggles of our time?

*Combat des lianes* is a snapshot of the anger in our world that forms nodes of resistance through the power of the vines that beckon humanity. The body is linked here in many ways, from vine to vine, from the imaginary to the real, from the poetic to the political, from the human to the sacred.

Through the power of gesture, at once twisting, contorting and poetic, Zora Snake's choreographic grammar is a journey through the invisible, like the snake of life, the rite of reincarna-

tion and reinvention of a healthier, more peaceful society that we dream of in order to return to ourselves.

If the dance takes shape here in the physicality of the vines – hollow, splitting, falling and hanging, creaking –; in the lore of the secret Nku' ngang societies of West Cameroon who believe that vines chase away evil spirits or in ritual dances, it is not a "primitive", "ethnic" or "ethnological" dance. It is the dance of roots towards all roots. It is a human dance in osmosis with nature, remembering what is to come, now.

## Zora Snake

In real life named Tejeutsa, which in the traditional Yemba language means "a person with strong empathy", Zora Snake is a choreographer, dancer and performance art researcher. In 2013, he founded the Compagnie Zora Snake in Yaoundé and in 2017, the International Festival MODAPERF – MOuvements, DAnses et PERFormances.

A multiple winner and finalist, he is regarded as one of the most promising artists of the current hip-hop (Popping) scene, and of the scene in general in Africa and elsewhere, mixing artistic practices in the public space, politico-poetic ritual performances, art and society. A 2016–2017 winner of the *Visas pour la création* program of l'Institut Français, he regularly works in the French cultural network around the world, as well as with the Goethe Institutes.

In 2021, in the wake of MODAPERF, he created the Espace-Labo, a space for artistic cross-pollination and sharing, and a social and cultural incubator; it is open to artists and cultural operators as a place to (re)invent artistic languages, professionalize young artists and thus ensure the long-term future of art in contact with audiences in Africa.

Zora Snake has a very strong relationship with social engagement. First, because engagement is the raw material of his audacious and explosive performances: *Au-delà de l'humain* ; *Je suis* ; *Transfrontalier* ; *Le Départ* ; *Les Séquelles de la Colonisation* ; *Les masques tombent* and *Shadow Survivors*. Secondly, because it is a constant subject of reflection. The artist participates in conferences and seminars, he leads workshops, he writes.

His book *L'art est une boxe - de la performance et du politique*, written in collaboration with Julie Peghini and Dominique Malaquais during a writing residency at the Fondation Camargo, is halfway between theory, method and archival document, and offers essential keys to understanding performance as a means of creating shared spaces for protest, reflection and collaboration – spaces that transcend both physical and disciplinary boundaries.

# Combat des lianes Zora Snake

Création Studio Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles

Choreography Zora Snake

Performance Gandir Prudence, Joy Alpuerto Ritter, Zora Snake, two Belgian dancers

Composers & live music Christiane Prince & Pidj Boom

Set design Alioum Moussa

Lighting design (in progress)

Costume design Lamine M

Production Théâtre National Wallonie- Bruxelles

Coproduction Charleroi Danse (in progress)

## Contact

Head of production

Juliette Thieme — [jthieme@theatrenational.be](mailto:jthieme@theatrenational.be)

Head of touring & international relations

Céline Gaubert — [cgaubert@theatrenational.be](mailto:cgaubert@theatrenational.be)

Production & tour manager

Matthieu Defour — [mdefour@theatrenational.be](mailto:mdefour@theatrenational.be)

## Espace Pro

[www.theatrenational.be/fr/pro](http://www.theatrenational.be/fr/pro)

## Tours

[www.theatrenational.be/fr/productions/agenda](http://www.theatrenational.be/fr/productions/agenda)

## Creation

Research and creation planned in Belgium and Cameroon  
during 2023-2024



[www.theatrenational.be](http://www.theatrenational.be)

