Caroline Guiela Nguyen &
Théâtre national de Strasbourg

LACRIMA



Image: Jean-Louis Fernandez

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Perth Festival acknowledges the Noongar people who continue to practise values, language, beliefs and knowledge on kwobidak boodjar.

Noongar people remain the spiritual and cultural birdiyangara of this place and we honour and respect the caretakers and custodians and the vital role Noongar people play for our community and our Festival to flourish.

We also acknowledge all First Nations people, whose contributions make our Festival culturally and artistically richer.

Our hearts are happy that you are here, on the traditional lands of Whadjuk, part of the Bibbulmun nation and its people.

Perth Festival Noongar Cultural Authority Council
Roma Yibiyung Winmar, Vivienne Binyarn Hansen, Richard Walley, Barry McGuire & Mitchella Waljin Hutchins

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Welcome

I first saw *LACRIMA* at the Avignon Festival in 2024. I queued for hours in the heat, deeply anxious I wouldn't get a ticket, standing in a haze of cigarette smoke, and almost immediately afterwards invited the company to bring the work to Perth Festival. The performance was breathtaking and the response from the audience was electric.

Created by the extraordinary writer and director Caroline Guiela Nguyen, *LACRIMA* is exceptional international theatre: precise, rigorous and deeply human. At a time when global forces are discussed at scale but the confronting truth of their human impact is often diminished, this work insists on attention, care and moral complexity. It exposes how global power and disparity are experienced in intimate, everyday ways, cutting through abstraction to reveal lived consequence rather than theory.

Perth Festival exists to bring audiences into contact with theatre that crosses borders and carries lived reality with integrity. I felt *LACRIMA* belonged in this Festival the moment I saw it. And finally, it has arrived in Perth.

Anna Reece
Artistic Director



Caroline Guiela Nguyen &
Théâtre national de Strasbourg

LACRIMA

FRANCE
AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE SEASON

6 – 10 Feb

Heath Ledger Theatre, State Theatre Centre of WA
Yandilup / Perth

Duration 2hrs 55mins including a short pause, no intermission

Fri & Sat 7pm
Sun 5pm
Mon & Tue 7pm

Join us after the show on Mon 9 Feb for a Q&A session.
Hear directly from the artists and creators of the work.

Performed in French, Tamil and English with English surtitles

- ↗ Auslan performance Mon 9 Feb
- ↗ Tactile tour and audio described performance Tue 10 Feb

This show contains depictions of psychological and physical violence as well as references to suicide.

Suitable for ages 14+

Synopsis

London, 2025. The Princess of England announces her engagement. Our story begins when representatives of her Highness contact a venerable French fashion house located at number 8, rue du marché Saint-Honoré in Paris, to place an order for a wedding gown.

The show follows the making of the royal commission, as it passes from expert hand to expert hand. Over eight months, and the equivalent of 9,057 work hours, we see the creative acts that bring into being a dress already destined to go down in history. This is a rare privilege, as the whole process is bound by the strictest codes of confidentiality. If the world of high fashion is habitually secretive, the nature of the commission has put everyone on red alert.





From a Parisian house of haute couture, we venture to an embroidery workshop in Mumbai and a traditional lace-making workshop in Alençon, France.

Three worlds, linked by their work and a high level of expertise and secrecy.

Three workshops where violence will erupt among the threads of cotton and flax.

Three workshops where the bodies of men and women have been ruined not only by labour, but also by past wrongs of which they are the unwitting, even unknowing, custodians.

Without ever losing sight of the expertise these craftsmen and women wield, or the power and knowledge they have in their hands, the question the show will ask, over and over, is if there is a space, in the silence the secret imposes, between what destroys us and what preserves us?

A note from Caroline Guiela Nguyen

My intuition from the outset was that I wanted to talk about secrets. At the same time, I discovered the work of Rieko Koga, an artist who hand sews sentences onto fabric. I was struck by one of her works, where she sewed on linen the lines: 'According to an old Japanese belief that I still hold, stitches have magical powers. The clothes my mother made for me when I was a little girl always covered me with her great love. And the stitches on the back protected me from anxiety and fear.'

One thing led to another, and I arrived at something almost akin to the world of fairy tales – what if all the characters were connected to the story of how a dress was made?

I went even further, thinking that the subject would be that everyone who comes into contact with this dress will, in a way, be touched by a curse.

Today, I feel that everything has led me to sewing and later to haute couture, which is truly a world of secrets.

From there, I could build my narrative – or rather my narratives, because I always work with a chorus, a plurality of stories that intertwine and resonate with each other.

Caroline Guiela Nguyen













Credits

Writer & Director
Caroline Guiela Nguyen

English & Tamil translation
Nadia Bourgeois, Carl Holland, Rajarajeswari Parisot

Cast
Dan Artus, Dinah Bellity, Natasha Cashman, Charles Vinoth Irudhayaraj, Anaele Jan Kerguistel, Maud Le Grevellec, Liliane Lipau, Nanii (alternating with Aurore Medjeber & Paola Secret), Rajarajeswari Parisot, Vasanth Selvam
On video
Nadia Bourgeois, Charles Schera, Fleur Sulmont
With the voices of
Louise Marcia Blévins, Béatrice Dedieu, David Geselson, Jessica Savage-Hanford, Maya S Krishnan

Artistic Collaborator
Paola Secret
Set Designer
Alice Duchange
Costume & High Fashion Pieces Designer
Benjamin Moreau
Lighting
Mathilde Chamoux & Jérémie Papin
Sound
Antoine Richard in collaboration with Thibaut Farineau
Music
Jean-Baptiste Cognet, Teddy Gauliat-Pitois, Antoine Richard
Video
Jérémie Scheidler
Motion Designer
Marina Masquelier

Hairstyles, hairpieces & makeup
Émilie Vuez
Casting
Lola Diane
Technical Directors
Stéphane Descombes & Xavier Lazarini
Dramaturgy Trainees
Louison Ryser & Tristan Schinz (TnS drama school students, dramaturgy section, Groupe 48)
Directing Trainee
Iris Baldoureaux-Fredon
Sound Trainee
Ella Bellone
Dramaturgy Assistant
Hugo Soubise
Artistic Consultants
Juliette Alexandre, Noémie de Lapparent
Recorded music
Quadar Adastra-quatuor à cordes
Surtitling
Panthéa

Stage Managers
Fabrice Henches & Abdelkarim Rochdi
Sound Technician
Lola Etiève
Video Technician
Marion Comte
Lighting Technicians
Thibault D'Aubert & Valérie Marti
Dresser
Bénédicte Foki
Subtitles Operator
Philippe Suss
Assistant Director
Julien Fiscera
Producer
Isabelle Nougier & Dorine Blaise
Artistic Consultants
Juliette Alexandre & Noémie de Lapparent



Auslan Interpreters
Tahlicia Osei-poku & Christy Filipich

Set, costumes and embroideries have been made in-house by the Théâtre national de Strasbourg workshops.

Produced by
Théâtre national de Strasbourg
Co-produced by
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Images
Jean-Louis Fernandez



Image: ©Smith

About Caroline Guiela Nguyen

Caroline is an author and director for both the stage and the screen. After starting out as a sociology student, she joined Théâtre national de Strasbourg (TnS) drama school and then, immediately after graduating in 2009, founded her own theatre company, Les Hommes Approximatifs. Its work centres bodies and histories that the theatre has paid little attention to, creating ambitious fictional tales in collaboration with both professional and non-professional actors who have emerged during extended periods of research. Guided by her dual belief in the inherent power of fiction and the need to depict the world in its material reality, Caroline begins each new creation with a period of writing, immersing herself in places that capture the pressing problems of our time, in contact with those she calls 'experts in realities'. Project after project, with the other long-standing members of the company: Alice Duchange (set designer), Benjamin Moreau (costume designer), Jérémie Papin (lighting designer), Antoine Richard (sound designer), Paola Secret (assistant director) and Jérémie Scheidler (dramaturg and videographer), Caroline has crafted an aesthetic and a research into new forms that leave an indelible print on their productions.

In 2011 Caroline and her company created *Se souvenir de Violetta* at the Comédie de Valence Theatre, followed by *Ses Mains* (2012), *Le Bal d'Emma* (2013), *Elle brûle* (2013) and *Le Chagrin* (2015). From 2013 onwards her shows toured throughout France. In 2015 she began a collaboration with the directors of Arles' high-security prison to create performances with a troupe of inmates. In 2020 she shot her first film, *Les Engloutis*, inside the walls of the prison. In 2016, with Alexandre Plank and Antoine Richard, she made a radio play for France Culture as part of their Radiodrama series called *Le Chagrin (Julie et Vincent)*. The same year she devised a show to be performed directly in people's homes, which toured different cities, including Paris, Rennes and New York.

In 2017 Caroline made *SAIGON*, first presented at the Comédie de Valence Theatre's annual festival, Ambivalence(s), before transferring to the 71st Festival of Avignon. Still touring regularly today, the show has been performed in more than 15 countries. For the 75th Avignon Festival, she made *FRATERNITÉ, Conte fantastique*, performing throughout France and Europe for a total of more than 130 representations. Upon invitation by the Schaubühne in Berlin to make an original production with the actors of their permanent troupe she wrote *KINDHEITSARCHIVE*, a fiction weaving different stories of adoption as told in an international agency for the protection of children, which she first staged in October of 2022. In 2023, with the active participation of Aurélie Charon, she released *Un théâtre cardiaque* published by Actes Sud and began rehearsals for her next project, *LACRIMA*. It premiered at the Wiener Festwochen in Austria and was then presented at the Festival d'Avignon in July. The show was a huge success and was quickly scheduled by venues in France and around the world.

Caroline has been an associate member of theatres that mark the journey she and her productions have taken. Today she is an associate artist at the Théâtre national de Bretagne (Rennes) and the Schaubühne (Berlin) and a master-teacher at the Théâtre de Liège. In September 2023 she officially took over as Director of TnS and its drama school.

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