



For immediate release

Leading European Theatres Embark on ‘Doughnut-Shaped’ Sustainable Transformation

STAGES, a multi-million-euro collaboration between 14 theatre partners, will test experimental solutions to the biggest challenges posed by the climate crisis: the carbon impact of international touring; the social and financial transformations required in theatres; and the importance of including scientists and local audiences in the artistic process.

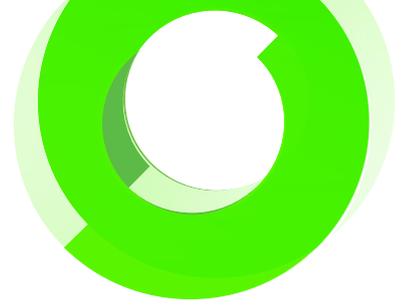
STAGES will launch with a conference-debate during the Festival d’Avignon on Friday 15 July. [More informationa below](#)

A group of leading theatre organisations in Europe have embarked on perhaps the most ambitious sustainability experiment in culture to date.

STAGES - Sustainable Theatre Alliance for a Green Environmental Shift, which has just been supported with 2 million Euros in co-funding from the European Union, will see 14 influential partners (full list below) spend the next four years testing radical solutions to the biggest challenges posed by the climate crisis.

These include:

- **The carbon impact of international touring:** Partners will tour urgent new performances on the climate crisis around Europe -- and as far as Taiwan -- without moving any people or items
- **Long- and short-term sustainable transformation:** A new auto-analysis process, based on the holistic understanding of sustainability in the Doughnut Economics concept, will identify key areas for change in



each partner's theatre buildings -- and even on themes such as costume design, audience travel and work-life balance

- **Dreaming of new creative processes:** An annual series of participatory Forum events and workshops will bring together artists, scientists and audiences to dream of 'desirable futures'.

The project comes as theatres urgently require new ways to become resilient and inclusive after two years of the pandemic and recognise the clear need to make up for lost time in implementing the 17 UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Doughnut-shaped transformation

STAGES builds on work by Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, one of the 14 STAGES partners, which has spent several years examining the possibility of using the 'Doughnut Economics' concept – which creates a framework for humanity to thrive, while also saving the planet – in the theatre-making process.

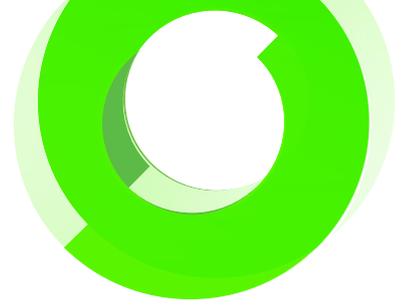
The theatre had previously teamed up with British director Katie Mitchell and French choreographer Jérôme Bel to test the radical possibility of creating a show about the climate crisis and staging it in Lausanne, without having any artists travel anywhere. Both artists had made high-profile pledges to no longer travel by plane.

At the same time, Vidy-Lausanne turned the Doughnut Economics ideas into an auto-analysis process for theatre, in partnership with the Competence Centre in Sustainability at the University of Lausanne.

The STAGES partners have now taken both elements of this process and will scale them up across Europe, connecting with partners in academia and a leading European theatre network to shift how theatres and audiences engage with the concept of sustainability.

The full list of partners:

- **Théâtre de Liège** (Belgium)
- **MC93 — Maison de la Culture de Seine-Saint-Denis** (France)



- **Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb** (Croatia)
- **The Royal Dramatic Theatre, Dramaten, Stockholm** (Sweden)
- **Lithuanian National Drama Theatre** (Lithuania)
- **Piccolo Teatro di Milano – Teatro d’Europa** (Italia)
- **Trafó House of Contemporary Arts** (Hungary)
- **Teatro Nacional D. Maria II** (Portugal)
- **NTGent** (Belgium)
- **Maribor Slovene National Theatre - Slovensko narodno gledališče Maribor** (Slovenia)
- **Riga Technical University - University of Latvia** (Latvia)
- **European Theatre Convention** (Germany)
- **Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne** (Switzerland)
- **National Theater & Concert Hall** (Taiwan).

Two new performances

The STAGES partners commit to re-thinking touring processes by re-staging the two performances created by Mitchell and Bel for Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, using local casts, local sets, and even electricity generated on-stage. They are:

- **A Play for the Living in a Time of Extinction** - a purposeful eco-feminist monologue by Miranda Rose Hall which reflects on our responsibilities and means of action in the face of ecological disaster.
Directed by Katie Mitchell
- **Jérôme Bel** - An auto-bio-choreo-graphy that could have been subtitled: "dancing, from AIDS to the climate crisis". By Jérôme Bel

[See upcoming performance dates.](#)

The process begins from the same script, shared among the partners, which comes with added directions and footnotes. Some of the casting, text or music elements are required, while some are open for local adaptations. Each local creative team can make use of the advice and resources (on topics such as using energy generated on stages) during their own re-staging.



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Auto-analysis

The first year of the STAGES project will also see partners undergo a deep and holistic analysis process of their entire activity, using the newly-adapted doughnut process.

They will set out a snapshot of where they stand on issues such as audience and staff travel to the theatre, accessibility (physical and financial) to their performances, the food they offer, the work-life balance among staff, the political positions taken by the theatre, the ethics of sponsorship, and many others, setting out targets and obstacles.

The results of this auto analysis period will be collected and disseminated across Europe to highlight the commonly identified areas – and obstacles – to change. The auto-analysis tool will also be shared for the wider European theatre sector to use in 2023.

Annual Forum events

The STAGES project encourages partners to develop collaborations between artists, scientists and audiences in participatory spaces for reflection and discussion on ‘possible and desirable futures.’

These will take the form of a series of annual ‘Forum’ events.

The events will be a laboratory for reflection and artistic experimentation for a future in transition. The first Forum will be titled 'Despair is too easy', hosted by Theatre de Liege and NTGent in November 2022. The next topics will be on Creation and Production, then on Circulation and Diffusion.

Solidarity with Trafó

STAGES partners have also been able to use their influence and Cross-European connections to express solidarity with Trafó, the project’s



Hungarian theatre partner, through a period of immense financial difficulty.

The theatre kept all of its funds in a bank that changed ownership in the 2010s and became Russian-owned. As a result of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the bank was suspended and Trafó was completely cut off from its resources.

To provide the funds needed to continue participating in STAGES -- and to remain a key part of a vital cross-Europe collaboration project -- half of STAGES partners have agreed to share a section of their project funds with Trafó. This solidarity will allow the theatre to produce the adaptation of the play Jérôme Bel, also co-produce an additional show in the second half of the project.

Speaking about STAGES, Serge Rangoni, Artistic Director and General Manager of Theatre de Liège, lead partner on the project, said:

“STAGES has a focus on social and environmental sustainability which is especially relevant for theatres in the context of the Covid19 pandemic, as institutions across the continent seek new ways to be resilient and to re-establish a relationship with audiences that have lived through immense social challenges.

“It also attempts to answer a difficult question: Is it possible for theatres to continue their essential face-to-face work with audiences around the globe — without further increasing the burden on the earth? And at the same time, can the wide-reaching power of culture be used to amplify the ambition, creativity and ingenuity displayed during the STAGES journey to change the way everyone interacts with sustainability?”

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