

DOSSIER

# STONOI



## STARTING POINT

The central focus of the project is to research on how the body language can relate, act and play with stones, boulders, pebbles and gravel.

Stone as a circus tool, an object to manipulate and balance.

Stone as a material in itself, a symbol of the bond with earth, and of introspection.

Stone is a living metaphor for the infinite flow of time and carries with it the memory of millions of years.

The central theme of the work will be memory. The stones of the future will conceal the memory of what we are now. What traces will we leave fossilised in the geological strata and how will these be interpreted in the distant future, when our society will be forgotten?



**Stonoj** means stones in Esperanto. The aim of the creation process is to use stones collected from many different and distant places to create a “geological Esperanto”, an image of the great diversity of places and peoples, while also looking for commonalities and similarities (on a morphological and intellectual level).

Piedmontese stones balanced on Romanian stones, Belgian sand covering Irish boulders, gravel collected in a Spanish churchyard on pebbles from a Croatian mountain river.





## NOTE OF INTENT

The vital and indispensable relationship that the contemporary circus artist has with the object is fundamental to understand this project: going beyond the classic circus discipline and leaving one's own fetish/circus equipment at home, connoted and recognisable (a ball, a trapeze), is a fundamental step towards freeing the circus from its aura of light entertainment.

I have always pursued a poetic approach based on the close relationship between acrobatic and apparatus, through which metaphors flourish, and a narrative that is comprehensible to all, however evocative.

The primary difficulty of the circus that wants to narrate is that of integrating an object into a narrative context: if, for example, I want to talk about war, how can I do so with a large white sphere, which immediately alludes to a certain type of performance? The answer, which the circus performer often gives himself, is to evoke or construct nonsense, with the frequently frustrating result of not really getting to the point, recalling some idea without being able to clarify it, as an actor might do with a good text.

The answer, at this point in my journey, is to abandon the circus apparatus, replacing it with a recognisable object that does not directly evoke the show and the performance, and through balancing and manipulation - my primary specialities - to devise a new language with archaic objects that cannot be traced back to circus imagery.

The aim of this artistic journey is to create a true camouflage of technical exploits, the purpose not being the demonstration of any skill or feat.

A piece of writing that integrates different genres and styles to become complete: the impossible figure, the magic and the challenge to gravity must be natural extensions of a narrative.

It is also crucial for me to create something in complete (scenic) solitude.

Throughout my career, collective and shared creation has been an integral part of my work; I think the time has come to try to lose myself. Of course, this does not preclude the creation of a creative team that can help me from the outside to get where I dream of going.



My artistic aim, which I have been pursuing for years, is to merge languages, to succeed in composing an extra-ordinary body with a physical language from another world, in which the traits of circus, dance or theatre are no longer recognisable because the boundaries have been made fluid. After 10 years of experimentation with contemporary circus, I aspire to refine this type of research, placing even more emphasis on the construction of a single score composed of balance, dance, object manipulation and physical acrobatic theatre. In addition to using these languages, which are already part of my path, I would like to experiment with staging a new discipline: stone balancing, which was born and developed as a form of meditation that is not linked to performance *tout court*. The challenge is to find an artistic method that can mediate between a practice conceived to meditate, to engage you with long, a-rhythmical times, and confront it with the adrenaline and extremely rhythmmed time of the stage.

## DRAMATURGICAL CUES



### 4150 AD

A lone man, the only survivor of an unpredictable human group, genetically adapted to a desert, arid and rocky world, wanders aimlessly in a post environmental crisis world.

The viewer watches, as if a documentary were running before his eyes or as if they were witnessing the first images of an unknown world.

A wild human being in the wild itself, with no recognisable codes and languages to relate with, a transfigured body inhabiting his world. He has with him few objects found while digging, a wheelbarrow, a bucket, a watering can, objects that he carries with him, perhaps fetishes of an old world, useful survival tools, or both.

He feeds on stone, sleeps on boulders, writes in the sand, washes himself with gravel, reads in pebbles, talks to the rocks, looks for gems and fossils to find his forgotten origins.

How will he interpret the signs left by our culture? How does he live in this lithic world?



I think it is more topical than ever to imagine a future of desolation in which the environment will no longer be hospitable, in this era of imminent and possible climate disaster. The best way to get to know each other and to understand our current specificity is to try to look at ourselves from the outside, in the same way as someone who finds him or herself spending a certain period in a foreign country or place, re-evaluating his or her country of origin having been provided the chance (or having been forced) to look at it with new, detached eyes. The idea of finding relics of our present-day villainy 3000 years later is an attempt to reinterpret ourselves and to look at ourselves as if we were our future, direct descendants.

What is a smartphone in a deserted and uninhabited world?

What does a Coke taste like when water becomes a very rare commodity?

## BIOGRAPHY



Graduated in 2006 from the circus school FLIC in Turin and in 2009 from ESAC in Brussels in "sphere of balance and juggling", Alessandro is a child of Roberto Magro's method on the circus actor. In 2010, with *Dieu me doit des explications*, he won the audience prize at the Pistes de Lancement festival in Brussels.

In 2011 he joined the project of Espace Catastrophe in Brussels, *Complicité*, in which professional artists meet young people with mental disabilities. His talent emerged together with Maxime Pythoud with whom he founded the Cie Circoncentrique, debuting with *Respire* (more than 400 performances worldwide) now in its eleventh year of touring. Co-founder of the circus MagdaClan, with whom he created: *Magda Cabaret*, *ERA*, *Sonetto per un clown*, *Extra\_Vagante*, *È un Attimo*, *Sic Transit* and, as director, *Masnada*.

He follows several projects as artistic consultant or director, including: *193 Problemi - Laden Classe*, *Piani in Bilico - Quattro4*, *Emisfero - MagdaClan Circo*, *Tre piccioni con una favola - Cieocifa*. In 2016, within the *Census Circo Italia*, Alessandro is in fourth place as a circus reference model for the companies interviewed. He holds courses and workshops on the creative and narrative research of the circus actor; his stage *La Grammatica della Fantasia Circense*, inspired by Gianni Rodari is regularly brought to FLIC and Vertigo Circus schools and many other contexts. He is currently artistic and organisational co-director of the contemporary circus festival in Monferrato, *Mon Circo*.



## TIMETABLE AND OBJECTIVES



**Autumn 2021:** First phase of research and study with stones, travel in search of stones from different places.

**Winter 2022:** Conception of sets and continuation of research and study

**Spring 2022:** Artistic residencies in different countries to start the writing process

**Summer 2022:** Work in progress and first rehearsals in front of an audience

**Autumn/winter 2022 or early 2023:** **STONOJ premeire**, Approx. 1 hour performance for the hall/stage

**Summer 2023: STONOJ INVASION** Site-specific/land art performance.

A performance adaptable to stone-rich places (mountains, rivers, rocky beaches, plateaus) or to urban spaces.

The starting point is always the Stonoj performance, but this will be adapted to the surrounding space and its characteristics, and will end by involving the public in a work of transformation of the space through stone balancing constructions.

Without interruptions of any kind, we will try to make the performance flow into an open-ended choral experience, in which everyone can experience what they have seen on stage.

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The basic idea is precisely that of creeping into spatial contexts that are unusual for a performance, mountains, the banks of lakes, rivers, deserts, wide open spaces. At the same time, I would like Stonoj Invasion to insert itself above all in urban contexts to propose their upheaval, with an invasion of stones and boulders to balance. The final imprint left by the installations will certainly have more impact on backgrounds where the human sign is totalising, a fusion between anthropomorphic and nature.

I imagine space as a place to be transformed through:

- The inversion of the natural position of the boulders in the space (if in a natural context rich in stones).
- The invasion of stones, boulders and pebbles in balance in an urban context that is daily devoid of natural elements.

**Stonoj Invasion** has the ultimate goal of leaving in the designated scenic space, an ephemeral Land Art work that can remain for a few hours or days afterwards.