



# COCO

JULIEN DESPREZ

Coco is a performance piece that creates an all-inclusive world of rawness. Born of a dialogue between Brazilian folk traditions and experimental performance practice, Coco creates a bridge that joins traditional Samba dancing with noise music.

Questioning the line that separates the work of a musician from that of a dancer, Coco plays with notions of identity and dodges all aesthetic classification. At the crossroads of graphic design, choreography and sound art, Coco presents a world in perpetual reconstruction where everything jostles in proximity to everything else.



**Julien Desprez:** Guitar, Performance, Direction  
**Pauline Simon:** Performance  
**Clément Vercelletto:** Modular Synth, Performance  
**Julien Loutelier:** Percussion, Performance  
**Lucas Lagomarsino:** Performance  
**Ana Rita Téodoro:** Performance  
**Grégory Joubert:** Sound  
**Miléna Grange:** Technical Manager  
**Grégory Edelein:** Outside Eye  
**Bastien Mignot:** Outside Eye  
**Guillaume Marmin:** Lighting Design

# ARTIST'S STATEMENT

## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOUND AND MOVEMENT

Coco was born of an investigation into the relationship between sound and movement that was conducted during a two-week residency in Arcoverde (Pernambuco, Brazil) with the group Samba de Coco Raizes de Arcoverde, in December 2018. In this relationship, which intention comes first? The sonic, or the physical? Through this inquiry, each intention is imagined as template that can be made to shift from foreground to background.

By changing the hierarchy of these intention/templates, the dancer can become a musician and the musician a dancer. This opening is further explored by allowing each of the performers on stage to shift from one role, one template, to the other. Coco plays with what is seen, and what is identified.

## DIALOGUE BETWEEN FOLK AND EXPERIMENTAL PRACTICES

At the inception of Coco was the desire to bring into conversation radically different practices by "deterritorializing" the musical and choreographic gambits of Brazilian traditional dances within the context of experimental performance practice. Building on the results of Julien Desprez' residency in Brazil, Coco has created a sound score and choreography that displaces the musical and choreographic gambits of Samba de Coco, into a performance context permeated with intense noise music.

## SET DESIGN

The set is built around various instrument: guitars, effect pedals, modular synths, percussion – scattered in the space. The design binds sound to space and gives a choreographic intent to the musical form. The choreography will thus express both a musical and spatial idea that will have impact on the musical structure.

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## LIGHTING

The lighting apparatus was specially designed for Coco by Guillaume Marmin, and is comprised of powerful LED's which play with the persistence of vision. The effect of their blinding brightness can effectively cause performers to disappear and reappear in a new space, or new costume. This technique is used to instill a doubt in the perception of the audience as to what it is actually seeing, and to emphasize the indeterminacy of the performers. A separate score for the lighting creates a visual and graphic trajectory that instigates moments of instability in the perception of the stage and the performers. The lights also interact with the performers through a set of movement sensors and audio-reactive parameters.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE GROUND

Samba de Coco is a dance and music that is strongly anchored to the ground, taking support from it while striking it with wooden shoes. This relationship to the ground creates an intermediary position between the arts of movement and of sound. The performer is a dancer as well as a percussionist and occupies an indeterminate position between the two practices.

## WORK DANCE

Samba de Coco was a dance created in a work context. A hundred years ago, it began as a way to beat the earth flat where houses could be built. Gradually, it departed from its original purpose and began to be danced and played in village squares, where it became a musical and choreographic practice in its own right. Ever since its origins, it has been in constant evolution and change. With Coco, we present a new transformation, another path for its evolution, but in no way a copy. Coco uses the repetitive movements derived from the collective work of flattening the ground in order to create its choreography. The set design of Coco takes into account the impact of dance on matter. The set evolves as it is impacted by the dance during the performance.

## INDETERMINACY

Coco sets up a level of constant indeterminacy between the performers. By blurring the lines between sound and choreography, Coco explodes the limits of each performer's identity. Coco's project is to bring each individual, and each individual thing, back down to the level of the "Whatever" – which is to say a space in which there is no naming and no thing has a name, where the explosion of identity releases its multiplicity. Between the several resulting multiplicities, Coco goes about creating new connections, so that new relations of identity can rise back to the surface.

**"THE WHATEVER POSSESSES THE POWER OF INDETERMINACY IN WHICH EACH THING HAS ITS FOOTING."**

**"THE WHATEVER IS A THING THAT IS SUCH THAT NOTHING CAN PREVENT IT FROM BEING SOME THING."**

**"WHATEVER: THIS AS WELL AS THAT, SUCH THAT NO THING IS PREEMPTIVELY EXCLUDED."**

**CF TRISTAN GARCIA, "FORM AND OBJECT"**



## **TRANCE**

The trance generated by Coco is based on repetitive work-related gestures – repetitive gestures pushed to the point of absurdity that aim directly at altering the state of the performers. Through high contrasts and intense dynamics, this trance creates a state where anything is possible, and where anything can suddenly change.

## **BREACH/PARENTHESIS/HALLUCINATION**

Coco works off a trance-effect to create breaches, parentheses, hallucinations which are the abstract counterpart to the concrete practices the Samba de Coco. A hallucinatory extrapolation of the Samba de Coco's relationship to time, to the ground, rhythm, repetition, organization – combined with the shifting identity of the performers.

## **GROUP**

Coco investigates the notion and working of the group. By seeking to make it function both as a unified whole and as an array of independent cells, Coco foregrounds the individual and collective contradictions inherent to the interactions of a group of people.

## **THE WOODEN TAP SHOE/THE CLOG**

The wooden clog, or tap shoe, is used by most working classes, proletarian and slave classes around the world. It connects communities that are otherwise unrelated. The word sabotage, comes from the French word for clog, sabot (the first act of sabotage in a factory was done by sticking a wooden clog into a machine), tamanco in Portuguese. Coco studies how the wooden clog has come to connect a commonality of resistance between various oppressed peoples. Clogs were also used by workers in some factories to drown out the boss' speeches, as well as by certain colonized slave communities. Coco imagines wooden shoes of all kinds, taps or clogs, as a connection between various oppressed, proletarian and slave communities throughout the world. Coco thereby seeks to create new mappings of the world that challenge the colonial mindset and its hetero and ethno centering on the white man. "The world is the only thing you cannot escape." Tristan Garcia



## **INSPIRATIONS FOR THE PROJECT**

### **• BOOKS**

**« NOUS » TRISTAN GARCIA, ÉDITIONS GRASSET**  
**« LA VIE INTENSE, UNE OBSESSION MODERNE » TRISTAN GARCIA, ÉDITIONS**  
**AUTREMENT « LE PLI », GILLES DELEUZE, ÉDITIONS DE MINUIT**  
**« THÉORIE QUEER ET CULTURES POPULAIRES: DE FOUCAULT À CRONENBERG »**  
**TERESA DE LAURETIS, ÉDITIONS LA DISPUTE.**

### **• MUSIC**

**ARTO LINDSAY**  
**GAETANO**  
**GRUPO DE SAMBA DI COCO RAIZES DE ARCOVERDE JOAO GILBERTO**  
**MERZBOW**  
**RYOJI IKEDA**  
**DEERHOOF**

### **• DANCE**

**GISÈLE VIENNE, XAVIER LEROY, JEROME BEL, BORIS CHARMATZ, TRISHA**  
**BROWN**

# STATEMENT OF INTENT REGARDING LIGHTING

**THE LIGHTING PLOT, COMPRISED OF 24 LED BARS WITH A VERY LARGE RANGE OF LUMINOSITY, IS DESIGNED TO OBTAIN A QUICK AND SHARP LIGHT, TO BE ADAPTABLE TO MANY DIFFERENT STAGE TYPES, AND TO BE EASILY TRANSPORTABLE.**

## HEAT AND INDEPENDENCE OF LIGHTS

The lighting colors used are variations of heat around electric white. This raw, sharp white color enables us to treat light as a material to be sculpted. The use of light in Coco is twofold:

- It lights the performers on stage.
- It occupies an equal place to that of the performers, in that it follows its own independent graphic score and is treated as a luminous sculpture.

The conception of Coco aims to put performance, movement, light and sound all on the same plane, and to keep Coco equidistant from such formats as the concert, dance performance, art or video installation. Being none of these, Coco is a mesh of them all.

## PERSISTENCE OF VISION

“Retinal persistence, or the persistence of vision, is a phenomenon attributing to the eye the persistence of an image on the retina for 1/25 of a second. According to the Ferry-Porter law, the critical threshold for flicker fusion is the frequency at which a discontinuous visual stimulus is perceived as entirely continuous.”

In other words, it is possible to play upon the perception of the spectator by increasing or decreasing the number of images per second that the eye perceives.

Going from total darkness to extremely bright, the highly contrasted lighting apparatus is able to chop up reality and give it a new rhythm. Using light flashes to reduce the number of images perceived per second, the apparatus turns the stage into a living cinema.

Example: Each flash is followed by a return to darkness. At less than 16 frames/flashes per second, the movements of the performances begin to be perceived as discontinuous. With an even slower rhythm, for instance one frame/flash per second, the performers seem to vanish and reappear elsewhere on stage with every move.

## ADAPTABILITY

The set-up has been conceived to work on any type of stage, proscenium or circular. This technical flexibility and autonomy enables the performance to occur in a very wide range of houses, from theatres to places not dedicated for live performance, thus reaching diverse audiences. Working with LED light bars, the set-up is easy to move on stage. Using a simple system for hanging the bars, it is possible to create wide variation in the design and look of the lighting plot.

## TRANSPORTATION

The complete set-up is designed for touring. Split between two flight cases, it is light enough to travel by train or by plane. This facilitates the possibility of touring internationally.

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