

Welfare

BASED ON THE FILM BY **Frederick Wiseman**
DIRECTED BY **Julie Deliquet**



Centre dramatique
national
de Saint-Denis

DIRECTION
JULIE DELIQUET

CREATION 2023





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Julie Deliquet

Watch the video : meeting between Julie Deliquet and Frederick Wiseman - <https://youtu.be/xMZUjdGfa9E>

Welfare



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BASED ON THE FILM BY Frederick Wiseman

TRANSLATION Marie-Pierre Duhamel Muller

DIRECTOR Julie Deliquet

CREATION 2023

WITH
Julie André
Elaine Silver, SUPERVISOR

Astrid Bayiha
Mrs Turner, SOCIAL CLIENT, MOTHER OF FOUR CHILDREN, PREGNANT WITH THE FIFTH

Éric Charon
Larry Rivera, SOCIAL CLIENT, IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH ELZBIETA ZIMMERMAN

Salif Cissé
Jason Harris, SERGEANT

Aleksandra De Cizancourt
Elzbieta Zimmerman, POLISH SOCIAL CLIENT, IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH LARRY RIVERA AND MOTHER OF A CHILD

Evelyne Didi
Mrs Gaskin, SOCIAL CLIENT

Olivier Faliez
Noel Garcia, SOCIAL WORKER

Vincent Garanger
Mister Cooper, SOCIAL CLIENT

Zakariya Gouram
M. Hirsch, SOCIAL CLIENT

Nama Keita
Miss Gaskin, DAUGHTER OF MRS GASKIN

Mexianu Medenou
Lenny Fox, SOCIAL CLIENT

Marie Payen
Valerie Johnson, SOCIAL CLIENT

David Seigneur
Sam Ross, SUPERVISOR

Agnès Ramy
Roz Bates, SOCIAL WORKER

ET LE MUSICIEN
Thibault Perriard
John Sullivan, MUSICIAN

STAGE VERSION **Julie André, Julie Deliquet, Florence Seyvos**

ARTISTIC COLLABORATION **Anne Barbot, Pascale Fournier**

SET DESIGN **Julie Deliquet, Zoé Pautet**

LIGHT **Vyara Stefanova**

LIVE MUSIC **Thibault Perriard**

COSTUMES **Julie Scobeltzine**

PUPPET DESIGNER **Carole Allemand**

SET CONSTRUCTION **François Sallé, Bertrand Sombsthay, Wilfrid Dulouart, Frédéric Gillmann, Anouk Savoy** - ATELIERS DU THÉÂTRE GÉRARD PHILIPPE, NATIONAL CENTER FOR DRAMATIC ARTS OF SAINT-DENIS

SEAMSTRESS **Marion Duvinage**

GENERAL MANAGEMENT **Pascal Gallepe**

STAGE MANAGEMENT **Bertrand Sombsthay**

LIGHT MANAGEMENT **Jean-Gabriel Valot**

SOUND MANAGEMENT **Pierre de Cintaz**

DRESSER **Nelly Geyres**

Zipporah Films is the official distributor of Wiseman's work

PRODUCTION Théâtre Gérard Philipe, national center for dramatic arts of Saint-Denis.

COPRODUCTION Avignon Festival (2023 edition) ; Comédie - Reims national drama center ; Théâtre Dijon-Bourgogne - national drama center ; Comédie de Genève ; La Coursive - National scene ; Le Quartz - Brest National scene ; Théâtre de l'Union - national drama center, L'Archipel - Perpignan National scene ; La Passerelle - Saint-Brieuc National scene ; Orléans national drama center - Centre-Val de Loire ; Célestins, Lyon Theatre ; Le cercle des partenaires.

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KING'S FOUNTAIN



The artistic and cultural activities in Seine-Saint-Denis are supported by Vivendi Create Joy.



ESTIMATED DURATION 2h30

Frederick Wiseman about stage adaptation

Julie Deliquet and I have the same interests. Julie a theater director loves movies and I, a filmmaker, love the theatre. I am thrilled that Julie wants to make a play from my film *Welfare*. I have wanted someone to adapt *Welfare* for a long time. I think the play contains all the elements of good theatre.

The encounters between the welfare workers and the clients and the separate conversations between workers and among the clients are sad, funny, strange and dramatic. The world which exists in a welfare center is not one which most middle and upper class people know anything about. Yet the problems of the clients are only extreme examples of common experience compounded by the absence of work and money and/or the physical or mental incapacity of some people, to properly care for themselves.

The world of the Welfare Center is a distorted mirror of everyday experience. We see and hear the consequences of the inability to work, eat properly, live in decent housing, care for children or the elderly, get and keep jobs or seek education. The play will dramatize the social and governmental consequences of some human beings who because they suffer from physical or mental illness cannot successfully function in the world The film does and the play will raise questions about the role of the State in providing assistance for those incapable, permanently or temporarily, to be responsible for their own lives.

The literal encounters and exchanges in the film raise implicitly and indirectly many of the abstract questions about the social contract and the role of government, the state, to provide and help those who for many and complex reasons cannot care for themselves.

I think it is one of the functions of good theatre to deal with these questions in a non didactic form which nevertheless provides understanding of the way people live and the role (if any) of the State in offering assistance and the forms that assistance might take.

I believe the adaptation of *Welfare* by Julie Deliquet will make dramatic and stimulating theatre.

My meeting with Frederick Wiseman about the "theater of daily life"



welfare

Frederick Wiseman, world famous American documentary filmmaker – who has received an Academy Honorary Award and Golden Lion for his lifetime achievement – contacted me at the beginning of 2020. He told me that since he shot *Welfare*, his ninth film, in 1973, he has always thought it would be interesting to make a play out of it, which has never been done.

When he saw my stage productions at the Odéon, the Comédie-Française and the TGP in Saint-Denis, he immediately thought that the project might interest me. As a filmmaker, he pictures himself as passionate about theater and knows that, as a stage director, I am passionate about cinema...

So I watched *Welfare* for the first time, found it hard-hitting and came out stunned. The documentary shows women and men, through the portrait of an institution, a social assistance center in the 1970s New York, illustrating the bewildering diversity of social problems.

Frederick Wiseman chooses a defined space to film his occupants and the rituals that take place there. The social workers and the clients are struggling at the heart of the laws and regulations that govern their work and life.

The place becomes a geographical, collective and eminently theatrical setting, where we observe and try to understand how the order is established, how it is resisted, how violence is formalized, how the transmission takes place and how democratic life is staged and played out in action.

Since I have been directing, the notion of community, democracy and collective obsesses me, inspires me, questions me and makes me create. By choosing to adapt a new social epic, I am continuing my work about how to live together, the collective horizon with a committed work that faces up to social reality without any miserabilism : it depicts America as a country of immigrants which must carry the torch of this diversity.

When I took the helm as a director of the Théâtre Gérard Philipe, national center for dramatic arts of Saint-Denis, in March 2020, my first gesture was to close it due to the first lockdown. In Saint-Denis, this period has reminded all of us that we can do nothing alone. The pandemic demonstrated well how our solidarity and collective intelligence to respond to the problems of the territory were extraordinary : in the hospitals, in the schools, in the community and social centers...

- We act like savages. This is how this country was built.

- We are all savages?

- All. Blacks, Whites, Blues, Greens... We are all savages.

Welfare

Adapting a documentary about the institution : mix reality and illusion

With *Welfare*, this is the fourth time that I have had the desire to adapt a cinematographic work for the stage. But it is the first time that a filmmaker has approached me and that I commit to such complicity, which is a rare chance. It is also the first time that I turn to a documentary.

I don't make a difference in my work between a screenplay and a play, but I always choose scenarios that call me to the theater by the force of their dialogues. Orality is what I like.

In 2019, I made *Violetta* with the Paris Opera, a film at the crossroads between documentary and fiction on two major institutions : the Gustave Roussy hospital in Villejuif (Europe's largest oncology center) and the Opera Bastille. I filmed the spaces, the abundance of trades, these people at work or following a protocol, concentrated on only one thing : life for one and the illusion of life for the other.

*According to you,
what is the function
of a documentary :
information,
archiving,
denunciation, social
change?*

Frederick Wiseman
*All of these at the
same time. I am
doing documentary
because it's fun
for me, because I
find it interesting.
It's a way to look
at the world. I like
the work, I like
watching the people,
I like to think about
everything I see.*



Wiseman defends the idea that, in a documentary, everything is fiction, based on unwritten events. *Welfare* is a film, an artifice, a dramatic structure which can easily slide towards the theater. The audience perceives things through the filter of the production and, therefore, very differently from seeing it through the human eye.

In the theater that I tend to defend, I'm not interested in representing a filterless reality. In my work, I want to cross the fourth wall, crossing the fantasy to regain a foothold on reality. I see theatrical illusion as the passage and freedom to go from one world to the other. By transposing the screenplay for the theater, it will change, cross half a century of history, move from real-life to fictional actors, cross the Atlantic and borders, go from an American documentary filmmaker to a French theater director : Wiseman handed me his work, his times, his nation. It's up to me to carry the torch and ensure that these marginal heroes are recognized on the French stage today, in a world-in-itself show, timeless, universal, collective, tragicomic and popular.

Fifty years after its creation, *Welfare* is still conveying fruitful political views. It is a work about those who have fallen, and those who are about to fall, who are "on the edge". It is the "exhausted" in front of the "tired". Each interview is a superhuman effort for the social clients as well as for the social workers. The team leaders juggle with the lack of personnel as the caregivers do today in our public hospitals...

**Meanings
of welfare**
*well-being,
benefits,
happiness,
wealth
social services*



Abstract

A particular day

December 1973, New-York, a day, from the opening to the closing time of an emergency service of a welfare center hosted in a school sports hall for the Christmas holiday. In this public refuge designed for childhood, they wait their turn... The homeless, the stateless, workers, single mothers, immigrants, and destitute people follow one another.

Hours pass, the social workers prepare a solidarity canteen and a connection happen. A world of resistance comes to life. On this marginal island, time and borders no longer exist, only humans are collectively in action. This land of asylum shelters a world that is invented with each story. The truth and the false only make light of each other and this human comedy becomes the display of a theater of the absurd where women and men fight with strength and courage for the refoundation of a democracy.



The scenic version



welfare

A BALZACIAN, RENOIRIAN, BECKETTIAN HUMAN COMEDY...

Welfare is the story of a place, a collective place : the place of talking where tragedy and comedy are constantly mixed. Wiseman, like Balzac and Renoir, does sociological work on the human condition, the mental condition, the complexity of life : a biology of the human being where a madmen theater is played out like in Shakespeare or in Cassavetes... It depicts the natural history of our ordinary lives. Wiseman, like Beckett, puts into experience human beings who wait together. The purpose of the waiting has less value than the waiting itself, in what it says about human beings, their flaws, their deficiencies, but also their resources for living against all odds. The play appears then as a machine to ask questions, a philosophical machine which says that it is through individuals that we can think the community and try to understand the immensity that surrounds us, the time that goes by and our place in society.



In my opinion, there are things that are quite comical in a lot of my films - I hope so ! It's not because I make distortions, because I change the events, but it is because in life there are comical things and as a documentary filmmaker, I find them and that interests me. Comedy is an aspect of everyday life, like the tragedy !

Frederick Wiseman

FROM THE DOCUMENTARY DIALOGUES TO THE STAGE : DEMOCRACY WITHOUT THE RIGHT WORDS DOES NOT EXIST !

The adaptation begins upstream of the rehearsals, and with four heads : Marie-Pierre Duhamel Muller, translator, Florence Seyvos, screenwriter and writer, Julie André, actress and artistic collaborator, and myself, Julie Deliquet, director and scenographer.

Marie-Pierre is responsible for the language, Florence for the dialogues and the dramatic composition, Julie for the actors and the transformation in a play, and I take care of the stage transposition, especially the development of the sets, which is done in parallel. We have already worked on these same bases for the adaptations of *Fanny and Alexandre* (Bergman) and *Eight Hours Don't Make a Day* (Fassbinder). This collective organization aims to create a real theatrical version out of the original work.

The documentary is based on real events, but the way these events are framed, recorded and edited is totally built. Each scene is then scrupulously studied according to its architecture, then a deconstruction of the general framework takes place, followed by a phase of rebuilding by breaking the isolation of the sequences and reconstructing an overall structure. This new set-up phase aims to represent the work by illuminating it according to previously unseen lights. Our focus is that the filmmaker's work is never misrepresented, nor is it "imitated". We keep the lines of the original work, while taking into account that our theatrical directing tools are not the same as the ones used by the cinema.

Welfare was made in four intensive weeks of filming, ten hours a day, five days a week. As a master of the sequence-shot, Wiseman offers a plentiful dialogue and grants great importance to speech. Moreover, during the shooting, he is the one holding the microphone and recording the sound. Our goal is based on the desire to remain faithful to him while giving pride of place to the actors, and the staging that will capture this material to bring it back to life in a new skin.

The permanent issue of the play is the refoundation of a democracy. It is a work about "speaking". Maintaining an exchange can sometimes go as far as exasperation, so that "speaking" becomes "doing": speech is an action! To make a citizen emerge is the goal of each conversation.

Extract

- He's coming. Wait there.

- All right, why not... I'll wait. I've been waiting 124 days since I left hospital. I'm waiting for something. Godot? In the story, Godot never came. I'm waiting for something that will never come. Fairness, justice. Justice... in our great democratic society where all men are equal before the law. Lincoln said that all men were equal. Lincoln never passed before a draft board. What is equality ? There are those who have and those who do not have. And the one who has not tried to rob the one who has, while the one who has tries to keep what he has. There is nothing in the middle anymore. You have or you don't. There is no middle class anymore. There are the rich and the poor. Me, I am poor. More than this, I live in misery. And I don't like that. After 22 years of study, and 17 years serving this state, and incomes of \$22,000 per year when I worked. And my practice which brought me \$3,000 or \$4,000 per year. I spend 7 months and 8 days at the hospital, until September, and I'm declared unfit for work! I have to quit rather than being fired.

I'll wait. I've been waiting 124 days since I left hospital. I'm waiting for something. Godot? In the story, Godot never came. I'm waiting for something that will never come.

- Wait outside !

- In 11 days, I'm fired... after 17 years of work ! Shut my mouth! Why not ? You are the law, you are the master ! Everybody is a master, when you have nothing. Everybody is a boss when you're broke ! Things have to change, and fast! If nothing changes, within 15 years, in 1988, there will be no more United States of America. Nor anyone worth saving. Those worth saving will be elsewhere. And I'll be the first to go.

For 40 years and 7 months, God knows I'm trying to help. I can't do anything for me anymore, and even less for others. Who can you help with 11 cents ? 5 days! Lord, I don't know why ? You still don't want me to go away. You prevent me from doing what I want to do. I have to do what you want and suffer. Suffer for all those who have already left. If this is it that you want, so be it. Our agreement dates back from a long time ago, I will not slip away. If you give up, it's your business. I will stick to it until the end, no matter how long. And if you don't want me to eat, or sleep, or work, I won't do it.

If you want me to wander as we have done for 5,735 years, I will go on. I don't mind, you know. Even if there is not a single person in the wide world who listens to me, I will continue to wander until you decide where is my place. A place, a home, people, friends. It doesn't matter when. I've got plenty of time. Thank God I have enough patience, strength and understanding. Thank you.

If you want me to wander as we have done for 5,735 years, I will go on. I don't mind, you know. Even if there is not a single person in the wide world who listens to me, I will continue to wander until you decide where is my place.

The show and the scenography



welfare

" We are all born mad. Some remain so."

Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett

AN OPEN-SKY TERRITORY : ONCE THERE WAS A COUNTRY

The very theme of the documentary is its place, its welcoming land, these people together. By deciding to make a stage show of it, I have to find how this black and white story of 1970s portraits can be told collectively on a very large stage, today, in color. No way for me to compete with the directing axis of Wiseman, as close to the faces as possible, without artifice and without effects. I therefore need to find another angle for this stage version. A space that I want to enlarge, move and "zoom out" in order to give it the dimension of world-in-itself, a world-theater.



A HOME IN THE HEART OF THE COLD CITY

On stage, a 1970s school gymnasium serves as a temporary shelter for an emergency service of a social center. This space, too big for people, can make you think of a voting office or a vaccination center, an emergency shelter or a community canteen. You line up democratically, wait your turn. Makeshift partitions create a universe that is both realistic and surreal in its anarchic dimension of a totally rigged-up space. It's an airlock, a corridor between interior and exterior, between childhood and adulthood, between private life, family life and social life, between true and false, between testimony and imagination.

It is a collective space where private and work spheres play together without concealing the harshness of the characters social condition. The scenic space must bring into play a space where the individual shares his intimacy and his story with others despite himself. This multi-functional living room must be invented according to the rhythm of the different characters but also to the rhythm of this passing day. It takes care of each one, metamorphoses over time, warms up. At the very heart of this gymnasium, the challenges of the off-screen city meet, collide, come to words and defend themselves collectively.



HOUSING AND DECONSTRUCTION : ONIRISM AND REVERSAL OF PERSPECTIVES



welfare

Our characters inhabit wandering, they escape from the frame of society, they explode the family, the state and the borders. They are finally quite free in the harshness of what they live and the administration constantly wants to bring them back to their pigeonhole. I want to stage a virgin land, this gymnasium, where everything is yet to be invented and where our characters will be the first settlers.

Then, I want to break down these partitions in order to directly question the notion of norm : how we impose it on ourselves, how we attempt to enforce it or transgress it, how we apply it, how we submit to it, how we endure it in plain helplessness... The last phase of the show would therefore take place in a dreamlike setting that imagines the possibility of a life in harmony between communities by breaking down borders. In a way it constitutes a reversal of the initial observation of the separation and the opposition of national and geographical spaces, so as to suggest another way in which the imagination can be beneficial in the approach to reality, and operate a reversal capable of redefining our vision of the national space. An essentially marginal but revealing point of view, the point of view of our characters, marginal themselves, carrying a heterodox and innovative vision. An isolated community but part of our contemporary history who suggests that we reinvent the world and our vision of it, as children would...

Welfare begins with Amerindians who have been robbed of their country and ends with a prophet who has no country. The first have been chased from their land, the second chased from everywhere: prophet of the precariousness of peoples, prophet of climate refugees, of a new proletariat which is a proletariat without territory, of the degrading of the person. People excluded from citizenship, who will never have their place. Throughout the show, they tell us the exact truth of America and the exact truth of the World, with the brilliance and acuity that only madmen possess.



The troupe and the viewer as a mirror of the democratic society

Wiseman filmed social workers listening to stories facing this long waiting room full of spectators. The very idea of summoning the audience to the theater is new multiplying *mise en abyme*. Through this social epic, I want to place the spectator at the very heart of the event, so that he feels immediately present on the spot and have to think and feel through what they have before their eyes. In a play like *Welfare*, you have to be active, you are in the social home and you observe these people in action. One collective, facing another collective facing you. The viewer must be fascinated by the apparent diversity of situations and psychologies playing out in front of him. I'm trying to bring spectators in another world than their own. Wiseman thinks that the spectator is always at the same level as him, otherwise he finds it condescending. I totally agree with his opinion regarding theater.

As for the theatre group, I want it to be as community-based and as most representative of the world today as possible. The cast will be gender, racialized and intergenerationally equal, with lifelong partners through the presence of the *In Vitro* collective, but also with new encounters. I have a deep desire to perpetuate my group's work, preserving our foundations, history and identity whilst being open.

A REINCARNATION THANKS TO ACTORS

Through the many characters of *Welfare*, I wish to bring together three generations of actors. Through the many characters of *Welfare*, I wish to bring together three generations of actors through fifteen life paths. Each character will be irreducible and will exist for him/herself. He/she will be led to go towards the encounter, the encounter of the Other and of an unknown territory: to be together physically in a human assembly and to embody fully the singularity of this experience. This show is a tribute to the art of working together, the art of acting, interpreting to save one's life. The character takes an active part in the story and plays an important role, he invents a story to write his future, he acts to survive. The main protagonist of the show will be the meeting place, the shelter, but its real subject is the life that exists on that day only and the human and theatrical experience that comes out of it. What interests me in *Welfare* is to show the making of an ephemeral collective through the journey of the social workers and social clients getting together there. The stage version will show that alone against the system, we can't do much, but all together, we can still try things. From the moment we point out the notion of a group on a stage, the question of the place of the individual arises. A group is not a choir, it is anarchy, a permanent imbalance. If it is not questioned from day to day, democracy is fragile. By staging nowadays the struggle of yesterday's American social clients to obtain recognition of their rights, I am trying to question the very notion of society, of today's troupe and its mode of social organization.

A striking thing in *Welfare* is that we never forget the characters that Wiseman films. To replay them every evening at the theater, re-carry their words as playwrights, is giving them life again through all their singularity and reach, I hope, a form of universality. We will not be able to be them, we will incarnate them with our weapons, we will not pretend to imitate them or to replace them, we will not carry their faces but their voices.

The characters



welfare



SOCIAL CLIENT
(BY ORDER OF ARRIVAL)

M. Hirsch
SOCIAL CLIENT

Larry Rivera
SOCIAL CLIENT,
IN A RELATIONSHIP
WITH ELZBIETA ZIMMERMAN

Elzbieta Zimmerman
POLISH SOCIAL CLIENT,
IN A RELATIONSHIP WITH LARRY
RIVERA AND MOTHER OF A CHILD

M^{RS} Turner
SOCIAL CLIENT,
MOTHER OF FOUR CHILDREN,
PREGNANT WITH THE FIFTH

Valerie Johnson
SOCIAL CLIENT

Lenny Fox
SOCIAL CLIENT

M. Cooper
SOCIAL CLIENT

M^{RS} Gaskin
SOCIAL CLIENT

MISS Gaskin,
DAUGHTER OF M^{RS} GASKIN,
HERE WITH HER MOTHER

John Sullivan
MUSICIAN

SOCIAL WORKER
(BY ORDER OF ARRIVAL)

Jason Harris
SERGEANT

Sam Ross
SUPERVISOR

Roz Bates
EMPLOYEE

Elaine Silver
SUPERVISOR

Noel Garcia
EMPLOYEE

Rehearsals

Our rehearsals begin with playful group works, like short films that I ask the actors to realize from the first days, following the model of the film *Pater* by Alain Cavalier. They must choose one of their partners and make a ten-minute fiction on the themes that link them to the work. These "Paters" are like the genesis of our rehearsals, they symbolize the journey to be made, in an intimate way, between us and the reference work : how will reality become fiction ?

And then, as in documentary where you film a lot before you sort and edit, I do a lot of rehearsals. Every day, we test an ephemeral structure where I await a takeover of the actors and the team, a dispossession. I then position myself more as an observer, which allows the actor to self-create. They play the embryo of the show and day after day, this embryo develops. It's not a preset mechanical construction, but it follows to a daily roadmap that I deliver and that they internalize, just like each member of the creative team. I am included, even immersed in this pregnancy. I know and don't know where I'm going. I'm waiting for a manifestation of which, today, I can perfectly recognize the signs. I await metamorphosis like Louis Malle in *Vanya 42^d Street*. Then I speak again.

Focused on the actor and the present moment of the performance, our theater tends to demythologize the place of each, to promote the status of the actor by defending the idea of a collective theatrical gesture. Supporting this notion of dependency and of shared commitment in the way to build the play gives access to a form of infinity. The gesture constantly mutates, I must therefore, accept its imperfections. With the team, I want to build a common dramaturgy that focuses on the place that each character shall have and take. I insist on a porosity between fiction and the present moment. The notion of reality remains linked to a form of drama and, though there is a dimension in my identity that is akin to a cinematographic approach, I do affirm on the other hand an aesthetic deeply rooted in dramatic art.

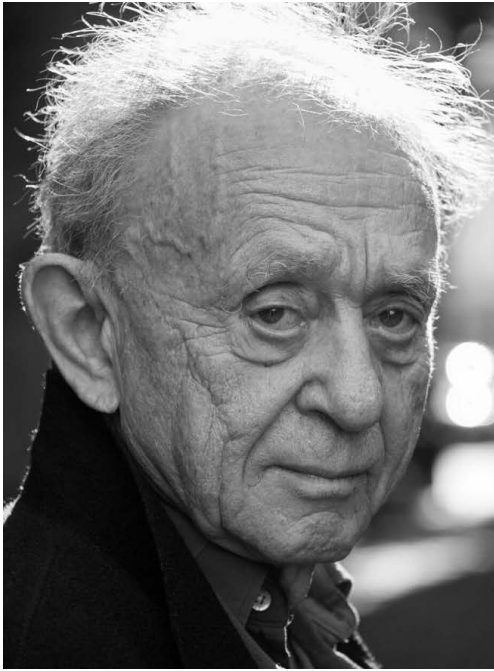
In my productions, which are silent, without demonstration, the stage is in direct contact with the world. While avoiding naturalism, the point is to give the impression that everything happens live. "Sequence-shots" allow a continuous acting of the performers together on the set, inducing a different relation towards time. Wiseman says that unlike in fiction, in documentary you can only shoot once and if you are lucky, the dialogues come across. This vertigo of the snapshot is what I also look for in my directing work on stage, day after day... The material offered by Welfare is ultra theatrical: people who have already lost everything are in the extreme. Speaking out gives them a social and a civic status. As long as they have a voice, they will keep it to save the little hope they have left. And for that, they will do anything to get what they need. Inside they are actors and they will choose their destiny. Thus, it is really a question of how to make a citizen emerge, how to refund the very act of democracy.

Frederick Wiseman

Author and director



welfare



Law graduate, Frederick Wiseman first taught at Boston University. In 1966, he reads *The Cool World*, a Warren Miller essay on juvenile delinquency in Harlem, New York. It gets him to use the film as means of giving a report on society. In 1966, with friends, he founded the Organization for Social and Technical Innovation (OSTI), a social welfare association which was active until 1973. Since the mid-1960s, Frederick Wiseman has used his camera to scrutinize the American democracy and local life by entering symbolic places : schools, prisons, hospitals, police stations, supermarkets. To paint America, he takes the time to listen and watch, favoring long sequence shots. He uses the basic principles he developed in his first documentary : no interviews, no voice-over nor additional music, in order to favor a slow taming of the people by the camera, until they no longer notice it. His ambition is to draw a critical portrait of the

United States and, as he will say later, the result is "a single and very long film which would last eighty hours".

Many of his works have been shown in Europe, notably *Near Death* (1989), a moving documentary about the intensive care unit in a Boston hospital. In 2002, he directed his first fiction film, based on the novel *Life and Fate* by Vassili Grossman, *The Last Letter*, monologue told by Véronique Aubouy of a letter written in 1941 to his son by a Jewish mother living in a ghetto in Ukraine. From 1980, he worked a lot abroad. In Paris, Frederick Wiseman successively filmed the backstage of the Comédie-Française (1996), the Opéra (2008) and the Crazy-Horse (2010).

Julie Deliquet

Artistic director



After studying film and several theater trainings, first at the Conservatoire of Montpellier, then at the École du Studio Asnières and at the Jacques Lecoq International Theater School, Julie Deliquet created the collective In Vitro in 2009 and staged *Last remorse before the oblivion* of Jean-Luc Lagarce (2nd part of the trilogy "From the 70s to the present day...") as part of the Young Directors competition Théâtre 13, where she received the audience award. In 2011, she staged *A Respectable Wedding* of Bertolt Brecht (1st part of the Triptych) at the Théâtre de Vanves then at 104 as part of the Festival Impatience, then in 2013, *We are alone now*, collective creation and 3rd part of the trilogy.

The full version of the trilogy was shown at the Théâtre de la Cité and at the Théâtre Gérard Philipe, national center for dramatic arts of Saint-Denis as part of the 2014 Autumn Festival.

In 2015, she staged *Gabriel(le)*, for the project "Adolescence and territory(ies)" at the initiative of the Odéon - Théâtre de l'Europe, and staged *Catherine and Christian (endgame)*, epilogue of the trilogy, at the Théâtre Gérard Philipe, national center for dramatic arts of Saint-Denis as part of the Autumn Festival 2015. In September 2016, she staged *Vania*, inspired by *Uncle Vania* of Anton Chekhov, at the Comédie-Française. She staged *Mélancolie(s)* in October 2017 after *The Three Sisters and Ivanov* by Anton Chekhov at the Théâtre of Lorient, national center for dramatic arts of Brittany, and played at the Théâtre de la Bastille as part of the 2017 Autumn Festival. In 2019, Julie Deliquet created *Fanny and Alexandre* by Ingmar Bergman at the Comédie-Française, and made a short film, *Violetta*, as part of the "3rd scene" program of the Paris Opera, released in the cinema during the pandemic under the title *Those who sing*, alongside Sergei Loznitsa, Karim Moussaoui and Jafar Panahi's films. This film was to be presented in the Official Selection at the 2020 Cannes Film Festival.

In the fall of 2019, she staged *A Christmas Tale* by Arnaud Desplechin at the Comédie de Saint-Étienne, national center for dramatic arts. The show was rehearsed at the Odéon - Théâtre de l'Europe as part of the 2019 Autumn Festival. Julie Deliquet is godmother of the promotion 29 of the Higher School of Dramatic Arts of the Comédie de Saint-Étienne and creates with the students a stage-writing on the set *The Sky Tumbles*, in June 2020.

In March 2020, Julie Deliquet took up her duties as director of the Théâtre Gérard Philipe, national center for dramatic arts of Saint-Denis.

In 2021, she created *Eight hours don't make a day* by Rainer Werner Fassbinder at the Théâtre Gérard Philipe, national center for dramatic arts of Saint-Denis. In 2022 she co-directed *Fille(s) de* alongside Lorraine de Sagazan, Leïla Anis and the actresses of the In Vitro collective. That same year, she created with the Troupe from the Comédie-Française, *Jean-Baptiste, Madeleine, Armande and the others...* from Molière, Salle Richelieu.

Florence Seyvos

Stage version collaborator

Florence Seyvos began publishing children's books in 1989. From 1991, she wrote works for adults, all published by L'Olivier editions. Her book *Les Apparitions* received the Goncourt prize for the first novel and France Televisions prize, whilst *The Unbreakable Boy* won the Renaudot Paperback Prize.

From 1995, she collaborated in writing films with the director Noémie Lvovsky, and has recently worked with other directors, such as Louis Garrel or Nicole Garcia. From 2017, a combination of circumstances brought her closer to the theater, where she notably collaborated in the adaptation of *Fanny and Alexander* by Ingmar Bergman at the Comédie-Française and *Eight Hours don't make a Day* by Rainer Werner Fassbinder both directed by Julie Deliquet.

Marie-Pierre Duhamel Muller

Translator

Marie-Pierre Duhamel Muller is a programmer, translator and teacher. She directed the Cinéma du Réel festival at the Center Pompidou (Paris), and was a programmer for many festivals, including the Venice Film Festival, the Rome Festival and the Viennale, as well as for the Pingyao Festival (China), created by the filmmaker Jia Zhang-ke.

She teaches cinema in several European film schools and universities and translates Chinese, Italian and English films. Notably, since 1997, she subtitles the films by Frederick Wiseman, and works with him on the English versions of his French-language films.



Théâtre Gérard Philipe, national center for dramatic arts

The Théâtre Gérard Philipe, national center for dramatic arts of Saint-Denis is a place of creation, production and distribution of theatrical works. It has been directed by Julie Deliquet since the spring 2020, accompanied by the In Vitro collective and two associate artists, director Lorraine de Sagazan and author Leïla Anis. She wishes to share a theater where fiction plays with reality, a theater placed under the sign of creation, transmission and education. It opens its program to young artists and offers modern and popular creations. The children are not left out : throughout the season, *Et moi alors ?* presents shows for young audiences.

Outdoors shows are regularly offered and contribute to the cultural life of the territory. The TGP sees itself as a house for the artists of today and tomorrow, warm, welcoming and open to everyone



**Centre dramatique
national
de Saint-Denis**

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Tour dates

- From September 27 to October 15, 2023 ; Théâtre Gérard Philipe, national drama center, Saint-Denis
- From January 15 to January 19, 2024 ; Théâtre Dijon Bourgogne, national drama center, Dijon
- From January 24 to February 3 ; Théâtre des Célestins, Lyon
- February 14 and February 15 ; Le Quartz, National scene, Brest
- February 20 and February 21 ; La Passerelle, National scene Saint-Brieuc
- From March 6 to March 9 ; Comédie de Genève
- From March 13 to March 15 ; Comédie – Reims national drama center
- From April 20 to March 22 ; Théâtre de l'Union, national drama center, Limoges
- March 26th and March 27th ; La Coursive, National scene, La Rochelle
- April 4 and April 5 ; L'Archipel, National scene, Perpignan
- April 10 and April 11 ; Comédie de Saint-Étienne, national drama center
- From April 16 to April 19 ; Théâtre du Nord, national drama center, Lille – Tourcoing
- From May 3 to May 5 ; La Villette, Paris

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