

Carmen & Carmen

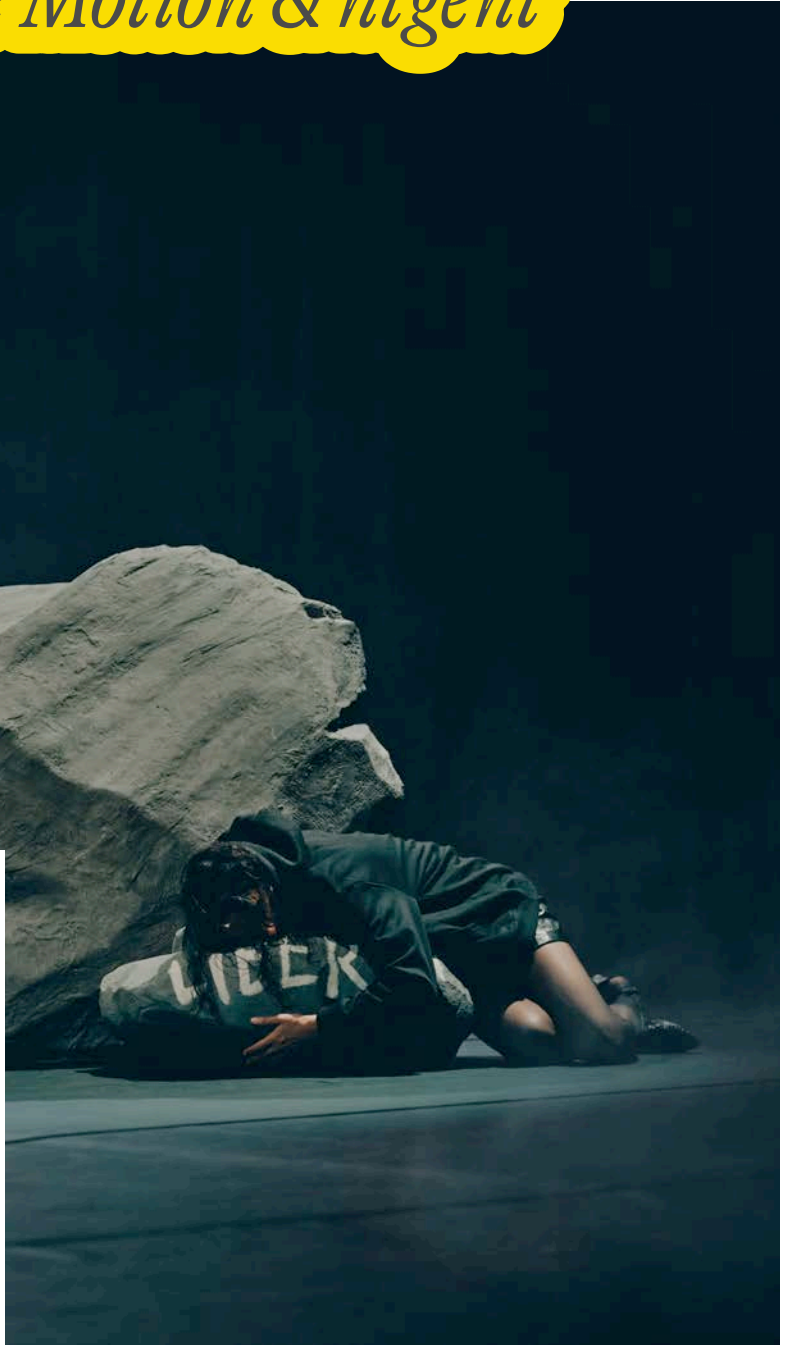
Moved by the Motion & ntgent

Carmen, the passionate lover, the free-spirited woman, the fury. Who is she really? Moved by the Motion explores the legendary story of opera composer Georges Bizet.

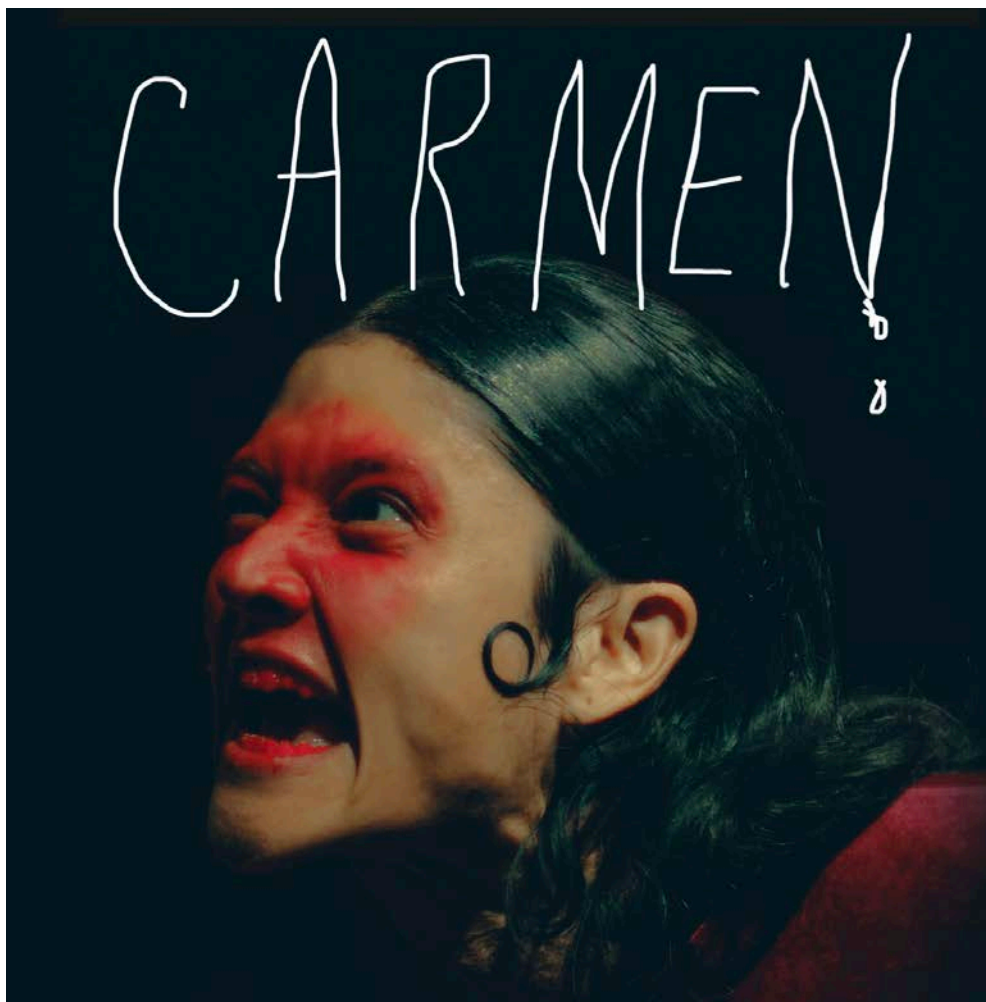
At the invitation of NTGent, Moved by the Motion embarks on research into the myth of Carmen, remixing opera, cinema, flamenco, and performance into a bold hybrid experience. Rather than retelling the classic, the group deconstructs it, using Carmen's iconic presence as a lens to explore themes of desire, violence, migration, and resistance.

Who is Carmen, really? A symbol of love, liberation — and a threat that must be subdued again and again.

Blending live performance and film, the piece unravels Carmen. As the screen begins to dissolve, a new story emerges, shifting from cinematic spectacle to visceral liveness.



ntgent



Letter from the makers

At the invitation of NTGent, Moved by the Motion continues its practice of iterative compositions and mixed-genre storytelling, extending their multi-year research of the opera Carmen.

The new performance decenters the opera by focusing on the expanded myth and its reception, with its myriad pop cultural references and political themes, particularly within the migratory fields of cinema and flamenco. In this new iteration, the myth itself becomes the score for a hybrid cinema-performance.

Carmen endures as a symbol of radical liberation and love, and therefore she must be regulated and killed over and over again. Her character is made to bear too many subalternities: as woman, factory worker, gitana, criminal; itinerant, polylingual, non-white, sexually liberated. She survives by codes that are anti(e)thetical to the very idea of Western subjecthood. In other words, her transgressiveness makes her inevitably both an object of desire and target for violence. In all her fractured multiplicity, Carmen becomes a prism to look at the ongoing socioecological disaster characterizing our times.

Moved by the Motion returns to its core ways of working, following a six-year residency at Schauspielhaus Zürich that enabled an in-depth investigation and usage of the craft of theatre, repetition in repertoire and extending collective work-methods towards an ensemble. This new production brings together different phases in the group's oeuvre: the ephemeral, iterative, improvised "Compositions" series and the opera Carmen. It brings migratory aesthetic practices into collision with the monumental and spectacular.

The "Compositions" series began in 2019 and is based on the improvised interplay between cinema, sound, and movement. Albert Einstein's notable observation of quantum mechanics as being "spooky actions at a distance" is operative in the cinematic staging of the group's ongoing poetic improvisation.

The format of the performance is a film live-scored by the performers on stage. The performance approaches the myth of Carmen using montage as a way to draw out her expanded legacy and themes implicit in her story. As the film plays, a performance starts to emerge around the edges of the film; the screen decomposes as the performance gradually overtakes it.

“Carmen belongs to nobody and everybody. She is everything her creators feared, and everything they desired. What was a threat to them is an inspiration to us”

– Wu Tsang

One inspiration for this project is Christian Marclay’s *The Clock* (2010), which synchronizes a 24-hour day through film montage, as a reflection on how time is conceived and dramatized by cinema. The captured and mechanized time of cinema (with its roots in the industrial temporalities of Carmen’s 19th century) creates tensions with the liveness of performance, the textures of flamenco compás, and the confabulations of speculative narrative.

Over the years, Moved the Motion has consistently worked with themes of constraint and capture, flight and movement. Considering the dominant disciplines and ideologies evoked by Carmen (Opera, State Theatre, Cinema) we can also understand the apparatus of capture in the repertory, that becomes fixed and kills through its disciplinary and regulatory forces. Performance and improvisation become a way to move through these constraints and practice liberation.

By engaging these different legacies and traditions, Moved by the Motion continues its ongoing investigation of the entangled states of live and captured images, through remixing genres of cinema, dance, music, and theater to create a hybrid stage performance. The production considers re-iteration and re-formulation of the myth through these different disciplines.







About Moved by the Motion

Moved by the Motion is a multidisciplinary group of artists who play with language, movement, image and sound. They create at the melting point of film, poetry, music, dance, performance and theatre. The group started in LA in 2013 and is internationally renowned. Members are invited to collaborate in projects around the world.

After a six-year residency at Schauspielhaus Zürich (where they analysed the figure of Carmen for a first time), the ensemble now returns to the basis of their working methods: collective creation, iterative composition and collision of genres.

Carmen & Carmen is directed by Wu Tsang, founding member of Moved by The Motion. Tsang is an American performer, director and filmmaker whose work has been shown in the most prestigious museums (MoMA New York, Tate Modern London, etc.). In 2018, she won the MacArthur Genius Grant and since the beginning of 2025 she has been a lecturer at Harvard University. Tsang is known for dismantling and breaking down racial and gender stereotypes and narratives.

“Wu Tsang is one of the most influential people in the contemporary art world”

– Art Review (2024)

Press

“Much like Tsang’s previous work, *Moby Dick* has drawn praise for its ability to combine disparate genres and forms, including dance and poetry, into an aesthetically striking artwork (...) But it has also established Tsang as an artist capable of crafting ambitious, provocative spectacles on a cinematic scale”

– New York Times (US), [portrait of Wu Tsang](#) (2023)

“One of the most emotionally moving things I’ve seen in this space”

– New York Times (US), on *Anthem* by Wu Tsang in Guggenheim, New York (2021)

“A magical plea for solidarity (...) an extremely loving fable, greeted with applause after every scene by the discerning children in the audience”

– Kurier (AT) on *Robin Hood*

“Director Wu Tsang brings the saga of the anarchist to the stage with heart and soul. It is a call for more community spirit – and a magical evening of theatre”

– NZZ (CH) on *Robin Hood*

Credits

Direction

Wu Tsang

Movement & creative direction

Tosh Basco

Choreography

Josh Johnson

Musical director

Asma Maroof

Set & costume design

Carlos Soto

Production

NTGent & Moved by the Motion

World Premiere

23.04.26 to 16.05.26

Ghent (BE), NTGent

Interested?

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