



strike

Wu Tsang, Moved by the Motion & NTGent

world premiere 23.04.26

Press file

Synopsis

With *strike*, their latest multidisciplinary performance, the collective Moved by the Motion explores the codes and gestures of an iconic figure in movement, joined by flamenco artists.

A "strike" can take many forms: a sudden blow, a percussive hit, a refusal, an act of collective interruption. The word carries violence, rhythm, and dissent all at once. What these gestures have in common is their evasion of capture even as they brush against the traditions of the world's most famous femicide: the myth of Carmen.

strike begins at a point of exhaustion following the endless repetition of Carmen's life and ultimately her death. Across centuries of adaptation she has been fetishized, moralized, romanticized, and punished. Yet she continues to return, or rather be resurrected - summoned by our desire and projections. Carmen is at once familiar and controversial: a beloved cliché, a femme fatale, "the devil" according to her jealous lover, a rebellious bird that refuses to be caged.

Through live improvisation, sonic and cinematic layering, fragments of the myth are played apart and reassembled in *strike*. Music splinters, images glitch, bodies negotiate inherited gestures. What emerges is less a retelling than an excavation—an attempt to expose the violence embedded in the beauty of this legend.

strike, directed by Wu Tsang, is the culmination of six years of research into the opera *Carmen*, the representation of Carmen in other genres, and the flamenco subculture. For this research, Tsang spent a lot of time in Seville, Spain, over many years. Tsang, born in the US, is an award-winning visual artist whose projects have been presented at prestigious museums including MoMA (New York). She recently curated the exhibition [*Theatre Picasso*](#) at the Tate Modern London (running until 12 April).

Besides Tsang, the cast of *strike* consists of dancers/choreographers [Tosh Basco](#) and [Josh Johnson](#), actor [Perle Palombo](#), flamenco artists [Raúl Cantizano](#) and [Sara Jiménez](#), and saxophonist [Tapiwa Svosve](#). The text is by [Fred Moten](#): leading American poet and cultural theorist. The costume and set design by [Carlos Soto](#), known for his long-term collaboration with Robert Wilson.

Dates

2026/04/23 - world premiere - NTGent Schouwburg (Ghent, Belgium) - 8pm

2026/04/24 - NTGent Schouwburg (Ghent, Belgium) - 8pm

2026/05/15 - NTGent Schouwburg (Ghent, Belgium) - 8pm

2026/05/16 - NTGent Schouwburg (Ghent, Belgium) - 8pm

2026/11/16 - Gessnerallee, Zürich (SWI)

2026/11/17 - Gessnerallee, Zürich (SWI)

2026/11/18 - Gessnerallee, Zürich (SWI)

More tour dates will be announced later.

Pictures

- [Scene pictures](#) (credit: Trevis Janssen)
- Rehearsal images (credit: Michelle Ettlin): <https://adobe.ly/4vZBFOF>
- Promotional images (credit Lumento - Vassili Feodoroff): <https://adobe.ly/4cmvc89>

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Credits

Concept: Moved by the Motion / Direction: Wu Tsang / Movement & creative direction: Tosh Basco / With: Tosh Basco, Raúl Cantizano, Sara Jiménez, Josh Johnson, Perle Palombe, Tapiwa Svosve, Wu Tsang / Dramaturgy: Joshua Wicke, Enrique Fuenteblanca / Set & costume design: Carlos Soto / Light design: Dennis Diels / Music direction: Asma Maroof Video: Jerome Pesnel / Productie: NTGent / Coproductie: Moved by the Motion, Gessnerallee Zürich

On Wu Tsang & Moved by the Motion

Wu Tsang (b. 1982, USA) combines her work as a filmmaker (*Wildness*, 2012, *Duilian*, 2015, *Moby Dick; or, The Whale*, 2022) with that of a performer and director. Her work has been exhibited in some of the world's most prestigious museums (MoMA New York, Tate Modern London, etc.). During a six-year residency at Schauspielhaus Zürich, where she first explored the character of Carmen, she has established herself in recent years as a theatre maker (*Pinocchio*, 2022, *Carmen*, 2024, *Robin Hood*, 2025) together with the other member of the collective Moved by the Motion.

In 2018, Tsang won the MacArthur Genius Grant and in 2025 she was a lecturer at Harvard University. She recently co-curated the expo *Theatre Picasso* in Tate Modern. According to [Art Review](#), she is one of the hundred most influential people in the art world today.

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. For *strike*, the ensemble returns to the basis of their working methods: collective creation, iterative composition and collision of genres.

Cast Biographies

Raúl Cantizano (b. Seville, 1973) is an unclassifiable and unique guitarist, who's experimental style of music blends flamenco, ambient, improvisation and rock. As a guitarist, he has been part of the most innovative flamenco projects of the 21st century.

Cantizano has been a regular guitarist for Niño de Elche, performed alongside Rocío Márquez and Andrés Marín, and has collaborated with musicians such as Llorenç Barber and choreographers such as Juan Carlos Llerida. Together with Santiago Barber, he created the experimental factory bulos.net. His work *Zona Acordonada* premiered at the 21st Seville Flamenco Biennial and has toured stages and festivals in Spain, London, Mexico and New York.

Perle Palombe, born in Marseille, graduated from the Strasbourg National Theater school in 2005. In 2008, she met the American choreographer Trajal Harrell, the start of a long collaboration. Palombe has danced in several of Harrells shows since, such as *Caen Amour* (Festival d'Avignon, 2016) and *The Collection* (Holland Festival, 2025).

Invited by Harrell, Palombe was part of the ensemble of Schauspielhaus Zurich between 2019 and 2025. During her residency there, she played in *Carmen* by Wu Tsang & *Moved by the Motion* and *My year of Rest and Relaxation* by Yana Ross, while continuing her collaboration with Harrell (*Deathbed*, *House of Bernarda*,...). In 2025, Palombe performed at Festival d'Automne in Paris in *Superstructure* by Hubert Colas.

Josh Johnson (b. 1987) is a multidisciplinary artist from Los Angeles whose practice focuses on composition and the investigation of how physical technique, conceptual frameworks, and historical forms can be reassembled in new performance languages. After studying dance at the Robinson Project of Performing Arts, Hollywood High School and The Ailey School (NYC), Johnson moved to Frankfurt (GER) to become a member of The Forsythe Company (2010 – 2015).

Johnsons work spans stage, gallery, and fashion contexts, often blending movement with sound, image, and text. He has collaborated with artists such as Anne Imhof, *Moved by the Motion*, Kandis Williams, Francesca Harper and Cyril Baldy. His performance practice regularly intersects with the music and fashion world in collaborations with among others Louis Vuitton, Travis Scott and Shayne Oliver.

Tosh Basco is an interdisciplinary artist whose work moves fluidly between performance, drawing, photography, and embodiment. Basco is co-founder of the collaborative entity *Moved by the Motion* with Wu Tsang and remains a vital aspect of her work. Basco's work has been presented at Venice Biennale, Whitney Museum (New York), Sidney Biennale, SF MOMA (San Francisco), Performa (New York), Martin Gropius Bau (Berlin), Wiener Festwochen, Schauspielhaus Zurich and Rockbund Museum (Shanghai).

Emerging from San Francisco's experimental drag and queer nightlife scenes, under the moniker 'boychild', Basco's practice has evolved into a sustained investigation of the body

as archive, language, and site of transformation. Across media, Basco explores how gesture, movement, and trace can communicate where words fail.

Tapiwa Svosve (b. 1995) is a musician and theorist whose multidisciplinary practice brings sound into dialogue with theatre, painting, and historical inquiry. Based in Zurich, Switzerland, Svosve's work spans extreme avant-gardism, free jazz, and noise music. Thinking through silence, negative space, solo performance, and the negotiations between body and instrument, he adapts music and sound to develop various physical and performative techniques.

A longtime organiser in Switzerland's experimental music scene, Svosve has used public spaces to explore the boundaries between commercial, theatrical, and underground communities. In 2024, he was awarded the Swiss Music Prize.

Sara Jiménez Andrés is a Spanish dancer, researcher and director who started studying Spanish dance and flamenco at age ten at the Reina Sofía Dance Conservatory. She later received a scholarship from the Andalusian Centre of Dance in Seville. Over the years, Jiménez has performed all over the world and was nominated several times for the MAX awards, the most important performing arts awards in Spain. In 2025, she won the category Best Dance Performer at the PAD awards (association of dance professionals in Andalusia).

From 2016 until 2018, Jiménez was a soloist in the company Ballet Flamenco de Andalucía, under the direction of Rafael Estévez. In 2020, she created the piece *VARIACIÓN a tempo* with guitarist Pablo Giménez, which received acclaim in Seville, Germany, Valladolid and New York. In 2022, she presented her début *A D I O S E S* as Sara Jiménez en Compañía at the Jerez Festival. At the beginning of 2024, the third piece with her company, *AVE DE PLATA*, premiered at the Teatro Alhambra in Granada. It has since toured five continents.

Born in 1980, **Carlos J. Soto** is a designer based in New York. From 1997 onwards, he collaborated with the late star theatre director Robert Wilson, and with the well-known singer, songwriter and actress Solange Knowles as artistic director and designer for installations, live performances and films. Soto's recent works include *Robin Hood: A Beast Ballad* at the Schauspielhaus in Zurich, *The Seasons* at the Boston Opera, *La Calisto* at the Glimmerglass Festival, *Tosca* at the Wermland Opera, *Intelligence* at the Houston Grand Opera, *L'Orfeo* and *Tristan und Isolde* at the Santa Fe Opera, and *Die Walküre* at the Detroit Opera.

In 2026, Soto is working with Zack Winokur on *The Black Clown* at the Philadelphia Opera, with Daniel Kramer on *200 Motels* by Frank Zappa at the Grand Théâtre de Genève and *La Cenerentola* at La Monnaie in Brussels, with Peter Sellars on *Perle Noire* at the Paris Opera, and with Jamar Roberts on a new production for the Alvin Ailey Dance Company in New York.

Interview

"Carmen is not a femme fatale, she's ungraspable"

It is grey and rainy when rehearsals are held in Zurich end of January for **'strike'**, a brand-new production by the collective Moved by the Motion and NTGent. Wu Tsang and Tosh Basco stem from sunny Los Angeles but after a six-year residency at Schauspielhaus, they already endured their fair share of wet European winters. They are happy to be back in the Swiss cultural capital and say the third week of rehearsals feels richer than expected.



Wu Tsang and Tosh Basco. (c) Michelle Ettlin

'The creation process has been immensely fun and exciting so far,' says Tsang. 'It is rather rare to have such a richness in the material so soon.' Rare but not surprising in this case. 'This play is the culmination of many years of thinking.'

Wu Tsang and Moved by the Motion have been researching the iconic figure Carmen for years now, leading to a dense web of references, new connections and practices on the way. In early 2024, they premiered their version of the famous opera by George Bizet in which they gave Carmen several new identities, one of which the left-wing rebel dancer La Paloma Roja who fought against Franco's fascist troops during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939).

The revamped opera two years ago was perhaps the most prestigious of the Carmen- renditions by Moved by the Motion, but only one of many, with an impressive variety in form: film installation, opera, theatre, performance,... only last fall, in the build-up towards *strike*, on show from 23 April at NTGent, the collective performed a take on *Carmen* in Tate Modern (Londen) and during Festival d'Automne (Paris).

The opera *Carmen* by Bizet premiered in 1875 and tells the story of an independent Roma woman who refuses to succumb to the charms of the army officer Don José, who ends up murdering her - a femicide in a time when violence on woman was portrayed on stage without any criticism. A critic from The New York Times described Carmen in 1878 as a 'wilderness of a woman' who lacked 'the sweet restraint and lovely decency of her sex'. Carmen's murder was presented in the Bizet-version as a crime of passion.

For the makers of *strike*, Carmen is not a wild woman, but becomes an elusive figure: a multifaceted lens through which to view the socio-ecological crises of our time, including the ubiquity of violence against marginalized communities.

'What draws me to Carmen, is her hybridity,' says Tsang. 'She is everything and nothing. She embodies so many qualities that can be reduced to being a *femme fatale*. But she is multi-faceted and elusive. Carmen is amorphic, ungraspable and mythic.'

'I have always felt a deep interest in the way Carmen has been deified for more than a century now, as an orientalisised subject, but at the same times continues to die,' says Basco. 'There is something very prominent around the repetition of her dead. What is it about her that is so valuable that it must be captured and killed? What is it about her that is so captivating to our world, the same world that continues to perpetuate violence toward many kinds of people?'

Representation

While in many renderings, Carmen has been a way to represent groups and identities that commonly lack representation on stage, *strike* addresses the question of representation on a fundamental level. For Tosh Basco, representation does not suffice. 'There has been a significant increase in visibility for gay, queer, and trans people, for all kinds of people in the very recent past. But it has been shocking to see how quickly that boomeranged back to blatant fascist violence that is committed before our very eyes.'

'Representation can serve access and power, but it scares me sometimes, the amount that people rely on representation to uphold or undo structural systems of power, the consequences of which we are now faced with again.'

Tsang spent a lot of time in Seville in recent years, where Bizet set his opera and Carmen lives on as the main tourist attraction. Even though she went of one of the touristic tours and was fascinated by the guide acting as if Carmen had lived in the Spanish city, Tsang's focus has been on getting acquainted with the thriving flamenco subculture there. She is not an expert by far, Tsang stresses, her travels to Seville have been a way to meet people and invite them to collaborate.

'Collaborating allows you to step inside someone else's knowledge. You can start a conversation, an exploration, a dance. That is how it feels for me with flamenco now: I am learning thanks to our very inspiring partners.'



Rehearsal picture, 'strike'. (c) Michelle Ettlin

Moved by the Motion calls itself a band of rovers due to its ever-shifting composition and migratory nature yet creating *strike* feels like a homecoming. Tsang and Basco are joined in the rehearsal room by long-time collaborators Tapiwa Svosve, Josh Johnson and Perle Palombe. The cast is completed by flamenco artists Raúl Cantizano and Sara Jiménez.

'Flamenco is so alive, so energetic and raw,' says Basco. 'I have not felt as connected to a subculture since being deeply emmeshed in nightlife. It must be all the stomping (laughs).'

'Raúl and Sara also bring in a practice of improvisation,' adds Tsang. 'One which we did not encounter when we were researching the more operatic side of Carmen. There is less an impulse to improvise there. It exists but is not nurtured in the same way.'

For Moved by the Motion, *strike* is a return to familiar ways of working. 'Ways that we've been carrying with us for many years but didn't have the time to focus on recently,' says Tsang, who refers to their collective way of creating, the clashing of genres on stage and composition through iteration.

Working with Moved by the Motion means 'daring to come together in vulnerability,' says Tsang. 'Every time we share a work with the audience, I carry the same hope: that there is a transmission of caring for each other.'

"Over the years, we have amassed connection,' adds Basco. 'It grows in masse, it grows in force, it grows in speed, it's a really beautiful interweaving between people that feeds me as an artist.'

--- *written by Jonas Mayeur and Joshua Wicke*



Rehearsal picture, 'strike'. (c) Michelle Ettlin