

# Clotilde

## XXY



# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

« Three years ago I considered the world around me, one where the question of “gender” was the focus of many discussions, while many women were still oppressed and objectified. A notion grew within me that soon became an urgent desire to recount femininity, recount the feminine through my eyes, those of an artist woman of her time.

I then began researching women who have marked the history of humanity, the major feminine figures one finds in myths, protest songs, Western literature, and folk tales from across the world.

Bringing my vision and experience of a twenty-first century woman to bear on these archetypes, I conceived seven portraits, seven feminines, embodied in seven women, who might resonate with everyone, their linear lives depicted cyclically through the creative process.

I soon realized that music alone was too constrained to legitimately render the protean aspect of the feminine. I aspired to create the piece in a multi-disciplinary space that affects all the senses, starting with hearing and sight, and adding smell, touch and taste later.

The question of the depiction of women's bodies also arose. Inasmuch as this work aims to be an ode to the multifarious feminine, whether embodied in a man or a woman, I did not want the question of the body to be an obstacle to the message and the sensorial journey. It was then I realized that dancers could portray these seven femininities. A dancer's body contains something that reveals the perfect balance between yin and yang, between animus and anima; a place beyond genders that allows the subtleties and issues of each of these portraits to be translated as accurately as possible.

The format of this work became ever clearer to me: a creative documentary proposing an original personal reading of femininity in the world today. Lasting around 40 minutes, it will comprise seven portraits, each consisting of a film with music. Each film will focus on a dance that embodies a particular femininity, with the accompanying music featuring a voice singing that femininity. The films may be viewed separately or in series.

I imagine dreamlike and highly evocative images to draw in the viewer, with little narration, and sharp, decisive editing, without crossfades, similar to the aesthetics of Dadaist and surrealist cinema, or the films of the Beat Generation.

I would like the viewer to be plunged into a dream, a hypnotic trance, a parallel dimension that allows them to see the “real” differently, to delicately comprehend the feminine – their feminine – from another angle.

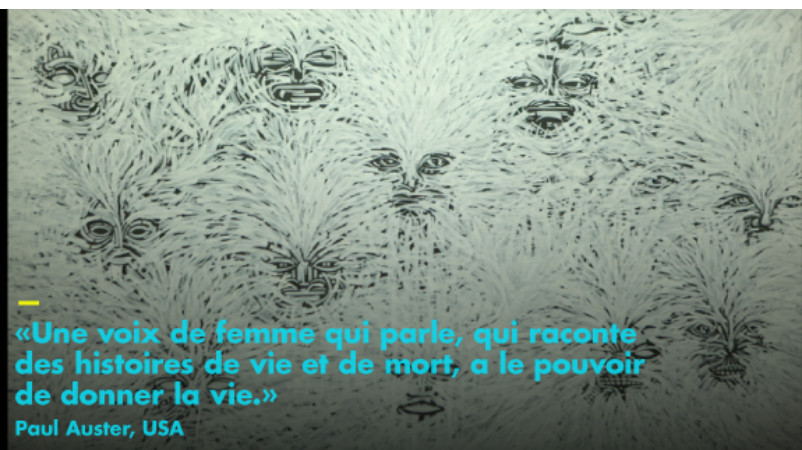
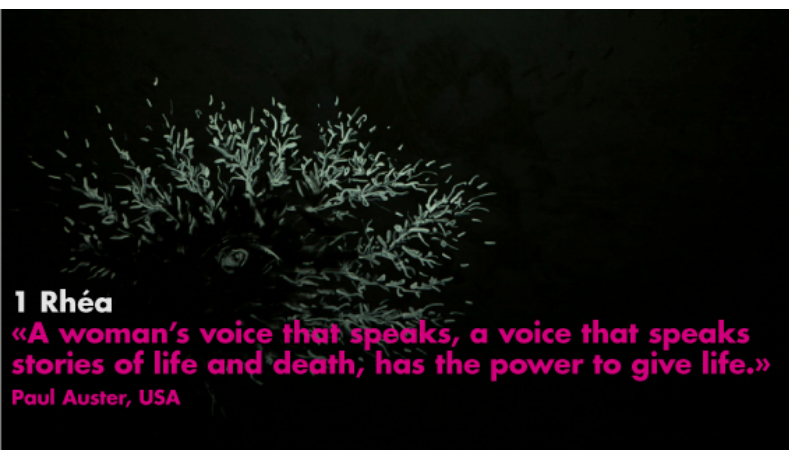
In order to best translate the specificities and differences of each of the seven women, I will collaborate with a different composer on the music for each portrait. They will be chosen from among the composers with whom I have already collaborated, and whose recognized qualities will best serve the project. As for the texts, they will be written in several different languages according to which I feel best represents the woman being described. In the same way, a different dance company will be picked to portray each woman, in movement and in space.

I see this work being presented in an interactive setting, with the spectator's sensorial, emotional and critical experience at the centre; a context in which each body will be disposed to feel something that amplifies its belonging to the whole and, through a boomerang effect, develop the impact of the work.

I have imagined that all these aspects of timeless, universal femininity will find a place in the tiniest corners of our retinas and ears, echoing the vibrant anima in each and every one of us. »

Clotilde

# SYNOPSIS



Nature is not gracious. It continually renews itself. It is a force that exists only to maintain the great cycle of life and death.

Ancestral mythologies all chose to embody this energy in a feminine entity, half-goddess, half-animal, with the power to create or destroy by a single word.

This portrait is an ode to the original womb, to that feminine which resonates within each one of us, expressing itself through our intuitions and connecting us to the rest of nature.

## **Rhéa**

She is a goddess from Greek mythology, the wife of Cronos and mother of Zeus. When the latter was born, Rhea duped her husband (who had devoured all their previous children) by giving him a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes. Rhea is often depicted accompanied by lions. She healed Dionysus of his madness and taught him her religious rites. The cult of Rhea stretched from Asia Minor to Rome. She was known as Mother of the Gods, Phrygian Goddess and Great Mother (Magna Mater).

## **Societal issues**

the nurturing mother, woman as a force of nature, the shaman.

## **Music**

An incantation, a voice that speaks, that sings, that screams to the pulsations of a didgeridoo.

Music by Clotilde and Adèle Blanchin

Adèle Blanchin : didgeridoo

Clotilde : vocal

## **Film**

Stop-motion of a graph being drawn.

Durée: 3'03

**Painter / Steer artist** : Stayreo





**2 Ruby**  
 «We've begun to raise daughters more like sons...  
 but few have the courage to raise our sons more like  
 our daughters.»  
 Gloria Steinem, USA

«Nous avons commencé à élever nos filles  
 comme des fils... mais peu ont le courage d'élever  
 leurs fils comme des filles.»  
 Gloria Steinem, USA

It is interesting to notice how, with a few exceptions, children's tales are full of fragile little girls who must face challenges, confronting wolves and witches. Yet such tales are not particularly aimed at girls or boys.

In the education girls receive, there is an ambiguity between candour and bravery, submission and cunning, a dilemma that faces Alice early on in her Adventures in Wonderland: DRINK ME and she shrinks; EAT ME and she grows. Modern society does its utmost to restrict La Loba, the she-wolf, the force of nature that breathes within each girl, wanting her to become an Amazon, a warrior woman.

Be a man, my girl!

### Ruby Bridges Hall

In 1960, Ruby Bridges Hall became the first black child to attend a school for white children, when she was just six years old. Owing to anti-black racism, she had to be escorted into school by federal marshals, since the local police of New Orleans and the state police of Louisiana refused to protect her.

When Ruby got to school, the white parents immediately removed their children. All the teachers, except for Barbara Henry, refused to teach classes as long as there was a black child in the school. Barbara Henry therefore taught classes to Ruby alone, for over a year "as if she were teaching a whole class".

### Societal issues

Issues of gender, gender equality and the role of education in gender equality

### Music

A diabolical nursery rhyme, a refrain that is, by turns, light and joyful, then sad and frightening, like a broken music box.

Music by Fred 'Parker' Aliotti

Clotilde : vocal

Fred Parker : piano

Boris Cacciaguerra : violin

Angelique Debay : violin

Marie Kuchinski : alto

Jean-Baptiste Goraieb : cello

### Film

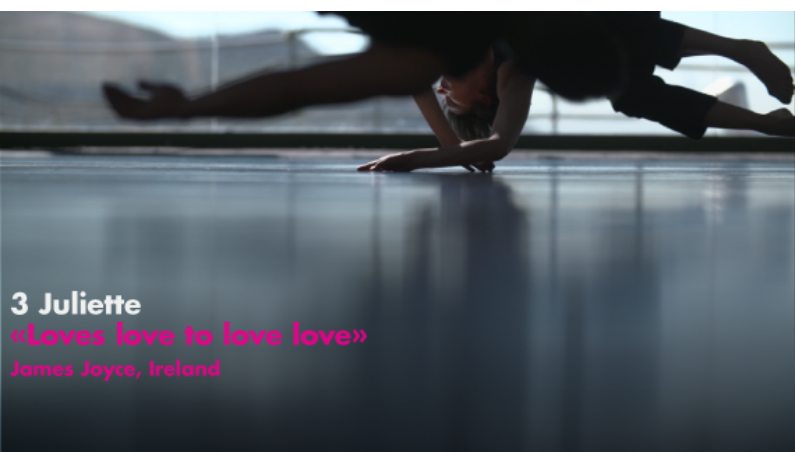
A child dancing a series of disjointed arabesques on a deserted beach, like a mechanical doll coming to life.

Durée : 3'17

### Dance

Keiko Sato (Japon)





3 Juliette  
«Loves love to love love»  
James Joyce, Ireland



«L'amour aime aimer l'amour»  
James Joyce, Irlande

While seeking her inner force of nature, her instinctive, universal woman, the girl finds love and confronts the Other in order to define herself. It's the time for nausea, for butterflies in the stomach, for impossible love, for dreams, for self-questioning. Slowly but surely, amid this chaotic cacophony of the senses, the beating heart of her inner force of nature, of her inner mother and nurturer begins to be audible. It gives her the courage to brave taboos in the name of her convictions. In making her first choices as an adult, she renounces her girlhood but also discovers freedom.

### Juliet Capulet

Shakespeare's Juliet is intelligent and obstinate despite her young age. For many, she is the real hero of the play. It is Juliet who sets the boundaries in her relationship with Romeo. It is she who asks his hand in marriage. It is she who lies and who goes against her family's wishes. A true revolt against traditional Italian society.

### Societal issues

The fragile balance of Love feeling, the quest of one's identity in the mirror of otherness

### Music

A joyful, psychedelic song, with a funky, bewitching groove; keyboards, horns; a catchy chorus everyone can sing.

Music by Alexandre Saada

Lyrics by Pierre Denardo

Clotilde : vocal and flute

Alexandre Saada : piano, Rhodes, Epinette, back-vocals

Laurent Salzard : bass, back-vocals

Antoine Paganotti : drum, back-vocals

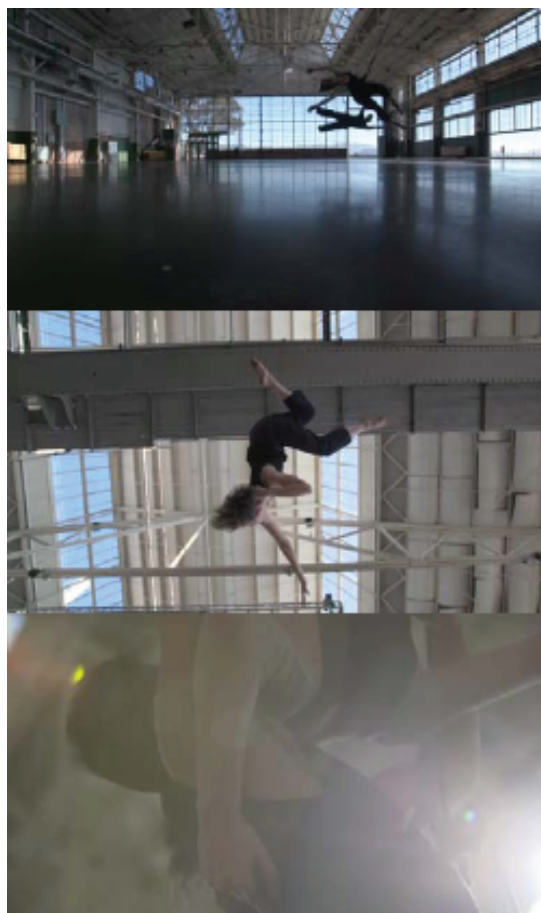
### Film

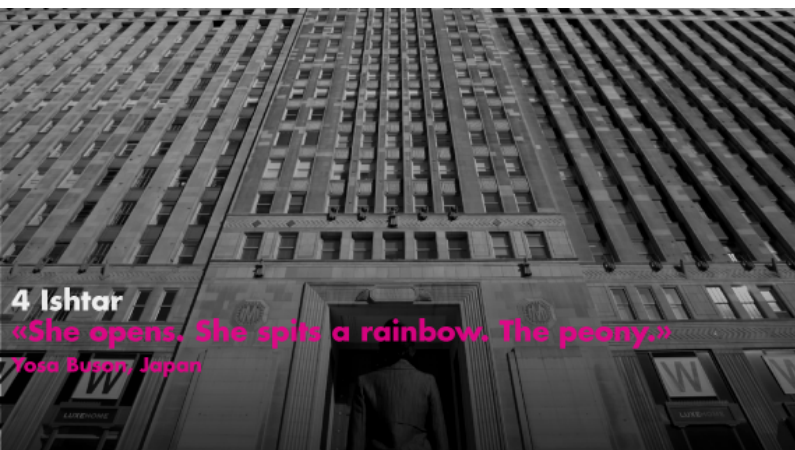
Dancers on wires who whirl and soar against the walls of an abandoned factory overrun by nature.

Durée: 2'58

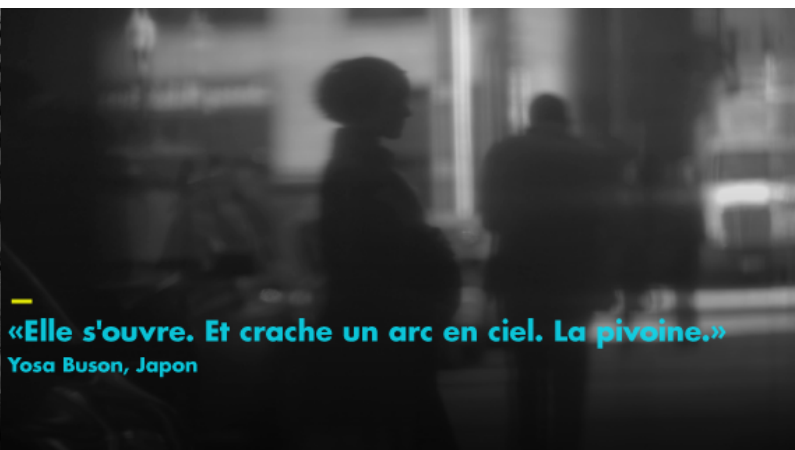
### Dance

CieBANDALOOP(Oakland-USA)





4 Ishtar  
«She opens. She spits a rainbow. The peony.»  
Yosa Buson, Japan



«Elle s'ouvre. Et crache un arc en ciel. La pivoine.»  
Yosa Buson, Japon

This is the second time in her life that the modern woman faces social and biological pressures in a perilous gymnastic pose. Steinbeck recounts it perfectly in *The Grapes of Wrath*. At the start of the book, the woman is a warrior leader, an incisive pack leader. By the end, this same woman is a loving, nursing mother who, after a miscarriage, proffers her milk-engorged breast to a starving man. The modern woman must therefore confront the biological clock and society that (wrongly) forces her to choose either to fulfill herself in motherhood or else to live with a pressure that is often destructive.

Yet the multifarious feminine can embrace all these roles without having to choose between yin and yang, to borrow a concept from Chinese philosophy. This is about reconciling “warrior impulse” and “fertile love”.

### Ishtar

Goddess for the Assyrians and Babylonians, she was called Inanna by the Sumerians. The culture and mythology that grew up around her is unparalleled by any other goddess in the Middle East. At the height of her adoration, she was goddess of war and of physical love, governing life and death. She seems to have given rise to Aphrodite, Turan and Venus in the Greek, Etruscan and Roman pantheons. She is often depicted with hermaphrodite features (Ishtar barbata).

### Societal issues

The biological clock, the place of maternity in modern society

### Music

An epic built on repetitive and recurring themes.

A fresco that rumbles and swells, with a furious free drums and cornet solo, and a breathless ending.

Music by Tristan Macé

Clotilde : vocals

Médéric Collignon : cornet

Albin Lebosse : cor

Yann Cléry : flute and vocals

Anne-Lise Clément : clarinet

Laurent Salzard : bass

Cyril Hernandez : percussions

Justin Faulkner : drums

### Film

A dancer walks in the street, looking straight ahead, not paying attention to what's happening around her, either the cars or the people going by. As she walks, she transforms from a businesswoman to a pregnant woman.

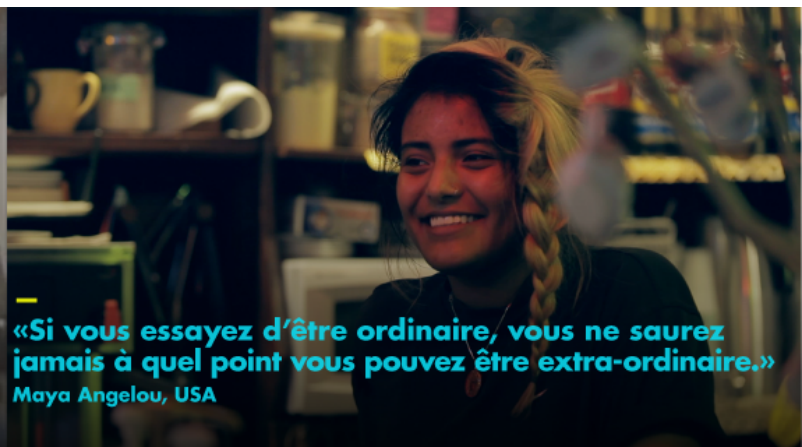
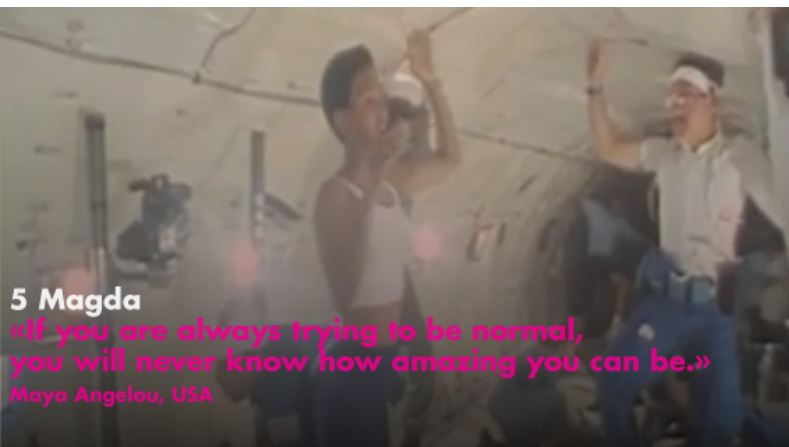
The expressions and attitudes of the people in the street change according to the “feminine” portrayed by the dancer.

Shots of the streets of Chicago with sweeping yet oppressive views. Point of view switching from that of the dancer to those looking at her.

**Durée:** 5'24

**Dance :** Chojnowska (Marina Ligeron)





**5 Magda**  
 «If you are always trying to be normal,  
 you will never know how amazing you can be.»  
 Maya Angelou, USA

«Si vous essayez d'être ordinaire, vous ne saurez  
 jamais à quel point vous pouvez être extra-ordinaire.»  
 Maya Angelou, USA

After all these metamorphoses and quests, the woman blossoms, finally free, complete and whole. She has created a peaceful place where all these feminines coexist, where her social woman can be reconciled with her inner force of nature, animus and anima. She becomes a “great lady”, rising like an impregnable tower, with fully assured femininity, to occupy those spaces traditionally reserved for men. Within each ordinary woman there is an exceptional woman awaiting her moment to bloom.

### **Magdalena**

From “Magdal” in Aramaic or “Migdal” in Hebrew, meaning “tower” (a phallic symbol *par excellence*), Magdalena appears in the gospels as one of Jesus’ apostles, the most important woman disciple and the first witness to the resurrection, itself a representation of the cycle of life and death. Mary Magdalene also raises the question of a fundamental equality between men and women, with certain theologians maintaining that she was the “spiritual” bride of Jesus

### **Societal issues**

The feminine in power, great women, women who occupy men’s positions

### **Music**

A oud - voice duo that symbolises the harmony, the accomplishment and the balance, alike the two arms of DNA, similar and so different at the same time and constantly moving

Music by Grégory Dargent and Clotilde

Clotilde : vocal

Grégory Dargent : oud

### **Film**

Shots of women filmed naturally in the street, in their daily life, then embedded in a mosaic of archive images (given by the INA, the Centre Simone de Beauvoir, RTS and SONUMA) of women from all over the world, living or deceased, who have made their mark on history.

Durée: 6’03





**6 Hannah**

«I am like a tulip in the desert. I die before opening. And the desert breeze scatters my petals.»

Anonymous woman, Afghanistan

«Je suis comme une tulipe dans le désert. Je meurs avant de m'ouvrir. Et la brise du désert éparpille mes pétales.»

Femme anonyme, Afghanistan

Despite, or because of, her perpetual quest for fulfillment and the gathering of her feminines in an harmonious whole, the woman finds herself hostage to a sibylline paradox. From the dawn of history until today, the history of humanity is filled, sadly, with these tales of war over, or triggered by, a woman.

She, the object of infighting. She, who unknowingly draws the fire of jealousy and power, a weapon of war. She, who also has the most to lose. She sees her sons, her brothers, her friends and her husbands combat and kill each other. As a pillar of her community, it is she whom the oppressors seek to silence, to destroy through the most terrible atrocities in order to defeat their enemies. It is the feminine who cries. Dazed, bewildered and disorientated amid such chaos, she momentarily forgets her creative power.

**Hannah**

is the first name of the mother of the Virgin Mary in the Muslim tradition (Anne in the Christian tradition). Although supposedly sterile, she gave birth to Mary after twenty years of marriage.

**Societal issues**

The women martyrs, women as weapons of war

**Music**

A funeral march that crosses musical genres, like a long lament, accompanied by the Hijaz'car orchestra.

Music by Grégory Dargent

Clotilde : vocals

Grégory Dargent : oud

Jean Louis Marchand : bass clarinet

Nicolas Beck : tarhu

Etienne Gruel : percussions

Vincent Posty : double basse

**Film**

In the middle of a lunar, battlefield landscape, where geysers spurt in explosive blasts, a procession of samurai dancers advance with heavy step, like mourners

Durée: 5'49

**Dance**

Jin Xing Dance Theater (Chine)



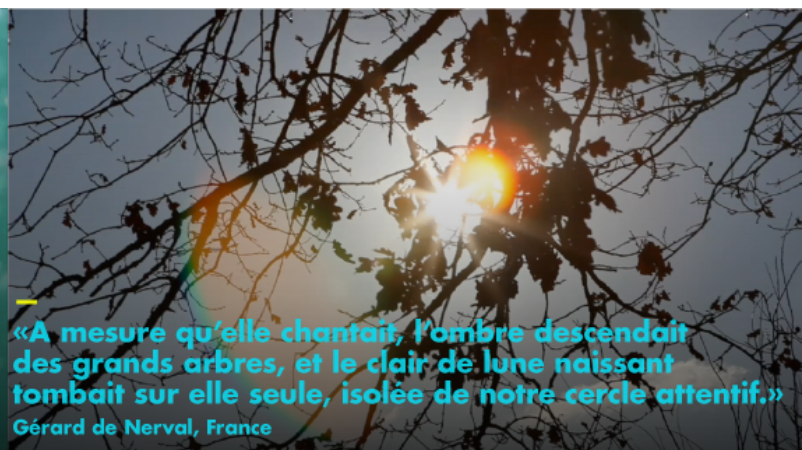




### 7 Enk'aï

«As she sang, the shadows of the tall trees shortened, and the brightening moonlight fell on her alone, isolated in our attentive circle.»

Gérard de Nerval, France



«A mesure qu'elle chantait, l'ombre descendait des grands arbres, et le clair de lune naissant tombait sur elle seule, isolée de notre cercle attentif.»

Gérard de Nerval, France

Immensity, contemplation, reconciliation, calming, fusion with the rest of nature, reunion of heaven and earth, peace of the original placenta before the tumult of rebirth.

### Enk'Aï

She is a Massai goddess. She is The Mother, the Origin of the tenderness that unifies us. She controls births, rain and life. By re-linking to her, the Massai reach the harmony and let express their sensibility, their vulnerability.

### Societal issues

The cycle of life, the original placenta, the state of completeness before the perpetual restart

### Music

Chorale blending ethereal and airy voices with organic, deep-seated breathing

Music by Emmanuel Bex and Clotilde

Clotilde : voix, shrutibox and flute

### Film

Nature sequences: sharply intercut shots of the tumultuous sea, forest in the wind, etc., alternating with long-takes.

**Durée :** 4'40

