

# PERFORMANCE PROSPECTUS

**ON THE  
BOARDS**

**Christian Rizzo | l'association fragile  
*b.c, janvier 1545, fontainebleau.***

**OCT 7 - 10, 2010**

**Choreography, set design and costumes : Christian Rizzo**

**Performed by Julie Guibert**

**Music live : Gerome Nox**

**Light installation : Caty Olive**

**Stage manager : Jean-michel Hugo**

production : l'association fragile ; co-production : Montpellier Dance Festival -  
Centre National de la Danse de Pantin (creation in residency)

with the support of the Passerelle, scene nationale de Saint-Brieuc.

For this US tour l'association fragile is supported by Culturesfrance and la communauté urbaine de Lille.

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## A NOTE FROM OTB

Christian Rizzo is an artist's artist. Perhaps this is why most of the artists in attendance at his US debut here in 2006 left shaking their heads, equally stunned by the frankness of his approach as his playful yet stark treatment of choreography, light, sound and props. But an "artist's artist?" What does this mean?

In Christian's case, it means two things: 1) he's nearly impossible to categorize, and 2) he's not afraid to provoke. While many artists could be described in similar terms, Christian somehow embodies these traits more than most, which is why he probably registers so much with other creative types.

In general, artists hate being boxed in by labels. As Christian points out in his interview with local choreographer Amy O'Neal ([read](#) or [listen](#) to it at [ontheboards.org](http://ontheboards.org)), coining artistic movements and styles is more the purview of critics and not something artists generally worry about. Christian is less of a dance artist than an artist who locates himself in dance because it offers so many creative possibilities. Formally, he functions more like a visual artist, treating the human body as a raw material and organizing it as just one part of the overall *mis en scene*.

This leads to the second point: he's not just a calculated conceptualist, he's a curious mischief maker who looks at each project as an opportunity for research and exploration. As such, he makes expressions with his collaborators that push to extremes while also feeling confident enough to lean the other way towards subtlety and barely discernible gestures. Perhaps this is why his performances convey a general aura of mystery, because he's willing to create riddles for himself that may never get solved.

We could not ask for a better artist to kick off the season. While we talk a lot about dialogue as a means for better appreciating what artists make and why they make it, this season is particularly challenging to decode. So while we'll keep writing and talking with the hopes that you will do the same and join us in a stimulating year long conversation about art and creative practice, we also realize it can be a somewhat futile exercise – but deeply worthwhile nonetheless.

Sarah Wilke and Lane Czaplinski

# DECODING THE TITLE

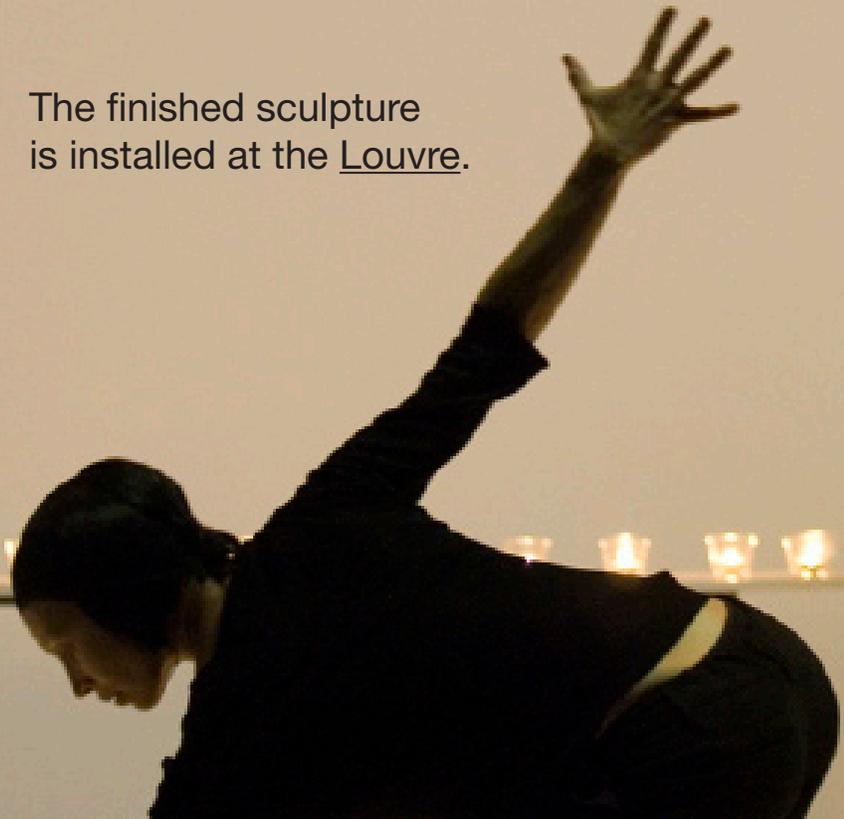
Christian Rizzo is infamous for titles that appear obscure on the surface but are actually imbued with meaning. The title - *b.c, janvier 1545, fontainebleau.* - is a direct reference to a sculptor and one of his most famous works of art, tying this performance strongly to the world of visual art:

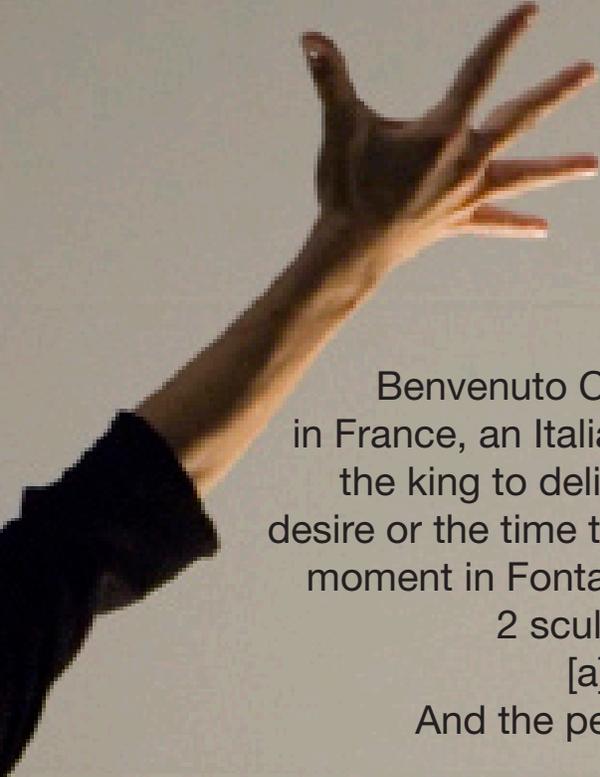
b.c, = Benvenuto Cellini, 16th century Italian artist  
janvier 1545 = date of creation or installation  
fontainebleau = a royal palace located 55km outside of Paris and the inspiration for a sculpture created by Cellini

Here's a quick background story from Christian's company regarding the title:

*"When Benvenuto Cellini came to France, François 1er [the King of France] was at the Château of Fontainebleau. (...) the celebrated sculptor was destined to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious predecessors, creating statuary for the most chivalrous court in Europe (...). Cellini had seen how much the King liked the Château and decided to flatter him by creating for him a statue he would name "the Nymph of Fontainebleau."*

The finished sculpture is installed at the Louvre.





# INTERVIEW EXCERPT WITH CHRISTIAN RIZZO

In fact **there is a real story** behind [the title]... Benvenuto Cellini, he was a sculptor during the Renaissance in France, an Italian. And in January 1545 he had a command from the king to deliver 2 sculptures. But this sculptor didn't have the desire or the time to do it, so he just delivered one sculpture at this moment in Fontainebleau. And he knew that he couldn't show the 2 sculptures, so he decided to show - he started to put [a] little **movement and lighting** in the sculpture. And the people were so mad about it that they totally forgot that the command was for 2 sculptures.

And in fact what I like in this little history, which is already in the 16th century, it could be the **start of what we now call trans-disciplinary arts**. We have the sculpture but we start to put lights and movement and it's already like the beginning of a hybrid way of showing things. Because in France we have...things like dance with art and music... I think for a long time we tried to develop some way to show things **using different tools together to create one moment**, specific one moment. We have all this generation always referring to the visual art thing, but only the artists who started from the '50s or '60s. And I think perhaps if we are really involved in that perhaps we can go a little bit deeper in the more large history of art to understand what we are doing today and not only our last 60 years... **I'm more coming from the Romantic painting of the 19th century** and some Middle Age things, and all these things are connected to understand the world today. And for me to just understand the last 50 years, it's not enough.

**LISTEN TO THE FULL INTERVIEW WITH AMY O'NEAL**

**ONTHEBOARDS.ORG**

**DOWNLOAD INTERVIEW PDF**



# TOP 6 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT CHRISTIAN RIZZO

- 1.** Christian's work is highly visual and is often informed from his various career tracks outside of choreography, including **fashion designer**, rock musician and visual artist.
- 2.** OtB was the site for Christian's US debut in 2006. His inaugural appearance stateside coincided with a growing clamor in NYC for his work. He wouldn't perform in NYC until 2 years later in 2008.
- 3.** He belongs in the **non-danse genre** that's most prevalent in France. What's non-danse? In a nutshell: dance in which highly physical movement is not the primary component or present at all. Often in this genre movement takes the back burner, becoming an element akin to set design, while other flourishes (visual, video, etc) are made more prominent.
- 4.** He is commissioned by the top companies around the world.
- 5.** In 2007 Christian worked with designer David Dubois to create an exhibition for the 20th anniversary of the fashion house of **Christian Lacroix**.
- 6.** Christian has begun to work more in the field of **opera**.

[Learn more about Christian Rizzo, watch performance clips, and learn about muse Julie Guibert](#)

# BIOS

## Christian Rizzo

Christian Rizzo was born in 1965 in Cannes. His artistic career began in Toulouse, where he started a rock band and designed a line of clothing, after which he studied fine arts at the Villa d'Arson in Nice, then unexpectedly branched out into dance. In the 90s he performed with a number of contemporary choreographers including Mathilde Monnier, Herve Robbe, Mark Tompkins and Georges Appaix, and sometimes created soundtracks and costumes for them as well. He also worked with choreographers with a different artistic approach, such as Vera Mantero, Catherine Contour, Emmanuelle Huynh and Rachid Ouramdane.

In 1996 he founded l'association fragile and began presenting events, dancing objects, solos and group pieces, as well as various projects and commissioned work in fashion and the visual arts. Since then, over thirty projects have borne fruit, not counting his pedagogical activities.

Christian Rizzo teaches on a regular basis in art schools in France and abroad, as well as in establishments devoted to contemporary dance.

## Julie Guibert

Born in 1974, Julie Guibert began her dance career with the company of Maryse Delente, later joining the Ballet du Nord in Lille, still under the direction of Maryse Delente and Jennifer Muller. From 1998 to 2003, she worked with the Ballet Cullberg, after which she joined the Opéra Ballet of Lyon, working with Trisha Brown, Mats Ek, Philippe Decouflé, Maguy Marin, Russell Maliphant, Christian Rizzo and William Forsythe. In 2005 and 2006, she performed in *Nouveau Monde* by Yves-Noël Genod in Paris, *Push* and *Transmission* by the Russell Maliphant company in London, then danced *Les Rares Différences* by Marie-Agnès Gillot in Suresnes – Cité Danse Variations. In 2007, she performed in the remarkable solo, *Devant l'arrière pays (Before the back country)*, by the Belgian choreographer Stijn Celis, under the auspices of the Sujet à Vif section (SACD) of the Avignon Festival. In 2009, she performed in the next creation of *Herman Diephuis Ciao Bella* and in *Glossopoiea* by Richard Siegal.

## Gerome Nox (aka G-Nox)

Gerome Nox is a product of the Beaux Arts school. But he has been moving in a world of “cutting-edge” music since the early 1980s, the decade during which he founded the industrial music group, NOX. These days, Nox's work blends rhythms, electronic and electro-acoustic manipulations, and city sounds and atmosphere. It is a body of work whose occasionally violent energy evokes the in-your-face edginess of bustling urban life, creating soundscapes that are constantly evolving, and in which power and excess alternate with minimalism and refinement. As one who considers sound more as matter, and instruments as so many means for

producing and shaping music, Nox is as much a visual artist as a musician. It is in this perspective that, while not abandoning a traditional instrument such as the electric guitar, he increasingly turned to electronic instruments – and especially computers – that allowed him to treat the sound in terms of texture, density, volume, resistance and spatialisation. Nox has collaborated on numerous new musical and audiovisual works, performances, and choreographic works.

These diverse collaborations have led him to work with the following artists:

Cecile Babirole (multimedia artist), Laure Bonicel (choreographer), Alain Declercq (visual artist), Christophe Fiat (sound poet), Emmanuelle Huynh (choreographer), P. Nicolas Ledoux (visual artist), Claude Leveque (visual artist), Barbara Mavro Thalassitis (choreographer), Michèle Murray (choreographer), Christian Rizzo (visual artist/choreographer), Kasper T. Toeplitz (musician/composer).

Nox has performed at the following venues and events: The House of World Cultures (Berlin), The Cultural Centre of Belem (Lisbon), the Bratislava Dance Festival (Bratislava), the festival Musique Action (CCAM Nancy/Vandoeuvre), the festival Nouvelles Scènes (Dijon), the Cartier Foundation (Paris), The Georges Pompidou Centre (Paris), MACBA (Barcelona), Melkweg (Amsterdam), DANCE (Munich), the Hebbel (Berlin), the Museion (Bolzano, Italy), etc.

Interview excerpts and press reviews can be found on the M-Tronic label's website: **m-tronic.com**

## **Caty Olive**

Caty Olive received her degree in stage design from the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. She divides her activities as a lighting designer among several types of projects:

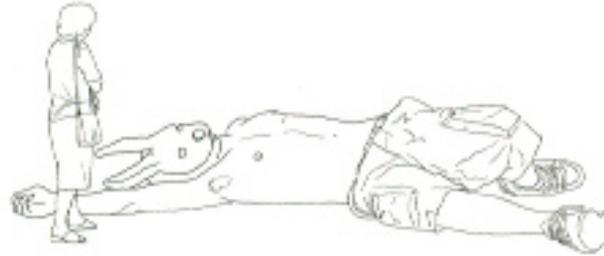
- Dance: working with Marco Berrettini, Christophe Haleb, Martine Pisani, Myriam Gourfink, Emmanuelle Huynh, Claudia Triozzi and Christian Rizzo in France; and Vera Mantero and Tiago Guedes, in Portugal.
- Architecture and exhibitions: Cartier International, Parc de la Villette, the Château de Versailles, Espace Electra, The Museum of the Cinema, Midi Minuit, The Museum of Fashion
- Fashion: Cartier, de Beers, Rayon Vert/Hermès.

She has also done research on light installations: Portrait de Frans Poelstra, Nicolas Floc'h/Structure multifonctions CatyOlive, Cabinet des méduses, une exposition des caustiques, Parcelles du champ, en cour et regard opaque, Nuits Blanches at Paris, nuits au potager at Versaille ...

In all these diverse projects, Olive shows a particular interest in questions arising from the displacement and instability of light.



# BUNNY-MAN SKETCHES



christian rizzo- 3005



christian rizzo- 3006



christian rizzo- 3008

Christian Rizzo | l'association fragile is supported by



Seasonal support for OtB is provided by



ARTSFUND

This production is sponsored by



THE PAUL G. ALLEN  
FAMILY *foundation*  
CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

This project is funded in part by FUSED: French U.S. Exchange in Dance, a program of the National Dance Project/New England Foundation for the Arts and the Cultural Services of the French Embassy in New York with lead funding from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, the French American Cultural Exchange and the Florence Gould Foundation.

Christian Rizzo | l'association fragile photos by Marc Damage