

Thibault Lac, "Blue Moon"
Performance: 26.03.2026, 20:00
Traces in the exhibition: until 17.05.2026

INTRODUCTION

As part of the exhibition "Suzanne Perrottet: After Dada, After Dance," Thibault Lac presents the new performance "Blue Moon" on March 26. The work draws on the life and practice of dancer and pedagogue Suzanne Perrottet (1889–1983), her encounters with the Dada avant-garde in Zurich, and her diverse approaches to dance. It pays particular attention to the nocturnal world of early twentieth-century cabarets—spaces of artistic experimentation where popular entertainment, Kleinkunst, the "milieu," and the avant-garde intersected. Perrottet is present in all the scenes, movements, and costumes of the piece—as a dancer, as a musician, and as an important, though often overlooked, chronicler of Dada and dance history who documented both everyday and staged movements.

The traces of the performance, presented here on the red stage of the exhibition, bear witness to this presence. Shoes and a shimmering sequined costume, embodying the glamour of the stage world, were left behind on stage immediately after the performance. Above the costume floats the moon, which Thibault Lac used as a scenographic element, evoking the ambivalences of the cabaret world between freedom and precarity.

MORE ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

In her memoirs, Perrottet recounts that her first encounter with Dada occurred at a preparatory gathering for the soirée at the Zunfthaus zur Waag in July 1916. Her recollection of this event also provides the only known description of a dance performance by Emmy Hennings, whose movements were constrained by a cardboard costume. In "Blue Moon," Lac invited the audience into a similar setting, where rehearsal and performance blurred. The stage was understood as a site of memory, preserving gestures and performances that were rehearsed but never seen or documented—just as was the case for many female protagonists, including those in Dada.

During the performance, the audience was drawn into a reverie that blended different times and places, as figures inspired by Perrottet's archive of gestures drifted in and out of focus. The journey moved between chic Parisian cabarets, Hollywood references, and the nocturnal underworld of performance. As the piece unfolded through a series of costume changes, historical references emerged—among them Perrottet's portrayal of a prostitute in the number "Die Bar" at the cabaret *Der Krater* in 1928, where narrative and emotion were conveyed not through words but solely through pantomime and dance. In the opening scene, she leapt onto a bar table on stage. The soundtrack resonated with eclectic sounds from avant-garde and popular music,

including Mariah Carey. Some of these traces led back to Perrottet's memoirs—her account of participating in the recitation of a simultaneous poem with the Dada group, accompanied by the singing of *Sous les ponts de Paris*, as well as the score of Cyril Scott's *Poppies*, performed by Perrottet at a Dada soirée and preserved in her archive.

In the choreography, various figures of seduction appeared, highlighting the historical context and cultural framework of cabaret performances, in which the stage functioned both as a space of emancipation and of sexualization. In the economy of performance—then as now—the body becomes the primary medium of expression: a body that is gazed at, desired, instrumentalized, and put to work. In "Blue Moon," a gradual dramaturgy of unveiling—akin to an extended striptease—unfolded through kitsch costumes and precarious cardboard props. In doing so, the work foregrounded an often-overlooked economic reality, as well as the paradoxes of autonomy, empowerment, and constraint inherent to the world of spectacle and Perrottet's life path.

In the melancholic light of a multiplied moonlit landscape—beneath a self-made cardboard moon—Thibault Lac held the tension between collective imagination and personal longing, which feels surprising in the context of the life-reformist Monte Verità or Dada in Zurich. Contrary to what is usually associated with avant-garde and high culture, Sophie Taeuber had watched the new Charlie Chaplin films in the cinema. Perrottet, too, had been fascinated by Hollywood glamour: in 1939, she created a detailed and precise notation of the dance by Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers in the Hollywood classic *Top Hat* (1935). Sub-cultural performances and popular theatrical forms stood side by side; avant-garde cabarets and American culture began to blur, from the moon at the first impressionist cabaret *Chat Noir* in Paris to the moon in New York's *Studio 54*—or Elvis' *Blue Moon*. Under the blue moon, the precarious and the glamorous, the visible and the invisible—everything onstage and backstage—was brought to light.

Thibault Lac especially thanks the following people for their precious help:

Mariah Carey, Lucienne Delyle, Elvis, Lotte de Jager, Emmy Hennings, Silvan Hillmann, Salome Hohl, Eartha Kitt, Tobias Koch, This Mortal Coil, Suzanne Perrottet, Ginger Rogers, Alban Schelbert, Monica Unser

LYRICS

Sous les ponts de Paris
(1913, J. Rodor, V. Scotto, Georgel, Lucienne Delyle)

“(…)

*Sous les ponts de Paris, lorsque descend la nuit
Toutes sortes de gueux se faufilent en cachette
Et sont heureux de trouver une couchette
Hôtel du courant d'air, où l'on ne paie pas cher
L'parfum et l'eau c'est pour rien mon marquis
Sous les ponts de Paris*

*À la sortie de l'usine, Julot rencontre Nini
Ça va t'y la rouquine, c'est ta fête aujourd'hui
Prends ce bouquet, ce brin d'muguet
C'est peu mais c'est toute ma fortune
Viens avec moi, j'connais l'endroit
Où l'on n'craint même pas le clair de lune*

*Sous les ponts de Paris, lorsque descend la nuit
Comme il n'a pas de quoi s'payer une chambrette
Un couple heureux vient s'aimer en cachette
Et les yeux dans les yeux, faisant des rêves bleus
Julot partage les baisers de Nini
Sous les ponts de Paris
(…)*

English translation:

“(…)

*Under the bridges of Paris, when night descends
All kinds of scoundrels sneak in
And are happy to find a berth
Drafty hotel, where you don't pay much
Perfume and water are for nothing my marquis
Under the bridges of Paris*

*At the exit of the factory, Julot meets Nini
That's it, redhead, it's your party today
Take this bouquet, this sprig of lily of the valley
It's little but it's all my fortune
Come with me, I know the place
Where we don't even fear the moonlight*

*Under the bridges of Paris, when night descends
Since he doesn't have enough to pay for a room
A happy couple comes to love each other in secret
And looking into each other's eyes, dreaming blue
dreams
Julot shares Nini's kisses
Under the bridges of Paris
(…)*