

# LEE MILLER IN HITLER'S BATHTUB

a NEEDCOMPANY production

in co-production with Wiener Staatsoper

*A tragic cantata*

**'A woman had to be a monster to be an artist.  
And one who married another artist was branded - like a cow.'**

Lee Miller

**With the support of the Flemish Authorities**



Lee in Hitler's bathtub, Munich, 1945 (David E. Scherman)

# LEE MILLER IN HITLER'S BATHTUB

*A story for two women and a few unimportant men*

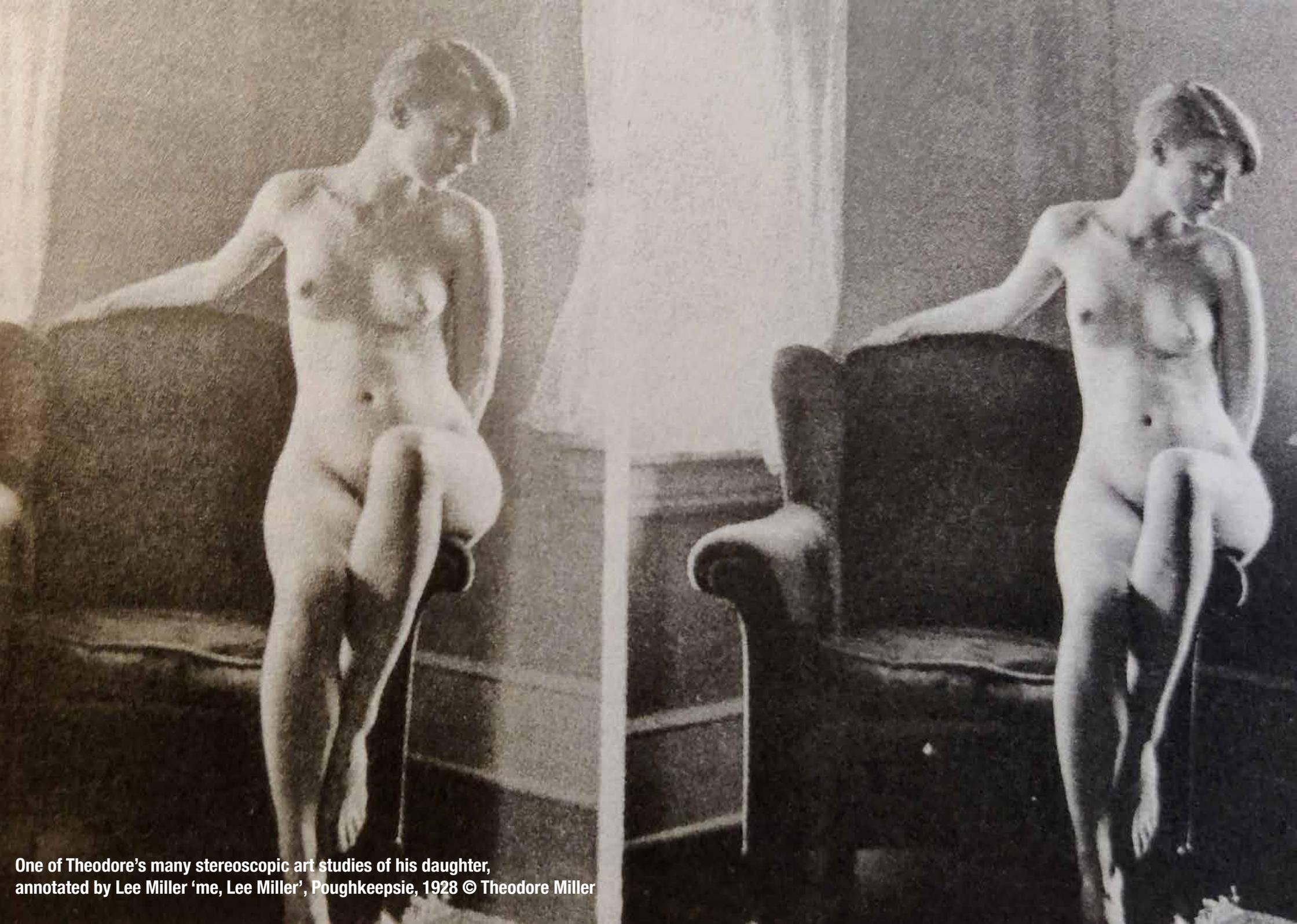
**Jan Lauwers'** oeuvre as a writer and theatre maker is characterised by strong female roles. One woman who has fascinated him for a long time is the American artist Lee Miller. (War-) photographer, journalist, topmodel, covergirl and alcoholic. Abused, vilified, adored and discarded. And then there is this one photo: **Lee in Hitler's bathtub** by David E. Scherman in 1945. Not only does this photo fascinate and shock the world, but also it perhaps forms the basis for another kind/a new kind of photography in which the subject is riveted to the body of the maker, in which there is no question of the autonomy of the image because the shadow of the maker muddies the waters. What possessed this woman to gain access to Hitler's apartment and wash herself in the devil's bathtub? The text begins at the moment when she stands in front of Hitler's bathtub in her stinking clothes, which still reek of the corpse smells from Dachau

**Kate Lindsey's** overwhelming interpretation of Nerone in 'L'incoronazione di Poppea', directed by Jan Lauwers, much admired by press and audience alike, inspired the latter to write a new text for Lindsey. The radical freedom that Lindsey seeks out in her métier inspires Lauwers to write a demanding text about one of the most controversial artists of the 20th century.

Alongside Kate Lindsey, **Romy Louise Lauwers** is also on stage. Actress, radical performer, muse and daughter of Jan Lauwers. Two women encountering one another in the shady world of Lee Miller. Because the darkness already set in early with Lee. Not only was she abused as a child, but her father took 'possession' of her by shooting photos of her year in, year out. Daring, radical photos. To what extent her father contributed to the cause of her downfall is difficult to assess. A father whose daughter is his muse? For Jan Lauwers this is a highly personal question, because he has been inspired by his own daughter for years and they still collaborate very closely.

Composer and performance artist **Maarten Seghers** has long been Jan Lauwers' partner in crime. From songwriting, he has evolved into writing contemporary music. In his compositions, the physicality and brutality of the music play a central role, even though his work is as soothing as it is punchy. It combines two extremes. On the one hand, he approaches music as sound, and consequently sound as material. On the other hand, he composes narrative music that draws on a more epic or emotional chronicling. This dichotomy, in which his work is marked by deconstruction and construction, results in compositions for both voice and contemporary ensemble. He primarily makes his mark by achieving the maximum with the bare minimum. For **Lee Miller in Hitler's Bathtub** he writes a full-evening cantata for mezzo-soprano Kate Lindsey and five-piece ensemble (percussion, strings, woodwind and brass).





One of Theodore's many stereoscopic art studies of his daughter, annotated by Lee Miller 'me, Lee Miller', Poughkeepsie, 1928 © Theodore Miller

## ABOUT THE LIBRETTO

**Jan Lauwers:** 'Theater involves collaboration. My entire body of work as a theater maker has been a quest for making a total portrait of the people with whom I am working at that moment. On the one hand, it is the portrait of the character in the play or libretto, on the other it is the performer/actor/singer who brings this character to life. As a portraitist, both the character and the performer are equally important. In my theatre works I write on the skin of the person portrayed. This is the key to contemporary theater. In doing this, one can also transcend the contemporary dogmas of diversity and identity.'

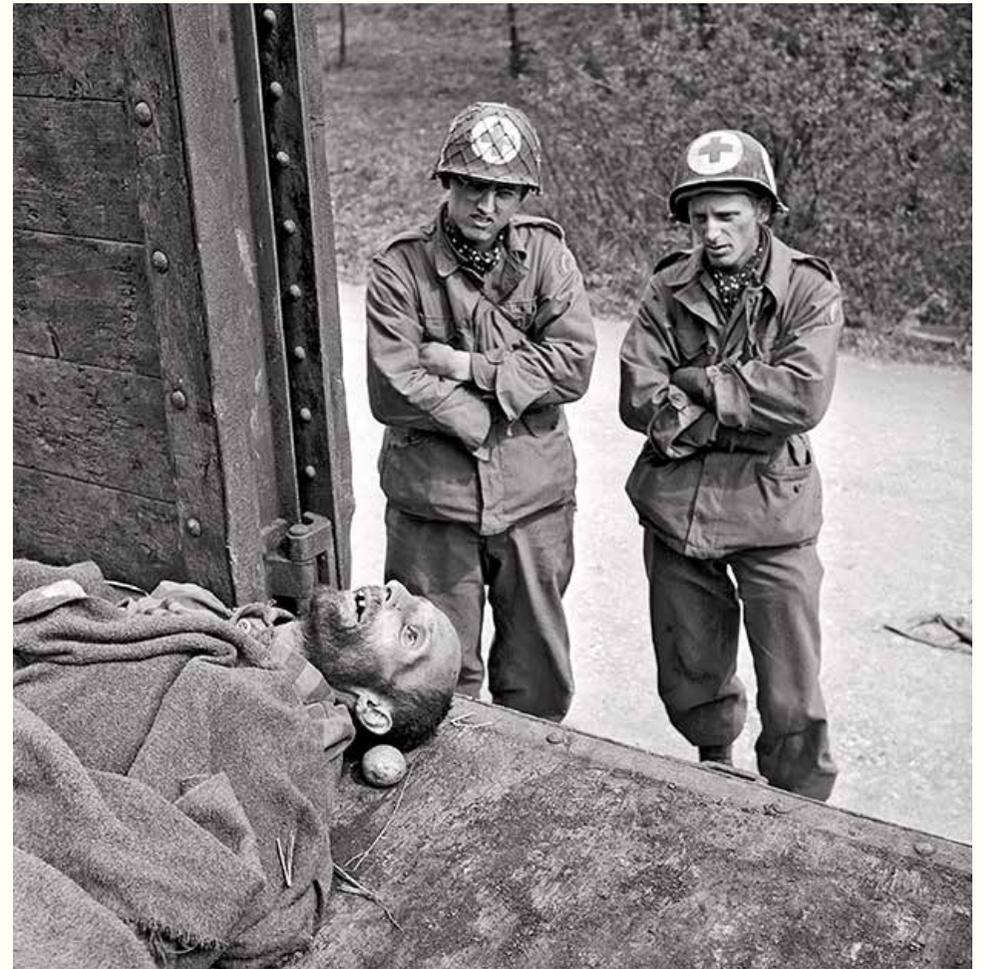
I wrote **Lee Miller in Hitler's Bathtub** because I met Kate Lindsey. During my collaboration with her in 2021 in Monteverdi's 'L'incoronazione di Poppea', where she played the role of Nerone, I knew that I would write for her. At that moment I had the notorious photo of Lee in Hitler's bathroom in my studio. The photo had been there for some time, because I had been researching into the issue of truth and photography in relation to the use of images on the social media. I spoke regularly to my daughter, the actress, Romy Louise who – heaven forbid – has been as it were a sort of touchstone and even an accursed muse for my thoughts about art in the contemporary world in which the 'woke' and #metoo movements have brought about a healthy confusion. My daughter has become my first reader. These two women, Kate and Romy, have inspired me to make a double portrait. Two phenomenal performers who get under the skin of Lee Miller. Why two women? In the first place because I didn't want to write a biography. I haven't made any in-depth study of the life of Lee. The libretto is a portrait of a woman who at the end of her life said that she felt like a cow who had been milked dry. A woman in the shadow of many men. Famous men. Notorious men. I wanted to make a portrait that was no longer that of Lee but of so many women in the history of art who have been gagged. I have already referred to this history in another text, 'All the good', in which I described the tragic power of Artemisia Gentileschi, the first female artist to gain admission to the Accademia delle arti del disegno, as an oil painter (in the seventeenth century), and who was brutally raped by her mentor, and later tortured in public as a sinner.



By writing for two women, Kate and Romy, a sort of objectivity is generated. The psychological line both performers follow and intersect with their subject, or else they introduce confusion, thus revealing the identity of both interpreters in contrast with the portrait of Lee. This alienation mechanism allows me as writer to situate myself athwart history. The result is no true-to-life document but it allows the power of poetry to speak via the bodies of the performers, their interpretation, and of course the singing voice of Kate, who is the main catalyst.

The libretto does not tell the story of Lee from birth to death. As a writer, I am fascinated by the moral lack of clarity of Lee as a woman in a patriarchal society, in which power games are ruthlessly played. What does it mean for Lee that she chose to take a bath in the monster's bathtub? What does it mean moreover to let her photo be taken there? What does it mean for her photography and the truth that she rearranged corpses in Dachau for the sake of the lighting?'





**US medics staring at a dead prisoner inside the Dachau  
Death Train, Dachau, 1945 ©Lee Miller**

# ARIA FRAGMENT

Fortunately images have no smell  
It would be intolerable if they did  
Smells are invented and never expected  
The lighting must be pleasing



Lee Miller's life is a succession of strange and sometimes cruel events. Central to her life is her unconditional love for her father, symbolic of her complete disintegration as a woman and creative spirit.

*I lost my virginity before I knew what it was. And all my life ... all my life I've tried to get it back. Instead, I became a mistress of pleasing people. With one glance I knew the sort of man who was looking at me. They looked at me with astonishment or lust, sometimes with shame. Or with aversion and despair. Unattainable. I'd learned from my dad that I had to please people, because of the panic attacks that I constantly felt under my skin ... to keep those panic attacks at bay, I had to please people, d'you understand? My dad gazed at me like a precious and beautiful object. I didn't feel I was beautiful in any way. What did I know? But I learned to play the game. And by learning to play the game so young and for so long, I became a mistress in it. Till the game took over and I really believed in it. I believed I was my body. That I was what people saw.*

*My dad didn't look at my breasts or thighs. He looked at light; it's always about light, he said. I took him at his word. Why wouldn't I believe him? He was my only certainty. Through him I've learned to look at the world as a beast of prey.*

## ARIA 'ABOUT COWARDS'

Lauwers touches only indirectly on Lee's love life and her series of affairs. Here too historical accuracy is not the requirement. All the men in the libretto become 'the' MAN. This gives rise to an amusing misunderstanding between the man and Man Ray, who was her true mentor.

*'What are you coming to do?'*  
*'I'm your new wife.'*  
*'You're taller than me.'*  
*'Do you have a problem with that?'*  
*'Maybe.'*  
*'Look at me.'*  
*'If I do that, I'm lost.'*  
*'What are you thinking when you look at me.*  
*Do you think you are free to think what you think?*  
*You look and what are you thinking then?*  
*Men always think about what other men are thinking.*  
*That's because you are cowards.*  
*Can you think without thinking what others think about it?*  
*No, you can't do that.*  
*Man, I love you.'*



Suicide in Leipzig town hall, 1945 © Lee Miller



Lee withdrew from public life and her photos ceased to be part of her existence and she concentrated instead on cooking and silence. Lauwers wrote the following epilogue:

*And the old woman said: 'A woman had to be a monster to be an artist. And one who married another artist was branded - like a cow.' With my last bit of lipstick, I write these words on the gigantic mirror in the hall of the country house where I've retreated. Where I cook and drink, but never put on makeup. This was the funniest bit: the perplexity in the eyes of the little men who saw me without any make-up.*

*The photo in the bathroom is my final self-portrait. I never take a photo of my own child. The men do come by now and then, always at dinner time. What they see then, at the stove, is a somewhat stocky woman, somewhat neglected, with broad, big-boned thighs and grey hair over her eyes, who never looks up. They see a woman who has had her day and hopes that she can pass through life unnoticed. 'There are no facelifts for the soul', Picasso had whispered to her in a poetic moment. But what they didn't see was the smile of the woman who knew she had killed the predator in herself. Because she had been given no choice, neither by her mother, nor her father; nor from all the men who had worshipped her without understanding her, nor from life itself. Because violence, love and death always accidentally took hold of my life. How much choice do you have as a human being? The smile on my lips was my last choice. And the meals I prepared: with the best, carefully chosen ingredients. And during the meal, I would address them. I'd speak to them with a mild voice. Gently looking to one side. A wise woman who has understood things. I'd point out to them, with a mild voice, that there are things that do matter. Point out that no rose is the same. That the horrors I have seen and experienced have made me who I am. I would speak very honestly and purely then about the future. About how we can escape from the horror without any danger to life and limb. I would speak to them without wagging my finger and tell them that they must take things into their own hands. But I said nothing. And have never said a word.*

*And so, I've disappeared: a strong proud woman whom no one ever saw: at the end I was just cooking for the same lonely, self-satisfied artists who always turned up at dinner time and got drunk and pissed in her carefully cultivated herb garden. They were paltry streams of piss from a diminished male member through a swollen prostate. No peeing contest, but counting drips. When I saw them behaving like this, I couldn't help thinking of that dancing bear in that gloomy cafe in Transylvania. The creature was hibernating and I ordered his boss to wake him so that he would dance for me and only me. Hibernation is a waste of time and I hadn't gone to the end of the world just to look at a dancing bear. I wanted to see my teddy bear dance. He poked and beat his creature till it woke up. The feeble animal stank and his coat was pale and fluffy. To the huge amusement of my company, he began to piss and shit before sinking through his feet. His keeper beat the creature harder and harder till it finally stood up straight and started to dance. For me. For me alone.*

CLICK CLICK CLICK



## ABOUT THE SCENOGRAPHY



On the stage is an exact copy of Hitler's bathroom in Munich, as in the photo. A projection screen showing a number of Lee Miller's photos.

The five musicians are seated around the bathroom. Besides their roles as musicians, they also interpret the male world that brought about her ruin.

On the proscenium, photography equipment has been installed, with a number of electronic flash lamps, by which the sound of the motor and the flash itself can be amplified.

To one side there is an ice sculpture of Lee as a six-year-old girl, based on the photo taken by her father the day after she was raped. The ice sculpture is life-size and melts during the performance.

Both protagonists are dressed in battledress. A copy of the army uniform that Lee wore when she discovered the bathroom.

# ARIA: THE GIRL IN THE SNOW

Listen to [Snow](#) here.

## KATE

[aria: the girl in the snow]

A photo of a girl in the snow.

A photo of a naked girl in the snow.

A photo of a seven-year-old girl naked in the snow.

A photo of a seven-year-old naked girl who has been raped and who tries to dull the burning pain between her legs with snow.

## ROMY

Daddy who asks her to look away dreamily. She can't manage it. Daddy who develops the photo and prints it in his red studio. He looks at the result. He is a satisfied man.

CLICK CLICK CLICK

## KATE

Take your knickers off and throw them over the facecloth.

She feels nauseated and tests the water that now has the right temperature.

Aren't you going to get in?

## ROMY

I feel like I'm being watched.

(Those trembling hands again. Shrugging her shoulders.)

## KATE

She looks round. In the corner, half-hidden behind the door is a photo of him, with a fine dark oakwood frame. He stares at her.



(Romy picks it up. She takes a close look.)

**ROMY**

It's a fine portrait photo. A good classical portrait. Studio work.

**KATE**

Would I take a photo of Hitler in my studio?

**ROMY**

Hitler is a group photo.

**KATE**

She laughs at her joke. There are few photos of her laughing. She was a serious muse.

A muse is always serious.

**ROMY**

Figure a muse who is funny.

**KATE**

And flirtatious.

**ROMY**

Seductive?

**KATE**

Or else she can never sit still. A muse with ADHD.



**ROMY**

The muse as a trampoline.

(They split their sides laughing at such a far-out fantasy.)

**KATE**

[aria: the laughing song]

Whimsy CLICK Supercilious CLICK immoral CLICK hysterical CLICK irresponsible CLICK icy CLICK narcissistic CLICK maniacal CLICK merciless CLICK a spoiled brat CLICK a show-off CLICK passionate CLICK CLICK CLICK... Look at the lens, look up, look ashamed, look seductive, just look, just look, look

CLICK CLICK CLICK

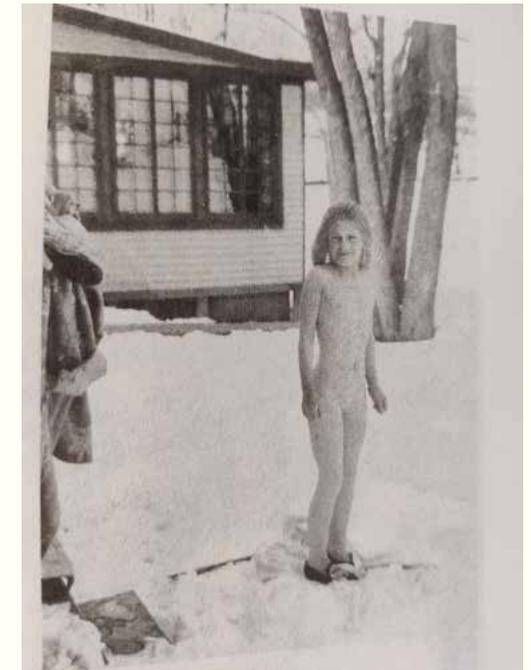
**ROMY**

She puts the photo down on the edge of the bathtub. She looks through her Contax lens. She calculates the distance. Looks through the lens. Checks the diaphragm. Depth of focus. Routine. Then she adjusts the self-timer.

**KATE**

She slides down in the bath water and laughs at the camera. CLICK CLICK CLICK.

The door opens. The tripod falls over. Fuck. Her Contax hits the wall. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.



## ARIA: 2

Listen to [Blue](#) here.

### KATE

I have no desire whatsoever to persuade anyone of anything. By taking photos of myself I destroy my own grievously damaged soul. With every photo I take, a little bit of it dies. I have made use of my beauty to survive; I have destroyed my body and devoured my soul like a beast of prey. Every photo is a blow to the heart!

### ROMY & KATE

(Romy narrates, Kate sings the breathing song)

Lee is alone again. She is her own object. The object of her own shadow world. I sit in the bath of the monster and wash myself. I'm my own object. I am the object of my own shadow world. She talks about herself in the third person. Now she is concentrating on her exhausted body. Checking all her muscles. Imagining them relaxing. She's learned to relax quickly. To make time when there isn't any. She lies down, and stays there as motionless as possible. The water turns into glass. Lee hears her heart beating against the zinc bathtub. How it slows down and then starts beating faster again. Breathing deeply in. Breathing out slowly. Breathe. Breathe. Breathe.

### ROMY

The breathing of a dying baby in Vienna. She watches a baby dying for over an hour. The tiny emaciated body. Nothing moves except the delicate ribcage that pulsates rapidly up and down. Sometimes a spastically shaking arm.

She doesn't know why, but she forces herself to go on looking. She feels her Contax getting heavier and heavier. But she doesn't take any photos. She feels she has to wait. She doesn't know the name of the baby. She doesn't yet realize that these nightmares will be her destiny.



**KATE**

[aria]

He was dark blue

Stupid dark blue

His eyes black as a snake's bite

Not even scared just empty

Stupid black, blue and empty object

How could it be scared of dying

It didn't know what living was

When God dies, he goes straight to hell

**ROMY**

How could you look for hours at a dying baby?

**KATE**

I don't know. I was waiting for the right light. I just don't know. Nothing.

It's such a fuss and bother.

CLICK CLICK CLICK

**ROMY**

It's at that moment, when the baby utters its last sob, that the wish to disappear takes up residence in her soul.

**KATE**

To put an end to all the fuss by disappearing.

# ARTISTS

One of the most compelling artists of her generation, “force of nature” (SFCV) mezzo-soprano **Kate Lindsey** possesses a rare combination of world class vocal artistry coupled with equally expansive acting gifts. Lindsey is a regular guest of the world’s most prestigious opera houses, including the Metropolitan Opera, the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, the Vienna State Opera, the Salzburg Festival, Glyndebourne Opera Festival, Festival Aix-en-Provence, the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, and the Bavarian State Opera.

In the 2023-34 season, Kate Lindsey’s versatility is once again on display in a wide variety of role debuts and new productions. She launches the season at the Vienna State Opera, in the role of Sesto in Mozart’s *La clemenza di Tito* and returns as Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. She makes her role debut as Charlotte in *Werther* at Theater Baden-Baden in a new production by Robert Carsen. At English National Opera she reprises her acclaimed interpretation of Offred (*The Handmaid’s Tale*) and will also be heard in Handel’s *Messiah*, fully staged by Robert Wilson at the Gran Teatre Del Liceu in Barcelona. Later in the season, Lindsey returns to Vienna for her role debut as Miranda in Thomas Adès’ *The Tempest* and takes on the role of Despina in Barrie Kosky’s new production of *Così fan tutte*, conducted by Philippe Jordan.



Highlights of the season 2020-21 included Kate Lindsey's house debut at Teatro alla Scala in Milano where she performed in a Kurt Weill double bill of 'Mahagonny Songspiel and Die sieben Todsünden' taking on both lead roles Jessie and Anna. As a very popular and celebrated guest artist of the Vienna State Opera Lindsey took on the role of Nero ('L'incoronazione di Poppea') and jumped in on short notice in Frank Castorf's new production of Charles Gounod's Faust performing the role of Siébel, which was produced as an international live stream.

In 2019-20 Lindsey was celebrated for her performances of 'Ariadne auf Naxos' and the world premiere of 'Olga Neuwirth's commissioned composition' Orlando, which was composed especially for her in the title role, at the Vienna State Opera. At the MET she starred as Nero in Händel's Agrippina, a production which finds its US premiere in New York, alongside Joyce DiDonato, which received great acclaim from the press and public.

Featuring the program from her album 'Thousands of Miles', which was released in May 2017 by alpha records, Kate Lindsey and pianist Baptiste Trotignon engaged on a tour with concerts at the Hartt School of Music, the University of Richmond Modlin Center for the Arts, the Pablo Center at the Confluence in Eau Claire (Wisconsin), at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, the University of Maryland Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center and Spivey Hall of Clayton State University in Georgia, as well as in Bremen (Germany). Further concerts have taken them to the stages of Teatro alla Scala in Milano as well as made them welcome guests at various European festivals: Pulsation Festival Bordeaux, Bergerac Festival and many more.



Highlights of former seasons include the title role of Miranda in a new production at Théâtre National de l'Opéra-Comique in Paris, 'Der Rosenkavalier' at the Glyndebourne Opera Festival, Nero in the ravishing new production of Monteverdi's 'L'incoronazione di Poppea' under the baton of William Christies at the Salzburg Festival, Sister Helen in Jake Heggie's 'Dead Man Walking' at the Washington National Opera, Muse/Nicklausse in 'Les Contes d'Hoffmann' at the Metropolitan Opera, LA Opera, and the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Cherubino in 'Le Nozze di Figaro' at the Vienna State Opera. On the concert stage, Kate Lindsey performed with the Orchestre de Paris under the baton of Thomas Hengelbrock in Paris, Palma de Mallorca, Vienna, Prague and Dresden. Further engagements included Lazuli in Emmanuel Chabrier's L'étoile at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, Hänsel in Hänsel und Gretel at the Dutch National Opera in Amsterdam, Leonora in La Favorite at Washington Concert Opera, Dorabella in 'Così fan tutte' at the Aix-en-Provence Festival and concert performances of Purcell's Dido and Aeneas with Balthasar Neumann Ensemble under the baton of Thomas Hengelbrock at Hamburg's Laeiszhalle and the Rheingau Musik Festival.

A sought-after concert performer, Kate Lindsey stood on the greatest stages with highly renowned orchestras and conductors. She starred in the BBC Proms with performances of Korngold's Tomorrow at the Royal Albert Hall with the John Wilson Orchestra before joining the Berliner Philharmoniker in performances of Berlioz' Roméo et Juliette under Daniel Harding as part of the renowned Musikfest Berlin. As an accomplished concert singer, Ms. Lindsey sang the premiere performances of a new commission by John Harbison with James Levine and the Boston Symphony Orchestra. She has also appeared with the Royal Concertgebouw Orkest, the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Met Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall, Cercle de l'Harmonie in Europe, and at the Tanglewood and Mostly Mozart festivals. She has worked with many of the world's most distinguished conductors including Harry Bicket, James Conlon, Emmanuelle Haim, Vladimir Jurowski, James Levine, Lorin Maazel, David Robertson, Jérémie Rhorer and Franz Welser-Möst. In recitals,

she has been presented by the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Rockefeller University in New York City. Ms. Lindsey has been featured in the Metropolitan Opera's HD broadcast of Les Contes d'Hoffmann, La Clemenza di Tito and Die Zauberflöte (which was subsequently released on DVD). Her CD Follow Poet (of songs by Mohammed Farouz) was released by Deutsche Grammophon.

Kate Lindsey is recording exclusively for Outhere Music France. Her first solo album 'Thousands of Miles' with works by Kurt Weill, Korngold and Zemlinsky was released in May 2017. Her second album 'Arianna', released in January 2020, features the Arcangelo orchestra conducted by Jonathan Cohen with Scarlatti, Händel and Haydn and made raving reviews all over the world. In May 2021 Kate Lindsey's third album and second baroque recital album Tiranno was released concentrating on the character of Nero including pieces of Scarlatti, Handel and Monteverdi, including world première recordings of cantatas by Alessandro Scarlatti and Bartolomeo Monari. The album is the second collaboration with the artist and the British ensemble Arcangelo under the musical direction of Jonathan Cohen. The album had great success and made Gramophone magazine conclude that Tiranno is a "model of what a recital album can be."

A native of Richmond, Virginia, Ms. Lindsey holds a Bachelor of Music Degree with Distinction from Indiana University and is a graduate of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. Her many awards include a prestigious 2011 grant from the Festival Musique et Vin au Clos Vougeot, the 2007 Richard F. Gold Career Grant, the 2007 George London Award in memory of Lloyd Rigler, the 2007 Lincoln Center Martin E. Segal Award, and a 2006 Sullivan Foundation Grant.





**L'incoronazione di Poppea, director Jan Lauwers, 2018 © Maarten Vanden Abeele**



**Romy Louise Lauwers** is a performer has worked with Inne Goris on Naar 'Medea' (2008), with Peter Seynaeve 'on mondays' (2010) and 'betty & morris' (2011) and with Abattoir Fermé on Apocalypso (2012). She has also acted in Patrick Toye's feature film 'Little Black Spiders' (2012), 'My first highway' (2017) by Kevin Meul and 'Het leven is vurrukkulluk' by Frans Weisz, based on the book of the same name by Remco Campert, for which she won the Sylvia Kristel Award.

Romy Lauwers is a founding member of the art collective Kuiperskaai: 'De Schepping' (2013), 'The Goldberg Chronicles' (2014), 'The Winter's Tale' (2016), '1095' (2017), 'Hamlet' (2018) and 'Bruegel' (2019).

'Marketplace 76' (2012) was her first production with Jan Lauwers. She also took part in the installation The House of Our Fathers. She replaced Yumiko Funaya in Grace Ellen Barkey's 'MUSH-ROOM'. In fall 2014, she took part in Just for 'Bozen | Bolzano in Transart14' and 'All Tomorrow's Parties', for the opening of Steirischer Herbst (Graz). In 2018 Romy Lauwers replaced Mélissa Guérin in 'War and Turpentine' and she's on stage in 'All the good' (2019), 'Billy's Violence' (2021) and 'Billy's Joy' (2023).

**Jan Lauwers** (Antwerp, 1957) is an artist who works in just about every medium. Over the last thirty years, he has become best known for his pioneering work for the stage with Needcompany, which was founded in Brussels in 1986. In the course of this period he has also built up a substantial body of visual artwork, which has been shown at BOZAR (Brussels) and McaM (Shanghai) among other places. From 2009 until 2014, Needcompany was artist-in-residence at the Burgtheater in Vienna. Jan Lauwers was awarded the 'Decoration of Honour in Gold for Services to the Republic of Austria' in 2012. In 2014, he was rewarded with the 'Golden Lion Lifetime Achievement Award' at the Venice Biennale. He is the first Belgian to receive this prize in the theatre category. In 2018 the Salzburger Festspiele presented 'L'incoronazione di Poppea', the first opera directed by Jan Lauwers to which there was soon a follow-up with 'Intolleranza 1960' (Salzburger Festspiele, 2021) by Luigi Nono and 'Le Grand Macabre' by György Ligeti (Wiener Staatsoper, 2023).

Jan Lauwers studied painting at the Academy of Art in Ghent. At the end of 1979 he gathered around him a number of people to form the Epigonenensemble. In 1981 this group was transformed into the Epigonentheater zlv collective, which took the theatre world by surprise with its six stage productions. In this way, Jan Lauwers took his place in the movement for radical change in Flanders in the early 80s, while also making his international breakthrough. Epigonentheater zlv presented direct, concrete, highly visual theatre that used music and language as structuring elements.

Jan Lauwers needs company. He founded Needcompany together with Grace Ellen Barkey. The group of performers Lauwers and Barkey have put together over the years is quite unique in its versatility. In 2001, composer and performance artist Maarten Seghers joined Needcompany. Since 2023, the three of them share the artistic direction of Needcompany.

Since Needcompany was founded in 1986, both its work and its performers have been markedly international. Historically, Needcompany was the first to play trilingual performances on stage. While its first productions were still highly visual, the storyline and the main theme gained importance in subsequent productions. Jan Lauwers' work has been labelled as post-dramatic. One of its most important characteristics is transparent, 'productive' acting and the paradox between 'acting' and 'performing'.



'Intolleranza 1960', director Jan Lauwers © Maarten Vanden Abeele

# MAARTEN SEGHERS

**Maarten Seghers** is a performance artist and composer. Together with Grace Ellen Barkey and Jan Lauwers, he is responsible for the artistic direction of the company. Since 2001, authorship has played a central role at Needcompany, and Seghers has personified this authorship since he joined, both in the composing of new music, and in the staging of performative work.

Seghers is a versatile composer who started out as a songwriter and since then has engaged in confrontations with other musical styles and art forms. His work is often performed with live musicians, such as in 'The blind poet' (2015) or 'All the good' (2019). He has created compositions for voice and tape such as in 'Billy's Violence' (2021). With 'Songs of Disconnection', he is currently composing a song cycle for cello, violin, percussion, flute and voice in which the boundaries of vocal, musical and performative involvement are explored, and in addition his work has a visual dimension in sculptures such as Fountain ((Late-Pornographic Balance) I (2010), which was incorporated into the permanent collection of FRAC Nord - Pas de Calais.

Seghers' performative work is created out of the hunger to transcend any definition, to refute or to contradict any stigmatisation. He understands the art of welcoming confusion, embracing chaos, and deploying apparent absurdity to cleverly expose art practice.

In 2006, Seghers founded OHNO COOPERATION, in close collaboration with artist Jan Lauwers and dramaturge and musician Elke Janssens. Together they make performances, video work, installations and music.

Listen to [song two](#) en [vligske](#) from 'Billy's Violence' here.

# LEE MILLER IN HITLER'S BATHTUB

**Lee Miller in Hitler's Bathtub** is neither a historical nor biographical portrait of artist Lee Miller and should be seen as 'faction' combining actual historical events with fictional elements. The interpretation of the Lee Miller character is based on artistic choices and Jan Lauwers' vision. It may differ from historical documentation or biographies. Some dialogue, situations and interactions are made up.

# LEE MILLER IN HITLER'S BATHTUB

<b>01.06.2025</b>	<b>WORLD PREMIERE</b>	at Wiener Staatsoper, Vienna
<b>03.06.2025</b>		at Wiener Staatsoper, Vienna
<b>04.06.2025</b>		at Wiener Staatsoper, Vienna
<b>05.06.2025</b>		at Wiener Staatsoper, Vienna
<b>06.06.2025</b>		at Wiener Staatsoper, Vienna
<b>07.06.2025</b>		at Wiener Staatsoper, Vienna

# **LEE MILLER IN HITLER'S BATHTUB**

*90 minutes*

Text, Direction and Scenography **JAN LAUWERS**

Music **MAARTEN SEGHERS**

Performed by **KATE LINDSEY | ROMY LOUISE LAUWERS** | a five-piece music ensemble

Dramaturgy **ELKE JANSSENS**

Assistant to the director **EMILY HEHL**

Production Manager **RUNE FLORYN**

Production **NEEDCOMPANY**

Needcompany office **PIETER D'HOOGE, ELKE JANSSENS, RUNE FLORYN, VIBE STALPAERT**

Coproduction **WIENER STAATSOPER**

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# **NEEDCOMPANY**

**Gabrielle Petitstraat 4/4, 1080 Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, Brussels**

**Artistic director GRACE ELLEN BARKEY, MAARTEN SEGHERS, JAN LAUWERS**

**Company Manager PIETER D'HOOGHE [pieter@needcompany.org](mailto:pieter@needcompany.org)**

**Dramaturgy ELKE JANSSENS [elke@needcompany.org](mailto:elke@needcompany.org)**

**Technical Production RUNE FLORYN [rune@needcompany.org](mailto:rune@needcompany.org)**

**Tour management & Communication VIBE STALPAERT [vibe@needcompany.org](mailto:vibe@needcompany.org)**

**[www.needcompany.org](http://www.needcompany.org)**