

## MOUVEMENT

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### “SPONGEBABE IN L.A.” BY MERCEDES DASSY: GOD IS A WOMAN

Mercedes Dassy began working on *Spongebabe in L.A.* while pregnant and completed it after a long post-partum recovery period. Taking an intimate route, the performer questions the status of the mother-artist in a disintegrating world.

“I drink at the oasis to relieve my distress. I am like a desert; very hot but very, very sad.” A cross between the lyrics of Bonnie Banane and Théodora, Mercedes Dassy has conceived her new creation as a performative concert or a long video clip of flesh and bone. On stage, a pile of white sheets provides a nest for the various creatures she incarnates: a boisterous showgirl, a slithering snake, a melancholy singer. The cyborg aesthetic, between nature and technology, is a recurring theme in her shows. However, this time, the stakes have shifted. Slumped like a depressed adolescent on a bed that resembles a melting ice floe, Mercedes Dassy draws us in, up close and personal.

Straddling a balloon, the performer connects two milk jugs to her chest. Moving back and forth, between pain and pleasure, Mercedes Dassy maintains the uneasiness. Is a woman producing milk still a taboo? Are we so disconnected from our metabolisms? With a proud look, the artist prolongs this face-to-face encounter with the audience. In her fishnet costume and her padded, armoured jeans, she exudes a combative, ultra-pop femininity. A few minutes later, we find her buried beneath the sheets, protected from the world and its violence. By sharing her personal post-partum experience – successfully passed through the abstraction mill – Mercedes Dassy embodies the ambivalence surrounding “powerful women”: what do these female icons, omnipresent in the media, do behind closed doors? Sometimes, they sing badly. Often, they cry and spend all day in bed.

#### Do a reset

It’s the story of evolution: in the face of upheaval, knowing how to adapt has always been vital. With *Spongebabe in L.A.*, the performer delivers an ode to perpetual metamorphosis and suggests the beginning of a solution without resorting to self-righteousness. Because creating shows, seeking out new human states to chronicle on stage, means daring to be vulnerable. And when you witness the roller-coaster ride Mercedes Dassy goes through in this room of refuge, you understand that it hurts as much as helps.

*Spongebabe in L.A.* by Mercedes Dassy was presented in the framework of the Trajectoires Festival on 23 and 24 January 2025 at TU-Nantes, in co-production with Lieu Unique.