

CNAC

Teaching  
CENTRE  
NATIONAL  
DES ARTS  
DU CIRQUE  
Innovation  
and Research  
Resource

Châlons-en-Champagne  
France

"Putting questions consists in teaching."  
Xenophon



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A centre  
dedicated  
to teaching,  
resource,  
innovation  
and research

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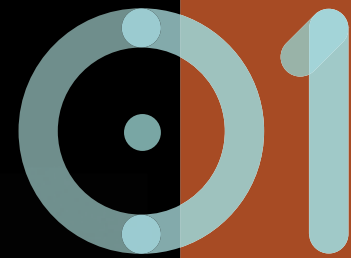
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**A centre  
dedicated  
to teaching,  
resource,  
innovation  
and research**



The *Centre national des arts du cirque* is a higher education and research establishment created in 1985 at the initiative of the French ministry of Culture and Communication. More than 300 artists from 35 different countries have graduated from the Cnac, and are now major players on the international contemporary circus scene.

### **The Cnac missions**

**Higher education in the circus arts** with

**a higher education establishment** authorized to deliver the Dnsp (national higher professional diploma), set up in partnership with the *École nationale des arts du cirque (Enacr)* in Rosny-sous-Bois, as well as a BA equivalent, set up with the University of Picardie Jules Verne.

**a professional integration unit** that includes a group graduation show, personal help on individual student projects, and help integrating circus companies.

**Lifelong learning** with

- Lifelong learning in the performing arts for artists and technicians in the performing arts sector,
- teacher training,
- preparation for the national teaching diploma in the circus arts,
- validation of acquired experience (VAE).

**A resource and research centre, in association with the *Bibliothèque nationale de France / BnF*** open to the public (professionals, students, researchers, etc.), with an audio-visual production unit.

The Cnac is a well-established international reference that defends the values of the circus arts spirit, including rigour, self-control, group work and respect for others.

Through its excellent training programme, it aims to be at the cutting edge of educational, artistic and technical innovation, to better serve its students, researchers and circus professionals, as well as the performing arts in general.

The Cnac is financed by the Directorate General for Artistic Creation (DGCA) of the French ministry of Culture and Communication. It is supported by the Grand Est regional council, the Marne departmental council and the City and the Urban community of Châlons-en-Champagne.

## New workspaces

Over the past years, the Cnac has undergone major developments with the renovation of the historic circus (dating back to the 19th century), which has housed the school since its creation, as well as extension work done at the La Marnaise site, a former agricultural wasteland situated nearby. The architectural project has integrated new constructions with existing buildings perfectly, in keeping with the local identity.

Destined for teaching the circus arts, the site includes a specific aerial space known as the "grand volant" (13.50m high). In addition there are 13 new studios to host artists and guest teachers, as well as spaces dedicated to research and innovation, particularly the design and construction of new apparatus. The site is also used by teachers from the Pierre Bayen high school in Châlons-en-Champagne, for teaching the high school diploma - circus arts option.

This extension enables the historic circus to once again be used for numerous activities such as public performances by students, lifelong learning courses, the documentation and research centre and researchers. And of course, performances by the Furies association in the framework of the "Terre du Cirque" initiative (encouraging companies to set up in the region), as well as performances by the Châlons-en-Champagne La Comète national theatre, which are held here.

This exceptional Cnac tool reinforces its position as the national centre for circus arts.

## La Marnaise

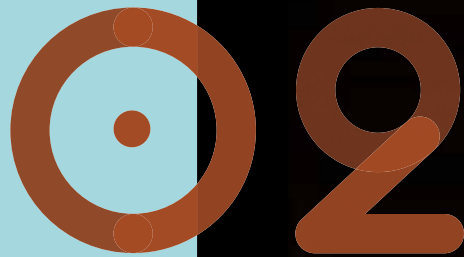
Contracting authority: the French ministry of Culture and Communication  
Contracting authority representative: OPPIC - Operator for heritage and cultural real estate projects  
Project manager: ARM architecture; Architect's representative: Matthieu Poitevin  
User: Cnac

2,500m<sup>2</sup> additional work space  
2,000 m<sup>2</sup> additional hangars and storage space

Financed by the State and supported by the Champagne-Ardenne regional council, the Marne departmental council and the City and the Urban community of Châlons-en-Champagne.



## Higher Education for circus arts



The national higher professional diploma for circus artists (Level II) : a ministry of Culture and Communication diploma.

A BA equivalent in "Arts" - Subject: "performing Arts" - Option "Circus Arts," is awarded by the University of Picardie Jules Verne.

### Three year diploma course : Dnsp and Ba equivalent in "arts"

The Cnac and the *École nationale des arts du cirque* in Rosny-sous-Bois (Enacr), have joined together to construct a three-year joint educational programme in partnership with the Arts department of the University of Picardie Jules Verne (Amiens), in order to create a joint course leading to a Dnsp in the circus arts.

This measure is part of the European framework (the Bologna Process) for higher education.

The director of the Cnac is the educational director of the course, with support from an Educational management committee and an Educational council.

#### **Three years of studies are spread over six semesters**

More than 3,000 hours of taught classes :

- optional preliminary year at the Enacr, Rosny-sous-Bois,
- first year (Dnsp 1) at Enacr,
- second and third years (Dnsp 2 & 3) at the Cnac, Châlons-en-Champagne,
- four taught units for 180 ECTS credits (*European Credits Transfer System*):
  - trans-disciplinary core syllabus,
  - core theory subjects,
  - core practical subjects,
  - strengthening/widening subject fields.

### A course that leads to professional working life

Throughout the course, the Enacr and the Cnac prepare students for professional working life situations.

#### In Dnsp 1

**The group show at the end of Dnsp year 1** at the Enacr is an important step in the course, as the students are required to work under a director, while creating a strong artistic project. This circus performance should emphasize, in a unity of style and time, the qualities of each student from a technical point of view and across the variety of subjects taught (dance, theatre, music and stage design, etc.). Each year a different performing arts professional, usually a Rosny/Châlons graduate, is asked to direct the performance. The work is then performed several times in the Enacr big top.

#### In Dnsp 2

- o Two weeks **work experience** with a company
- o **Repertory work**  
The course now places particular emphasis on reinterpreting or recreating repertory pieces. This approach encourages Cnac students to network and to develop professional relationships. It also highlights the school's commitment to helping the history and memory of the circus live on.  
The students work on a reference piece from the circus repertory with the artists or the circus companies who created the work. This enables students to experience the various artistic approaches and processes while broadening their circus culture knowledge. The exercise ends with several public performances.

#### In Dnsp 3

- o It's possible to join a "tutor" artistic team for a defined period of time within the framework of a partnership agreement.
- o **Échappées**  
The students' course is interspersed with periods of research and creation dedicated to the development of their artistic identity and to experimentation in the ring. This work culminates in the 3rd year with performances known as "Échappées," which enable each student to show the results of their technical and artistic research. These performances are often a step in a long-term creative process continued upon leaving the Cnac.

The role of the Professional Integration Unit (CIP), is to optimize the students' integration into a professional working environment. It complements the *École Nationale Supérieure* teaching by supporting the students as they come to leave the school.

### **The group graduation show - a highlight of the Cnac course**

The creation and diffusion of a graduation show is the highlight of the final year of the course. It serves as a transition from student to professional status.

This group performance is directed by a different professional performing arts artist, and is an important annual event in terms of artistic research into what is known as "new circus." The creation of the show in Châlons-en-Champagne is followed by performances of the same, mainly in Paris at the Parc de la Villette, and in the Champagne-Ardenne and Grand Est region. It enables these young artists to perform in front of large audiences as well as professionals and critics.

As creative performers they are surrounded by a professional artistic and technical team in conditions that mimic their professional future.

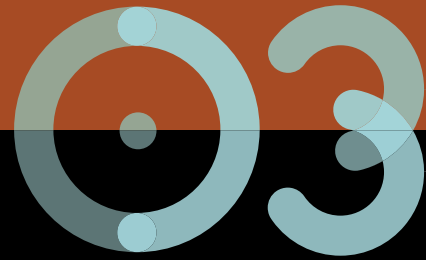
A special partner of the Cnac, the Grand Est regional council provides financial support for this stage of the professional integration unit.

### Successful professional integration measure

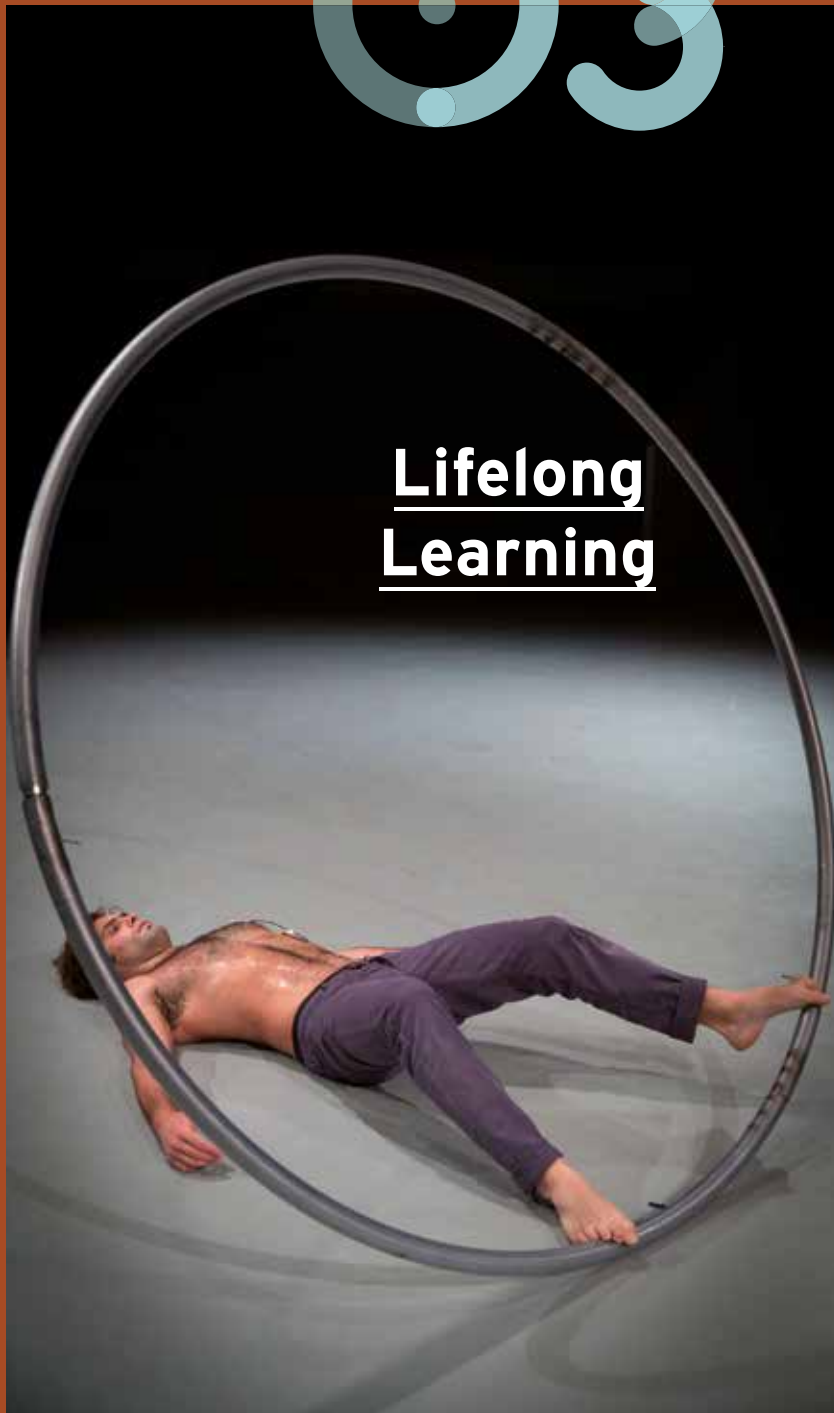
### **Help with individual projects**

The Cnac encourages personal artistic support for its students through numerous collaborations, tutorials and partnerships with professionals, and artistic and cultural establishments. This measure, begun at the beginning of the course, may be extended through to the professional integration year and beyond.





## Lifelong Learning



Lifelong learning is one of the essential links that the Cnac has to maintain with its professional sector. It is the continuation between the initial course and the ensemble of situations whereby skills are acquired.

Programmes available should enable each participant to:

- o develop the highest level of skill possible,
- o perfect or update knowledge
- o develop a professional project (artistic, technical or educational, etc.),
- o complete a professional re-training course,
- o obtain a qualification,
- o validate professional skills,
- o initiate a research project.

**To achieve these aims, the Cnac offers a range of courses, as follows:**

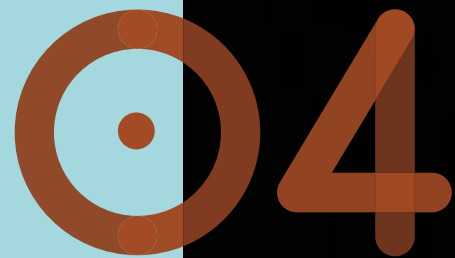
- o teacher training and the National diploma for circus teachers,
- o trans-disciplinary and innovative artistic courses,
- o technical courses leading to qualifications,
- o validation of acquired experience (VAE).

These missions may be developed in partnership with various establishments in France or abroad. For example, the National dance centre in Pantin, the Enacr circus school in Rosny-sous-Bois, the Fratellini Academy in Saint-Denis, the University of Picardie Jules Verne in Amiens, THEMMA (the National Association of Puppet Theatre and Associated Arts), the Cnam (National Conservatory of Arts and Professions), Fedec (the European federation of circus schools), Ffec (the French federation of circus schools), the Education department of the Reims Academy and the Faculty of Science and techniques of physical and sport activities at the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne.

### **"Made-to-measure" courses**

The Cnac designs, develops and creates training courses adapted to individual needs.

Several specific courses have been created for the Education department of the Reims Academy, for the E2C (Second Chance School), the Regional Platform for Cultural Professions, the Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture (Korea), the Setouchi Circus Factory (Japan), the Palhaço Association (Guyana).



## Resource and Research Centre

### A multimedia reference library

The Resource Centre houses an extremely rich collection on the circus arts and on the performing arts in general. In partnership with the *Bibliothèque nationale de France / BnF*, it serves students and interns and is open to researchers and the general public, in the aim of collaboration and exchange with other higher education establishments (ENC Montreal, Esac Brussels).

#### Resource and Research

The Resource Centre also works closely with the Cnac research team, producing documentary and audio-visual resources on some of their research projects.

The audio-visual production unit is an educational tool that records numerous research projects. In addition, it provides a service for the profession by recording performances and shows. Part of this audio-visual resource is available at [www.cnac.tv](http://www.cnac.tv) and a collection of videos (circus company shows) will be retransmitted at the [rueetcirque.fr](http://rueetcirque.fr) portal run by HorsLesMurs.

### Documentary resources

A few figures :

- 7,000 works, periodicals, documents and dissertations on circus traditions and the contemporary circus
- 12,000 photos of the Cnac and numerous posters,
- 2,200 videos: 700 on the circus mostly directed by the Cnac, and 800 related to Cnac shows and teaching, 700 on sister arts (dance, theatre, performance etc.),
- 1,300 videos available for streaming,
- more than 400 media available at [www.cnac.tv](http://www.cnac.tv) with 200,000 visitors on 2014 (large audience, international broadcasts) and 15,000 annual hits on YouTube.

#### The circus arts anthologies <http://cirque-cnac.bnf.fr>

The *Centre national des arts du cirque* and the *Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF)* are developing a new partnership, which gave rise to the creation of *The Circus Art Anthologies*, a multi-media site allowing amateurs, professionals and researchers alike, to discover and understand the different circus disciplines.

#### Specific collections

The Resource Centre also houses a rich selection of the following:

- the archives of the circus historian Tristan Rémy and of the artist Philippe Petit, as well as other historians and collectors such as Jacques Fort and Jean Villiers, etc.
- an exceptional collection on magic, containing 350 rare works that are references in the area, helping the sector to develop and nourishing the Cnac's new courses in magic,
- a collection of 520 remarkably interesting and rare, precious works
- 3,000 old photographs,
- a collection of 1,500 French and international circus journals, specific collections about female artists, the performing arts, stage arts and new technologies.



## Innovation and Research

Through its research activities, the Cnac has initiated an open conversation in terms of the production and teaching of documentary resources.

To this end, several trans-disciplinary axes are encouraged, as follows:

- o the development of innovative projects about and through circus arts practice,
- o the construction of links and exchanges with higher education establishments in the arts and several universities at a national and international level,
- o the creation of educational measures to be tried out in the classroom and in the ring,
- o the organization of study days, symposiums and conferences such as for example, "Reflections by Women,"
- o residencies in and the valuing of academic research in the circus arts.

The projects developed and supported, which always have a direct link to circus creation and practice, concern different domains :

### Biomedical

*Imen Zaghouani, a PhD student in medicine at the Laboratoire C2S, Research Unit 6291 - cognition, health and socialisation at the University of Reims Champagne-Ardenne with the Champagne-Ardenne Work and Environmental Medicine Institute*

Evaluating stress levels and how the body manages these by measuring certain criteria in the students before, during and after public performances.

### Analysis of movement

*A project by Bernard Andrieu, Philosopher, Professor at Paris-Descartes University, Director of the Techniques et Body Stakes Laboratory (TEC, EA 3625) and Coordinator of the GDRI 836 CNRS (teacher at the Cnac).*

Using recorded images, conscious or unconscious movements, which may interfere with practice, are analyzed to improve performance.

Physical techniques are questioning how the circus arts are learned. Bernard Andrieu suggests that students carry a GoPro on their bodies or apparatus, not to film their performance but their movement, thereby bringing the action to life in order to question how the circus arts are learned; analyzing movement and distinguishing involuntary physical gestures (interference), which are incorporated and become automatic through learning and training, as well as intentional and conscious gestures during the exercise.

### The performing arts and Health

*A project by Philippe Goudard, Professor at the University of Montpellier III and the RIRRA21 research centre (and a teacher at the Cnac) and Philippe Perrin, professor at the University of Lorraine, faculty of the science of sporting and physical activities - Physiology and Balancing.*

Carrying out two simultaneous tasks can sometimes be difficult, even dangerous if they compete with each other (e.g.: to combine a balancing task and a dexterity task).

They will be developed in collaboration with the French and European circus schools federations.

### Professionalization

*Émilie Salaméro, lecturer at the Faculty of sport science at the University of Poitiers and the Centre for Research in Management Sciences (CEREGE) Research Unit 1722, in the framework of the research programme financed by the ANR.*

Sociological and statistical approaches to the careers of professional artists with higher education in the arts.

### Educational Sciences

Organizing encounters, conferences with professionals, theoreticians and artists on themes related to the circus arts such as new technologies, the plastic arts, dance, electronic music, clown, juggling and puppetry, etc.

### Documentary IT

*A project initiated and created by Clarisse Bardiot in partnership with Buzzing Light and Thierry Coduys, with the support of the French ministry of Culture and Communication (DGCA), in the framework of a call to tender for innovative digital cultural service projects in partnership with Phénix, the national Valenciennes theatre, Le Fresnoy - national studio for contemporary arts and the International Puppet Institute.*

Based on circus shows and some of the Cnac works (e.g.: *Échappées*), the "Rekall" open source software will be used for documenting and analyzing the creative process. In addition it will then be easier for works to be put on again.

### Circus notation

*A project developed by Katryn Wolf, a circus artist and a choreologist (\*)*

Creating a transcription tool for specific, circus art acrobatic figures (Benesh notation\* for the circus arts). This media used for this research are scenes from the Cnac graduation show. The scores will serve as a reference for the ambitious project of creating a Benesh notation dictionary for the circus arts. BMN is a movement notation system and a so-called universal language invented by Rudolf and Joan Benesh in 1955. It enables a representation of movement through space, of the relationships between individuals and their material environment, of their movements, and the positions of the different limbs and parts of their bodies.

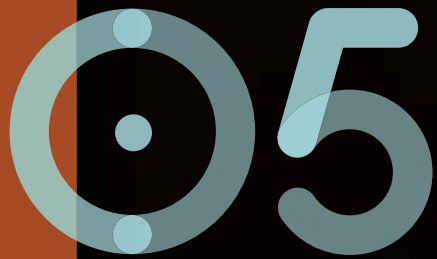
*(\*) Benesh Movement Notation (or choreology)*

### Mechanical engineering

The Cnac technical department possesses internal skills in engineering and creating prototypes. Through the practice of circus arts, this department develops research into new materials as well as the creation and construction of innovative apparatus.

### Hosting researchers

The aim is to encourage closer links between the Cnac and the Universities of Picardie Jules Verne, Reims Champagne-Ardenne, Montpellier III, Lorraine, Paris 8 - Saint Denis-Vincennes and Lille 3. The research department facilitates and extends links between the various universities through different agreements.



## Artistic and cultural education

The Cnac places particular importance on artistic and cultural education, which is a vector of equal opportunities and cultural democratization.

Acting in its double capacity of National centre and State operator, it has developed several axes :

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### **The Lycée Pierre Bayen in Châlons-en-Champagne Baccalauréat L, circus arts option**

*with the Cnac Higher education*

This establishment created a Bac L, Circus arts option in September 2012. The Cnac played a central role by putting an exceptionally rich tool at their disposal in the shape of circus specialization classes with some of its permanent teachers and its students, access to technical equipment as well as to the Resource centre, work sessions, rehearsals and performances.

### **Artistic residences in the school environment**

*with the Professional Integration Unit*

The Cnac graduates spend 6 weeks in Champagne-Ardenne secondary or high schools. Their time is split between circus workshops organized for the students with the host teaching team, and personal research projects.

### **Training courses for the National Education**

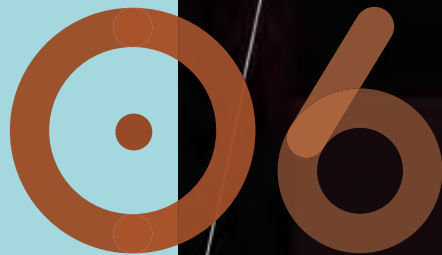
*with the lifelong learning department*

In partnership with the *Préac* of the Reims Academy (research centre for artistic and cultural education), the Cnac has set up several training initiatives to help the National Education with educational and artistic activities related to the circus.

For example:

- teacher training in the circus arts (national level),
  - raising awareness among teachers of the circus arts in the framework of an academic training plan (PAF),
  - helping with artistic residencies in the school milieu for establishments welcoming circus arts projects.
-

## International actions



The Cnac has always been very open to creating lasting links with international partners. Over the years this has taken shape in various ways.

Since 2013, this open approach is very present in the new Cnac project initiated by Gérard Fasoli, and can be seen in the following various activities:

### The higher education establishment

**The new diploma and the ECTS** (European Credits Transfer System): The three-year course taught at Enacr Rosny-sous-Bois / Cnac Châlons-en-Champagne leads to a Dnsp (national higher professional diploma) in the circus arts. The diploma is linked to a BA awarded by the University of Picardie Jules Verne. In this way, the Dnsp is integrated into the European framework for higher education (licence-master-doctorate).

**Educational exchanges** with higher education establishments, such as the Esac in Brussels, the Circus Space in London and the ENC in Montreal etc.

### Lifelong learning

**Made-to-measure vocational training courses:** the Cnac designs, develops and implements training courses adapted to every need (e.g. with the Seoul Foundation for Arts and Culture/Korea, the Setouchi Circus Factory/Japan and the Palhaço association/Guyana).

**A higher education qualification in dramatic art and the circus arts** awarded in partnership with the Esac (Higher education establishment for circus arts) in Brussels.

**Validating acquired experience (VAE):** this measure enables professional and personal experience to be taken into consideration when obtaining all or part of a professional diploma or qualification. It may also apply to international citizens practicing in France. The Cnac is now authorized to award the circus arts Dnsp through VAE and the National teaching diploma (DE) in circus arts.

### Resource and Research

**A collection of international works and videos** to which the sizeable Jacob-William Collection on circus arts across the continents will be added in 2015.

**The circus arts anthologies:** the Cnac and the *Bibliothèque nationale de France/BnF* are developing a multi-media website <http://cirque-cnac.bnf.fr/fr> to enable people to discover and understand the circus arts and disciplines (in several languages at the end of 2017).

**Numerous audio visual recordings and productions:** the Cnac audio visual production unit carries out numerous recordings : *INTENTS / Ffec / Fedec* (2015): 5 day training session on "Verticality, weight and gravity on the Chinese poles, trapeze, ropes and silks", *CircusNext* : support for young European authors, *Festival CIRCa Auch* : European circus schools performances.

**Hosting young researchers** (already from Brazil and Japan).

### European Federation of Professional Circus Schools

The FEDEC is a European and international network of vocational and higher education circus schools and training programmes, and of organisations involved in information, research and circus arts advocacy, located in 24 countries in Europe and beyond.

The CNAC has been a member of the Fedec since it was founded in 1998. This federation is committed to supporting the development and evolution of training, teaching and creation in the field of circus arts.

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07

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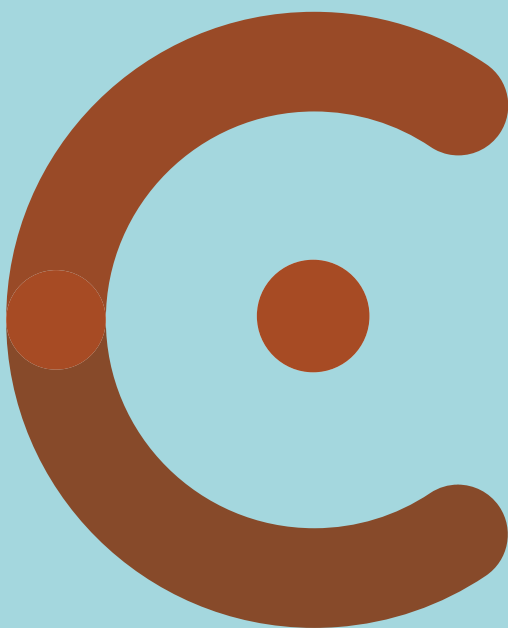
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