A CORNER IN THE WORLD
DÜNYADA BIR KÖŞE

2015

ABOUT THE FESTIVAL

A Corner In The World is a festival for performing arts which brings together innovative and original works that explore new ways to document experience as performance, and explore the individual in collision with the political.

The festival aims to bring together artists who work in close geographical proximity, but have few opportunities to share a stage, experience each other's work, and develop a dialogue.

The first edition of the festival will take place in October 2015 in İstanbul and will feature works by artists from Syria, Armenia, Greece, Lebanon, Iran as well as Turkey.

The festival is produced by Köşe, a new artist collective working in the performing arts in Kadıköy, Istanbul.

Incorporating various venues in the historical Kadıköy district of İstanbul, the festival will present a brand new platform for the artists of a region with limited opportunities for mobility and expression.

The question behind the first edition of A Corner In The World is: How do artistic experiences transform our imagination of what's possible in our world?

FESTIVAL HAKKINDA

Dünyada Bir Köşe, dans, tiyatro ve müzik gösterilerinden oluşan bir sahne sanatları festivali. Festival, bireysel olanla siyasi olanın çatışmasını araştıran yenilikçi ve özgün performans çalışmalarını bir araya getiriyor.

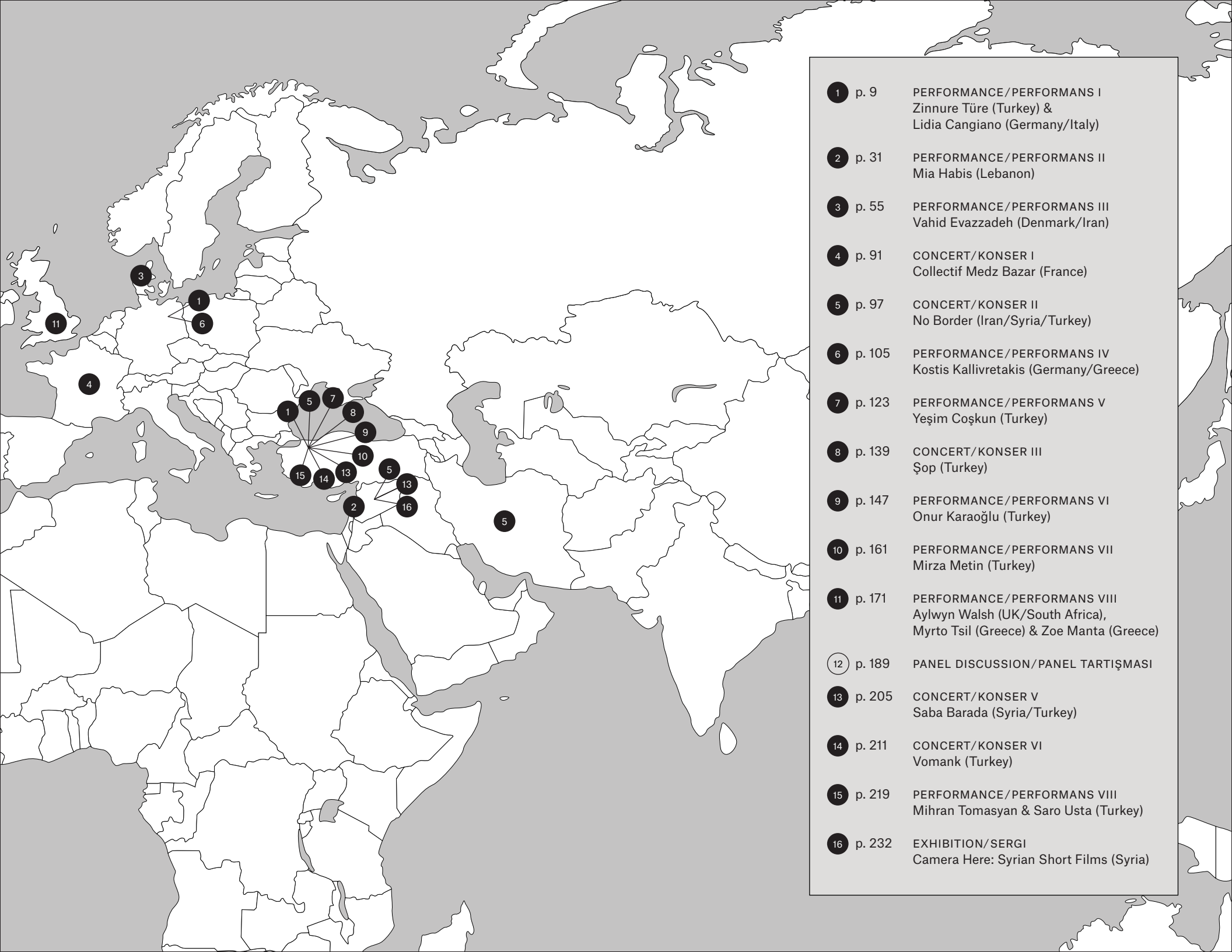
Festival, yakın coğrafyalarda üretim yapan ancak birbirinin işlerini izleme, tecrübe etme ve aynı sahneyi paylaşarak diyalog geliştirme şansı bulamayan sanatçıları bir araya getirmeyi amaçlıyor.

14-28 Ekim 2015'te ilk kez gerçekleştirilecek olan festivalde Suriye, Ermenistan, Yunanistan, Lübnan, Türkiye ve İran'dan sanatçılar yer alıyor.

Festivalin yapımcılığını performans sanatları alanındaki yenilikçi çalışmalara ev sahipliği yapan Kadıköy Yeldeğirmeni'ndeki sanatçı kolektifi Köşe üstleniyor.

Kadıköy'deki çeşitli mekanlara yayılan bu festival, ülkeler arasında dolaşım olanakları çok kısıtlı olan bir coğrafyanın sanatçılarına yepyeni bir buluşma alanı sunuyor.

Bu yıl ilki gerçekleşecek olan festival şu sorudan hareketle yola çıkıyor: 'Sanatsal tecrübelerimiz dünyada neyin mümkün olduğuna dair hayal gücümüzü nasıl dönüştürüyor?'



1 p. 9 PERFORMANCE/PERFORMANS I
Zinnure Türe (Turkey) &
Lidia Cangiano (Germany/Italy)

2 p. 31 PERFORMANCE/PERFORMANS II
Mia Habis (Lebanon)

3 p. 55 PERFORMANCE/PERFORMANS III
Vahid Evazzadeh (Denmark/Iran)

4 p. 91 CONCERT/KONSER I
Collectif Medz Bazar (France)

5 p. 97 CONCERT/KONSER II
No Border (Iran/Syria/Turkey)

6 p. 105 PERFORMANCE/PERFORMANS IV
Kostis Kallivretakis (Germany/Greece)

7 p. 123 PERFORMANCE/PERFORMANS V
Yeşim Coşkun (Turkey)

8 p. 139 CONCERT/KONSER III
Şop (Turkey)

9 p. 147 PERFORMANCE/PERFORMANS VI
Onur Karaoğlu (Turkey)

10 p. 161 PERFORMANCE/PERFORMANS VII
Mirza Metin (Turkey)

11 p. 171 PERFORMANCE/PERFORMANS VIII
Aylwyn Walsh (UK/South Africa),
Myrto Tsil (Greece) & Zoe Manta (Greece)

12 p. 189 PANEL DISCUSSION/PANEL TARTIŞMASI

13 p. 205 CONCERT/KONSER V
Saba Barada (Syria/Turkey)

14 p. 211 CONCERT/KONSER VI
Vomank (Turkey)

15 p. 219 PERFORMANCE/PERFORMANS VIII
Mihran Tomasyan & Saro Usta (Turkey)

16 p. 232 EXHIBITION/SERGI
Camera Here: Syrian Short Films (Syria)


POLAND
BELARUS
GERMANY
UKRAINE
CZECH REPUBLIC
SLOVAKIA
AUSTRIA
MOLDOVA
HUNGARY
SLOVENIA
ROMANIA
CROATIA
BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA
SERBIA
MONTENEGRO
BULGARIA
MACEDONIA
TURKEY

PERFORMANCE
PERFORMANS
I

BLADE BONES

ZINNURE TÜRE &
LIDIA CANGIANO

BLADE BONES/POST SHOW TALK
ZINNURE TÜRE & LIDIA CANGIANO
KARGART, KADIKÖY

Blade Bones is a performance about eroticism, body, and space. Zinnure Türe and Lidia Cangiano, two artists who want to rebuild the definition of eroticism, presents a point of view for today's spaces which enlarge both vertically and horizontally while shrinking in terms of meaning at the same time, and the states of the bodies swinging in those spaces.

Kürek Kemiği, erotizm, beden ve mekanla ilgili bir performans.



Erotizmin tanımını yeniden düşünen Türe ve Cangiano, günümüz mekanlarının yatay ve dikey düzlemlerde genişlerken aynı anda anlamsal olarak küçülmesi ve bu mekanlarda salınan bedenler üzerine performatif bir araştırma yapıyor.

FATIH GENÇKAL: So these post show talks are very much an integral part of the festival. We wanted to create as many opportunities as possible for the audience to get to know the artists, and for the artists to get to know the community and each other. There are some festival artists here tonight, like Vahid, Kostis, and Onur, who are going to be performing soon, so come see those shows!

After every show there will be a discussion, and on the 25th of October there will be a big talk with many of the artists present, and with as much audience as possible. That discussion will be a deeper discussion of the works and of the larger issues that the works address. But I would like to begin this discussion by getting to know who these artists are and by asking why they wanted to be a part of this festival with this work.

LIDIA CANGIANO: My name is Lidia Cangiano. I am Italian, but I have lived in Berlin for ten years, and it was through a connection in Berlin that I met Zinnure, some years ago. I am an actress and a director. I come from physical theater. At the moment I work with a company that does documentary theater. I also work at a school, a public school, that works with refugees in Berlin. I am very honored to be in this festival. I have worked on different projects in Turkey since 2007, but I have never worked on an artistic project here. I have always worked with children and teenagers in different parts of Turkey, but I wanted to do an art residency and to work with a group that can work on art but also engage with politics.

ZINNURE TÜRE: I am Zinnure. I am an actress and the festival Program Director. It is a great pleasure to be involved in this festival as both an artist and as an organizer. This is a festival that we have been working on for ten months. We came up with the idea for this festival as a response to all the issues we are having and all the problems that we face. I had wanted to work with Lidia for a long time and this was a great opportunity for that too.

FG: Why did you think this was a good project for this festival? How did you decide what to work on?

ZT: First we just decided to make something together. Lidia came to Istanbul for a residency. At first, we thought we wanted to work on orientalism and occidentalism, because we decided that it could be an interesting topic, since we are living in Turkey, and it's really in-between everything, and—

LC: And also because of the festival. We were trying to find out what our interests were while at the same time always keeping an eye on what the festival wanted to propose. Because Zinnure is a part of the festival team it was very important for her to contribute a work that was close to the festival topic. And I don't remember exactly why but we ended up thinking about eroticism.

ZT: Maybe we were drinking Rakı or something.

LC: It turns out we both are very interested in urban development and cities. The shape of cities, how they are changing these days, gentrification, post-colonialism... All these topics were in a kind of big soup pot. And then, all of a sudden, it became clear that the point is to talk about eroticism. Yeah. We are in a period of research. It's not finished. This is the tip of the iceberg.

ZT: We talked a lot about our own cities. She lives in Berlin and I live in Istanbul. We found Istanbul so erotic, and Berlin kind of pornographic. We started to analyze which kind of cities we are attracted to, and which kind



of cities we don't want to be in, and this conversation led us to talk about what kinds of things we find erotic. We started to want to describe eroticism in our own way, and to get away from the normal patriarchal way of thinking about it.

We also spent one month in Paris at an academy for physical theater. While we were taking classes we were also developing our project. And there we really decided on what sort of things we would focus on. To finish the work we came back to Istanbul for one more week, and then now here we are.

FG: Does anybody have any questions?

AUDIENCE: In the program note you describe a process of expanding in space while diminishing in meaning, but I couldn't find that in performance. How did you put that in the performance? How is it part of the performance?

ZT: When we started thinking about eroticism we wanted to pay attention to different sensibilities and sensations, and think about how we can take more time to observe details. In the cities that we live in the relationships we have with people and space can be very direct and very violent. And because of these relationships we lose a lot of detail. In our eroticism we want to pay more attention to detail and take more time with things. And pay more attention to different sensibilities.

LC: Also it has to do with duration, how long something lasts. We are not used to slow speeds. We are used to everything being very fast. Everything has to be done before you even think about it. Duration was a kind of challenge that we wanted to propose to the audience.

AUDIENCE: So, for you, as the space is getting smaller does that mean there is more detail? Can we make this assumption? I didn't think your answers to the previous question were direct but that's the impression that I got.

ZT: So when I say "expansion of space" what I am talking about is globalization and how cities expand violently, and how they lose meaning as they do. Big cities like New York, Toyko Hong Kong...

AUDIENCE: So when you say "diminishing of meaning," I think you are talking about the relationships between human beings.

ZT: It includes that but it's also more than that.

VAHID EVAZZADEH: I don't have a question. I just wanted to say thanks for the performance and congratulations, and congratulations to the festival! It is official now. So I go to sleep.

[laughter as Vahid leaves]

FG: Vahid is also one of the resident artists here, and he performs on Friday and Saturday. He is not performing himself but his company is performing and he is directing it.

ONUR KARAOĞLU: I thought it was interesting how despite the fact that this is not a conventional theater space you still wanted to orient the audience in a conventional theatrical arrangement. How were you thinking about the audience and their experience in this space?

LC: Of course audience is very important. We do it for the audience. Audience is part of what happens on stage. In fact, I felt that tonight the space was very warm, people were there, you could feel it. But it was hard to think about how to place the audience in this space. I don't really think of this space as a space for theater, it's more for concerts. Also, since this is the first performance of the festival and we had to try to fit as many people as possible. We thought about only having chairs on the edge of the space, but then we could only welcome twenty people, and we wanted to welcome more than twenty people, so it had to be a compromise.



AUDIENCE: Are you going to perform again?

ZT: Probably after December.

AUDIENCE: I want to ask about the texts you used. Where did they come from and how did you decided to use them?

ZT: These texts are coming from our own collections. Whatever we thought we might be able to use we collected. The Turkish text is written by Abidin Dino, and we used it because there was something about it that got us excited. The other text is a creation myth about the creation of the earth out of water, and the first human sin. All of these texts got us excited in some way, so that's why we decided to use them.

AUDIENCE: I wanted to ask about the music. Because it was interesting to me how from the beginning the music sounded very orientalistic in its approach but was not specifically orientalist. So I wanted to ask what you were trying to do. Were you trying to contradict something? Were you trying to do this Istanbul thing, where there is this very metropolitan city with orientalism slapped on it?

LC: It's a very interesting question I think. Somehow I think we needed... I think it fulfills a need more than anything else. We were discussing orientalism and occidentalism a lot, and it was very challenging to try to understand each other sometimes. I believe that tradition is something we carry on our back, like our blade bones, our shoulder blades, unconsciously. But at the same time we are always projecting forwards. And I think it is the movement between the tradition we carry and our projection into the future that Zinnure and I want to research. Also the thing I speak in the beginning, the thing about the man with many women, is from Borges. I think that Borges would have liked this movement between tradition and projection as well.

AUDIENCE: It's really tricky. Because I don't know if you notice, but right now in Turkey we don't really have a pinprick in art where we can add orientalism to the modern space. I think this festival is a great beginning for this. There is a great need for Turkish art in modernity, but everything is so European.
So I just wanted to ask if you have any thoughts about how we can add a space for orientalism from the inside like this. Thank you for doing it. I just wanted to ask.

LC: For me that's a very very important question, because I am such a critic of Western culture, even though I am living in Berlin. I am looking for deepness and quality, not quantity and marketing. This past year I was traveling in Indonesia and I just loved what they do there. It's full of tradition, and the quality and intention of the work is great. I am trying to find this balance as well.

AUDIENCE: And just to add onto the point about music. Talking about occidentalism and orientalism, I didn't find anything overtly symbolic in your performance except for the stylized dance movements in the beginning and the chandelier, which is, I would say, an overt symbol of occidentalism, or some sort of yearning for glamour in a very specific way. So it seems to me that you are trying to localize your relation to these concepts in the performance, and

not actually talk about the extremes of orientalism and occidentalism because they are fictions in a way, would you agree with that?

ZT: Can you repeat that...

AUDIENCE: Yes, sorry I was rambling a little bit. There were no overt symbols of the East or the West except for two elements—

LC: The chandelier.

AUDIENCE: And the stylized dance movements.



LC: With the Greek song.

AUDIENCE: I would say it's orientalist just because it's stylized.

LC: And it's a Greek song.

AUDIENCE: But I wouldn't say that the Greek song itself is an orientalist element.

LC: Maybe the composition of both the song and the movement?

AUDIENCE: I felt like the atmosphere was more like mysticism...

My question is, I think you tried to deal with the problems of orientalism and occidentalism by focusing on the conditions they produce, which is what the text is doing by bringing together a lot of different elements that are present in the city of Istanbul and showing how homogeneous of a hodgepodge it is. You are pointing this out and saying that we should look at specifics and not deal with the two extreme edges because they are made up, they are lies, they don't exist anywhere. Or maybe it is just Istanbul where they don't exist. I don't know. What do you think about this? ... You don't have any thoughts. That's fine.

[laughter]

LC: No! We are thinking!

ZT: To me, our basement, our foundation, was occidentalism and orientalism, but then we just really—

LC: Went exploring.

ZT: those concepts are still there somewhere, but we really did not base this performance on occidentalism and orientalism. It was working in the back of our heads, but he most important thing to us was trying to create the "erotic" elements of the show.

LC: For sure not. I think we would really love to go deeper into thinking about orientalism and occidentalism, but we didn't have the time.

ZT: Yes, we really want to keep working on that and we really want to keep thinking about that. But for now we did not really focus on that.

LC: Maybe any last things people want to say? And then maybe we can close because it's getting...

FG: Should we wrap up? ... OK, thank you all for coming, thank you for staying.

[applause]

INTERVIEW WITH ZINNURE TÜRE & LIDIA CANGIANO

BEN VAN BUREN: Your performance features several texts that describe Istanbul in different ways. How does your work relate to this city?

ZINNURE TÜRE: Istanbul inspired us so much. From the beginning of working together we were talking about Istanbul. When Lidia came for a residency at Köşe we had a deep connection, a sense and a feeling about Istanbul. It was the main connection between us actually. And then, when we decided to do something together for the festival, of course, we knew it was going to be in Istanbul. We find Istanbul so erotic...

BVB: How so?

ZT: There are so many places that one hasn't discovered yet, and that are impossible to discover. I find that erotic. There are so many place that you don't know the details of. There are closed doors, hidden streets, hidden squares, and places you cannot find on maps. Sometimes you just see a door and when you push it it opens onto a really big square. This city has so many hidden places just waiting to be discovered.

BVB: I know that you also worked on this piece in Paris. How would you compare the two cities?

ZT: Paris is well organized, everything is planned, it's a city that keeps its mysteries planned. But Istanbul can still be really mysterious. It's the same with the people in each city as well. Here you can just meet someone on the street and listen to his or her story for hours. Which is so interesting, and so erotic. Eroticism, for me, has more to do with surprises. It is about discovering new things, taking your time with things. It's about being curious about places and about people, about actions and about objects. So Istanbul is really full of that.

And the water of Istanbul is really amazing. It's a city where you can find the sea like a river. To be clear it is not a river, it's the sea!

BVB: Threading through your whole performance is a story about a fisherman who is consumed by jealousy when the woman he loves shows affection for a younger man. How did you come to chose this particular story?

ZT: In Paris we spent our time creating the dramaturgy for the show. We worked in a devising theater method. We gathered many different materials to support our dramaturgy, and one of them was this story. I found this story so interesting because it was about Istanbul, and it features a really nice description of Istanbul. I found it really erotic, especially the beginning description of the sea.

In Paris we were also talking about what kinds of things we find erotic. For example, we found it interesting that poison was erotic to us. Somehow pain was kind of erotic for us. We were curious about the moment in the story when the fisherman experiences pain because of his love. We were curious to see how that pain might lead somewhere else... Because we were also thinking about the opposite of eroticism. If you want to show something, if you want to make it more bold, you can also show its opposite to help it shine. There is eroticism and there is something that goes against eroticism. For example, when the fisherman kills the young boy because of his love, that is totally unerotic. Jealousy is one thing, but killing someone... that is really going against eroticism. When that part of the story happens in the performance we start smashing large pieces of ice on the stage. We destroy everything we had created, somehow...

This is something, yeah, for me I need to say, it's about an alternative system to capitalism. [laughs] Now I have I said something so strong! But for me, to be able to create an alternative to the world we live in I think we need to seek eroticism. Everybody has to find erotic

things about life. Because eroticism includes romanticism, naiveté, and all the nice things about oneself. And it also includes action.

BVB: Interesting. How do you connect eroticism and action?

ZT: Let's think about romanticism, eroticism, and pornography. Pornography is too wild, and it destroys everything. Romanticism is too soft, and is just for oneself, it's selfish. But eroticism... Eroticism is the thing that includes both romanticism and action. It prepares you to go to somewhere, the same way that before making love you just prepare with each other. It has action and it's still so naive. We need action, but we need an element of naiveté and beauty also. So, that's the thing I think we are missing in life today.

LIDIA CANGIANO: I agree with what Zinnure has said so far. I mean, at a minimum capitalism wants to reduce your senses and create new needs that you can buy. Now, in this moment, the contemporary moment, we use our eyes to take in images a lot, and that is pornographic somehow. We forget about touch, about listening. There is so much less listening, so much less smelling things. I think that eroticism goes through the senses and activates you. It wants to make you look for the part of the world which is unknown.

When we started working on this project one of the first images that came to us was of a door in Istanbul with a curtain moving in the wind. It's full of beauty, you want to see what is behind there, maybe you listen and some sound pushes you to go and explore. There is an element of danger. There is something to do with danger. Because when you go into the unknown you don't know what you will receive, what will happen to you. You have to take the risk of going into a dangerous situation. Something we talked a lot about was exploring different cities. I live in Berlin and Zinnure lives here in Istanbul and I find the city of Berlin totally not erotic. I think that everything is really planned, closed off, and there, like Zinnure was saying, we come back to capitalism.

BVB: How do you think Istanbul is changing at the moment? Do you feel it's becoming more like Paris or Berlin?

ZT: I couldn't guess exactly. Turkey is not a first world country and it won't be in the near future, I'd guess. I studied urban planning before acting, so I can describe how cities fall into certain categories because of their political backgrounds and their economic situations. New York, Tokyo, London, Paris, maybe Berlin, and Brussels, those cities are really into urban planning and are really well planned. But I don't think the rest of the world can be like that because of the economic situation. Because if you want to really plan a city well you need a really big economy and in Istanbul it's just not possible to make that happen, even if you really wanted to. If you decide to do that now it will take fifteen years at least. Anyway, we wouldn't allow it to happen! That's why Gezi happened, because the government wanted to do that and people revolted. In this area people revolt somehow, if they don't like something they say no, even if they are killed.

Maybe the government will destroy the city, I'm telling you, maybe they will really destroy it because they are really fucked up. They have killed the history of so many things, they have destroyed a lot, but still, people will protect it.

LC: And that was something I wanted to add to your question, because I think also, in the beginning, we started to talk about how we were afraid of what the government is doing to the city. It is shutting down a lot of old buildings in order to build luxury skyscrapers, while all around there are a bunch of people living in poverty. In that way I feel a very strong connection with the city where I come from, which is Naples. There the people love their tradition, which does not mean that they are old fashioned or that they didn't emancipate. They

love the things that I was just calling erotic, like the smell of the bread and the dough, and little streets, and the guy on the corner who has been selling the same newspaper for twenty years... All these things are so important. No Burger King can come and just take their place. The city resists the economic drive from below.

ZT: At least some of them.

LC: But it's not always happening, of course. So to your question I think yes, in Istanbul there are some places that have been gentrified very strongly and violently. Of course, as Zinnure said, it's not really about urban planning, it's just like, "OK we put that on top of that and it's finished." That's my fear, of course, that some day it will be like Paris, so well planned at the expense of so many things being shut down.

ZT: I am just happy about one thing. Istanbul is too huge to be destroyed. For sure we will lose some places, we have already lost some places, but our history is like a fountain here. It's just always bubbling up. They cannot destroy everything. They cannot destroy the history, they cannot destroy the books, and it will keep moving in people's minds.

LC: It is a memory.

ZT: It is a memory. Everything is changing so fast in Istanbul and you can track the changes from generation to generation. That's why we tell stories, and I believe in stories. People will keep talking about the city even if we lose the actual place.

And I just want add something about capitalism and how it suppresses eroticism. It has to do with duration also. Capitalism is so fast, everything has to be so fast. You should go from point A to point B as fast as possible, it has to be your focus, and you should not destroy your focus. Urban designers create the city around this idea. And eroticisim is really against that. You should still go from A to B but you should distract yourself and get a little lost.

BVB: Do you have any ideas about what a more erotic approach to city planning might look like?

ZT: Yeah that's the thing we really want to work on actually. Maybe in the future we can work with urban designers on how to make more erotic cities. And maybe we can just work with people from the public to create their own erotic cities, but I cannot say anything now. I will just say that old cities, really old cities, ancient cities, like Istanbul, when you explore them you can see that there is a big harmony with nature and with humanity, let's say. You can see how they were not always oppressed by something. You can see the real harmony with nature and people and everything. We have lost that.

BVB: In other conversations you have mentioned a tension between orientalism and occidentalism. I'm wondering if this was something that came up because you were working in both Paris and Istanbul.

ZT: Yeah that was the starting point, but then we just threw it away somehow. For sure it was somewhere in our mind, but we did not really base anything on it.

LC: It's very tricky to say what occidentalism is and what orientalism is. What are the borders? What are the limits? We started talking about these concepts very casually when we would go on long walks together in Paris.
We would take hours just walking and getting lost on our way from one place to another. On these walks we started playing a kind of game of pointing to things and trying to define them to each other. We pointed at buildings, the corners, the shape of the street, the curves, everything and anything. Then when we came here we kept pointing at things, and through this exercise of just pointing at things I was learning a lot about what, from Zinnure's point of

view, orientalism is or occidentalism is. I think these themes made their way into the work just because we are interested in them. It was something we were experimenting with.

BVB: How did you build the work together in the studio?

LC: You mean how did we train? Or how did we build?

BVB: How did you create the performance.

LC: Ah, it was a long process.

ZT: First of all Lidia came to Istanbul and we were supposed to make a residency, but so many things were happening, so we didn't have so much time to work together. But there was one song that we both liked a lot, that Greek song, so we made some choreography on that.

BVB: How did you go about making the choreography?

LC: We would work separately, then we would watch each other, and then we would try to put it together. I think we were exploring duration. It was an element that never left us, we were doing this all the time, even in Paris.

ZT: Yeah, it really was at the core of the work.

BVB: Would you mind describing how the piece begins?

LC: For me everything the audience sees at the beginning is there. All the elements that we are going to use are onstage. And already, from those elements, the audience can start to build their own image of what is going to happen, with this swimming pool, with the ice, with so many bottles full of water. And then the focus becomes about listening to a story, the power of narration. So that's the first image. Of course we are also on stage so there is also our bodies.

ZT: Well actually first they meet the chandelier.

BVB: It's hanging over the doorway as people enter.

ZT: That's the first thing that welcomes them. You go into a place with a chandelier and then see the bottles, big chunks of ice, and a pool. It creates an atmosphere. The chandelier comes from my childhood because my father made them for a living. He had a shop. All the material, including the crystals, would arrive separately. When I was about six years old I was helping my father make that kind of chandelier. I would occasionally steal some crystals from his shop and take them home and to play with. I loved how the crystals made rainbows on the walls. It still makes me so comfortable, I love it so much. And so when I saw a chandelier in Komşu Cafe I asked them if I could take it and they said OK take it. I was sure I really wanted to use it somewhere in the work. Because it's really a beautiful thing and it's important to the history of Turkey. Once upon a time everybody had those kinds of lamps at home. But these days they are less popular, we are losing them somehow. The story in the piece about the fisherman is also about losing something. And if we need to talk about those sorts of feelings, those really deep and melancholy blue feelings, it's because we are losing so many things into the wild world.

LC: I Also want to say two more things about the chandelier. One is that its re-use, as Zinnure said, makes me feel so comfortable. It always gives me the image of being in a room which is maybe the living room where my family or friends gather together, maybe they share a meal, and they start to tell each other their news, or maybe they tell stories. It puts people in this kind of closed space, where you are all together. And second, this reflection of the light through the crystals, it's also, for me, the meaning that we wanted to give the

audience in this performance. When we started to work with these topics we always said we didn't want to give the audience answers, we wanted to open questions. True feelings, and senses. And when you look at how these diamonds reflect light, and how it changes all the time according to your position and how you feel in that position... It reflects a new light and you change. Even if we lose something maybe at the same time we can find something. It's all about changing perspective.


TURKEY
CYPRUS
SYRIA
LEBANON

PERFORMANCE
PERFORMANS
II

ROOM

MIA HABIS / MAQAMAT
DANCE THEATER

ROOM/POST SHOW TALK
MIA HABIS/MAQAMAT DANCE THEATER
SAINT JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL, KADIKÖY

A performance based on the collaboration between dancer Mia Habis, pianist Cynthia Zaven and drummer Øyvind Skarbø. It is an outcome of a 2 week creative residency in Beirut. 'Room" is a conversation between a dancer, a drummer and a pianist.



Dansçı Mia Habis, piyanist Cynthia Zaven ve davulcu Øyvind Skarbø'ın Beyrut'ta gerçekleştirdikleri işbirliği sonucunda ortaya çıkan Oda, bir dansçı, bir piyanist ve bir davulcu arasındaki performatif bir diyalog.

FATIH GENÇKAL: Thanks for staying! I would like to begin by talking about your work, and Maqamat Dance Theater's work, and how this project came about.

MH: Sure. Maqamat is a Lebanese contemporary dance company that was founded in Beirut by Omar Rajeh, who is here, he should actually—

FG: He should come up.

MH: —Talk about Maqamat.

FG: Yes.

MH: And I can talk about the project

OMAR RAJEH: You should talk about the project, talk about the performance.

MH: OK, OK, so we start with the performance. So Maqamat is a dance company but we organize other kinds of projects as well. Festivals, or formations. One of them is CO2 festival. We organized it in 2014. It's called CO2 because it's Choreographers and Composers. The idea was to grow the work from residencies that bring together choreographers and musicians who don't know each other.

FG: Does it have to do with Carbon Dioxide?

[laughter]

MH: Yes in the sense that it's an outdoor, well not outdoor, it's a site specific festival! So we were brought together, we had never met before, we didn't know each other. We met on the internet. [laughter]

I knew about Cynthia but didn't know her personally. So we started a conversation, on the internet, and then we had a residency in Beirut for two weeks.

So we were projected, thrown, into this room. And we had already, on the internet, developed a kind of concept, and knew more or less what we wanted to do. But then we let ourselves be free to discover new things in the space, which is always very different.

OR: And this performance tonight, as Mia said, is part of a bigger project. We were focusing on the idea of residencies, of bringing artists together, and also the idea of presenting work outside of a theater. Now here it happened inside, but during the festival there were performances on the street, in a pool—

MH: This one was in a church.

OR: In a church, in the crypt of a church actually. It was different with different works. And also, the last thing I want to say, is that I think it would be nice if you ask questions.

AUDIENCE: Did you have any specific

goals when you began working together as a trio?

MH: For me, I cannot answer for the three of us, but for me the purpose was first and foremost to meet. I mean the whole process was interesting to me. This is why I did it. I simply wanted to



have a meeting between music and body without any other kind of philosophical concept. This was for me very challenging, because it's not always easy to stay simple while interacting with live music. To not only interact with music but also to "complete" the music, somehow. What we tried to do was to allow each other to exist totally alone, but also all together at the same time. But this is a concept...

AUDIENCE: So it was like an improvisation?

MH: There was a big part, a very big part, which was improvisation. There is not one performance like the other. But there is a general structure of course.

FG: Do you want to add something?

CYNTHIA ZAVEN: I don't want to.

[laughter]

ØYVIND SKARBØ: OK, I'll make a comment on this. Because your question is really a good one. Earlier today I was thinking about this, about what does this piece really mean. Does it mean anything? Did I miss the email that said what we are talking about... I don't know. I don't know what it's about. There are no political hints or anything. However, I find that music and movement can evoke a lot of really strong feelings even though they are not specific, and that's usually what I'm interested in. When I'm performing music in general it's never specific but it can be very emotional. And how you choose to interpret that... actually you don't choose, either you feel it in some way or you don't. And I think that has just as much value as anything else, even though it's not specific. To me it needs to create some emotion and if it doesn't then it's dead. Can I ask you, did you get any impression of a theme? Would you like to share it? It would be interesting to know.

AUDIENCE: For me there was a critique of symbolism. Symbols and replacements, or something. The theater as a kind of producing process. In the middle of everything there was somebody who was trying to find their own language.

AUDIENCE: Not all, but most of the parts of your show I enjoyed.

[laughter]

AUDIENCE: I think at the end you really found the harmony with movement, it was very nice with the music. I really enjoyed it aesthetically. It was not philosophical, but for me the most important thing is that you tell me something aesthetically and make me feel something. Thank you.

MH: Thank you very much.

AUDIENCE: I have a question for the two musicians. Did you feel like you were accompanying the dancer, that she was following what you were offering her? I didn't get... I was trying to understand who was accompanying and who was leading. I wanted to know how you were working together.

CZ: I think we started with the concept

of having a conversation. How can we have a conversation with another instrument? Because usually in improvised music we meet all over the world with musicians we don't know and after half a rehearsal we're on stage. And either it's great, or it's a total disaster. So we are used to improvising with people we



don't know. But this was an experiment with a dancer, with a body. The movements of the musicians were working with the movements of the dancer. At one point it stopped being that important whether she was following the music, or if the musicians were accompanying the dancer. Mia said "I'm going to sit down, you guys keep going, and I'm just going to listen to you." This became my favorite moment of the performance.

[laughter]

MH: She's revealing the secrets!

CZ: Mia said, "I am going to sit with my back to you and you just keep playing and playing and playing until I stand up." OK! So following is not really the basic rule. It doesn't really matter whether we are following her or she is following us, or if I'm following him, or if he's following me. What is more important is being together in this very tight moment, which is not an hour and a half, its thirty to forty minutes, so it's a quite limited in time. So I don't know if I answered your question, but there is that.

MH: it's also very much about playing. It's very playful. It's about what you want to do. What do I want to do with this big piano and Cynthia's playing? It's really about respecting the space of each person, while at the same time saying what I want to say. And it's very enjoyable. For example, when I'm in the back sitting down with my back to them, today Cynthia asked me, "Isn't it too long?" No, I'm just listening to you, let me listen to you and enjoy listening to you. I will go whenever I feel I want to go.

AUDIENCE: Two things. I didn't experience a very emotional response to the performance, but really enjoyed how it activated all my five senses. And I felt like the music was mostly taking place in time and the dancing was mostly taking place in space, and how they collided and came together created a sort of third dimension. It wasn't only the body and music, but another sphere of communication. I felt like you were collecting different senses, like a spiritual collection of feelings.

MH: Thank you very much.

INTERVIEW WITH MIA HABIS

BEN VAN BUREN: You are the executive director of Maqamat Dance Theater, and the artistic director of the Beirut International Platform Of Dance (BIPOD). Would you mind describing a bit of your history with these organizations?

MIA HABIS: We have to go back to 2002. I came in the middle of this adventure. In 2002 Omar came back from England, and found that in Lebanon there was nothing called contemporary dance. There were studios with classical ballet and some folklore companies, the traditional stuff, but nothing contemporary. The word contemporary didn't exist in 2002. So Omar came back to Beirut from the UK where he studied dance and he wanted to make a performance with Lebanese performers. This was the first stone cast into the sea.

The piece he made, *Beyrouth Jaune*, was a huge success. They had to take another theater, they performed for three months, it was always packed, all the newspapers were talking about it. It was very new... "What is it?" "Is it dance?" "Is it theater?" So this is how it started.

Soon after that the idea to start the BIPOD festival came very spontaneously. In England Omar used to watch performances every week, but in Lebanon there were no dance performances. While Touring *Beyrouth Jaune* he got to meet other artists, and he decided to start BIPOD with a very small program of maybe six performances, and it worked super well. The first edition was in 2004 and it grew. It grew, it grew, it grew until next April will be the twelfth edition.

BVB: Looking on the website I was very curious to learn about Leymoun and how it grew up in BIPOD.

MH: Leymoun is a platform within BIPOD. It's a meeting. It started as a meeting and a showcase. When Omar started it in 2009 it was really a showcase to present, promote, and develop the work of Arab choreographers, dancers, and performers. So it started as a sort of marketplace.

The 2009 edition of Leymoun was huge. We had twenty-five choreographers presenting work. We had 130 international presenters coming to see that work. It was huge. The streets of Beirut were flooded with festival tote bags and a certain international presence. And It was successful. Artists were able to tour, to have co-productions, to go to training programs, to get residencies. So it worked. It worked well. One particular highlight was that Akram Kahn even came and ended up hiring two dancers for his piece *Vertical Road*.

Since the first edition in 2009, Leymoun has happened in 2011, 2013, and 2015. 2015 was my first year as the artistic director and I decided to restructured Leymoun. This decision came for two reasons. Between 2009 and 2015 I had seen other platforms featuring Arab choreographers, and I decided that I wanted to take Leymoun in a different direction. I am not going to name festivals, but I felt that sometimes the way these other platforms treated their artists could be reductive. For example, in one "international" festival, the program did not even mention the choreographers names, and they were described as representatives of "the Middle East." The term the Middle East is problematic... we prefer the Levant. "The Middle East" has so many connotations...

The other reason for the restructuring was because of budget. It was either we cancel, or we think of something

else. I came up with the idea of having a smaller platform, a more intimate platform, and a more, maybe, solid platform. I choose ten choreographers who are very good technically, who have already made at least one work, and who have a unique perspective in choreography. And, importantly, I wanted them to meet in the studio. Because as an artist you can have a million conversations, but it's never the same as when you meet in the studio and work together. I wanted the artists themselves to have a solid collaboration, or at least to open the chance for solid collaboration later on.

Arab countries are having a hard time. Arab artists sometimes look to the outside, but amongst us we have many beautiful performers and talents. I wanted to encourage the 'pan-Arab' thing. So I choose ten emerging artists and I put them in a studio to train together. I invited a choreographer from the UK to give a workshop, and then for two days the international presenters came. It was a smaller number of presenters, but the close proximity was very nice. We were all in the mountains of Lebanon, in the same hotel. It was very intense. From morning to evening these performers and presenters got to know to each other. Whereas the big showcases are often very hectic and competitive, here it is was like everyone was on the same level.

We had studio presentations. Some of the artists talked and presented things on a computer, others presented physically. So it was very free. Each artist could do whatever they wanted. For me it was a nice and intense edition. We had some good debates. We debated the problem of performing in the Arab world.

BVB: What is the problem of performing in the Arab world?

MH: I should say we didn't only talk about problems. We also talked about how we could collaborate, and follow up, and strengthen. We discussed the problem as a space problem, an organizational problem, a networking problem.

BVB: Why were you interested in coming to A Corner In The World?

MH: First, it is good to know the festival. We are not very far from each other, so geographically it's nice. It's always nice to be close, to work with close people. So I was curious, first it was curiosity. The second thing is that it's always nice to perform in another country, in Turkey especially. I have never performed in Turkey. And Third, I sensed similarities. A festival that is just beginning is always very exciting, not only for the organizers, but also for the people participating. When Faith came to meet me at the airport, and I was able to see what was going on concretely, it reminded me a bit of Beirut and what we are doing there. Because there is a certain hospitality in hosting a festival. This is very important. And I am curious to see what is going to happen when we perform tomorrow. I wish I could stay longer.

BVB: Have the recent bombings in Ankara effected your experience of the festival?

MH: I sent Fatih a message saying that I am still very happy to come, in fact I am even more happy to come. Because in Beirut we face the same thing and sometimes artists get scared and they wonder what's going on. For me it makes even more sense to be here.

Because, actually, everything we do in Lebanon whether it's the festival, the company, or anything else we do, for

me, is an act of resistance. For sure. I mean we cannot be performers in a country where there are so many problems and just do pirouettes. If you see what I mean. We cannot just do "form." Dealing with the problems we see around us is totally a part of what we do, we are totally engaged as artists. It's always a question. Can we, as artists, be totally detached from what's happening in the country? Can we just go on stage and do *Beauty and the Beast*? Or are we going onstage because we are resisting with our bodies, resisting something related to our everyday lives and where we live?

For me it's fine that *Beauty and the Beast* exists, but it's also a kind of denial. And for me it is important to engage the audience differently. I think we have a responsibility. The question of responsibility is a big one for me. It doesn't mean that the subject of performances need to be serious, it's more about a different vision of things... For us it is important, in Beirut for example, to have a festival that pushes the mind, that opens the mind. I think in general there is a more passive spectator and a more active spectator, and what we try to do with our festival, and with our company, is to engage a more active spectator. A spectator who feels that he is engaged with the thing happening, with the event. And for us the presence of this spectator makes the event possible. And making the event, the performance, the festival, possible is also a way of resisting all the shitty contexts we are in. It's not about liking or not liking a work. It's more about asking questions. And more about pushing the boundaries of what art and performance can be. For me it's a mind opener.

BVB: How does the company, Maqamat, think about engaging with the public, or with its own corner in the world?

MH: The work of Maqamat is very engaged. Since the beginning, since before I came to Maqamat, Omar's choreographic work was already busy with this.

Before I became the artistic director of the company I was a dancer in it. The first piece I was in was a performance about the assassination of journalists in Lebanon. But, importantly, the performance wasn't about "documenting." We were not documenting, we were not dramatizing, we were just exploring a particular situation in an artistic context. In the end the performance might even appear to be about something else. Could be, could be. But the process, the inspiration, the material, the physicality all came out of discussions and research about the specifics of our context.

Another good example could be the piece *That Part Of Heaven*, where we dealt with the aftermath of the civil war. We asked the question, "How could a memory could become physical?" There are people who are still carrying experiences of the civil war, how are they doing that? How do they experience their bodies? Asking ourselves these questions brought us to a very interesting physicality. But when you see *That Part Of Heaven* it doesn't talk about war specifically. It's a beautiful piece. On a personal note, I really love it.

I was directly involved in the creation of *That Part Of Heaven*, and it was a very difficult process. I am not usually the kind of performer who gets emotionally involved. I try all the time to have a certain distance. But there are some performances where I feel totally involved, as if it's really Mia on stage. I'm not representing someone, I'm not acting someone, It's Mia onstage, with her own body, her own presence, saying something about her life. In *That Part*

Of Heaven I was totally involved. I had to get through a period of time where I felt I was carrying the work home, or walking with it in the street. It was bitter, it wasn't easy. But then I got through it, I had to get over it. Because you are making art you aren't doing therapy. But this is on a very personal note.

BVB: Could you speak more about the difference between *being* Mia on stage, and representing Mia on stage?

MH: It's crucial in our work. Because Omar... He is obsessed with not representing. In everything, even in his dance technique. It's like in acting, either you embody the thing or... I don't know how to explain it, it is difficult to explain. It's like you are just holding a glass and not acting like you are holding a glass...

And this difference is important in other ways too. For example, we have had to face the problem of being asked, "Is your dance Arab?" Or, "Is your dance Lebanese?" We went to Holland for example with *The Assassination of Omar Rajeh* and after the performance we were told, "But there is nothing Lebanese about your work." What do you mean Lebanese? What is Lebanese? When Krisztina de Châtel presents her work do you say, "Where's the Dutch in your work?" When you go to New York, is it New York performance? When you go to China is it Chinese? You know? I wonder sometimes. Do Arabs have certain similarities that constitute Arab work? Or not? It's a question for me. I wonder. Sometimes when you see work choreographed by artists from the Arab world there is a certain connection. It is somehow spiritual. Spiritual and very basic. We had an edition of Leymoun where we asked what was common between the artists, and we thought maybe it was this kind of spiritual thing.

BVB: What do you mean by spiritual?

MH: I don't know, It's still a question. Because you have other people who don't do that, other Arabs. It's also important that we don't generalize. But I am definitely against saying, "You come from an Arab country your work must look a certain way."

—

INTERVIEW WITH OMAR RAJEH
MAQAMAT DANCE THEATER

BEN VAN BUREN: It has been ten years since the first edition of BIPOD (Beirut International Platform Of Dance). Do you feel established?

OMAR RAJEH: Yes, for sure we feel established, but always, also, insecure. I say established in the sense that the festival is there in Lebanon, people wait for it from one year to another. So, from this perspective it's great, it's good. But It's always a challenge. Mia and I work all year and we are not paid for it. We try to cover some expenses, and to make a little bit of money, but compared to the work it's nothing. I'm not sure for how much longer we will be able to continue like this. We have a very good team now. In January people will start asking us, "When do we start, when do we start?" We have lot's of volunteers, and lots of people in administration. During the festival there are about fifty people working. So yes, it's not easy, and every year it's the same struggle.

The cultural centers in Beirut support the festival a lot, and this is one of the main reasons it keeps going. So at least we know we have a certain kind of support. What we are trying to do now, for the sustainability of the festival, is

to work on finding private sponsors and partners. But we aren't approaching it with the usual logic of private sponsorship, we are really trying to have partnership. We are looking for people for whom it is important to have a festival like this in Lebanon.

BVB: And Leymoun? How has Leymoun shifted over the years?

OR: The 2011 edition of Leymoun was an important year. Not only for BIPOD, but for the whole Arab region. The platform in Leymoun, In Beirut, in 2011, was really huge. It opened a lot of possibilities for artists in Arab countries, not only in Lebanon.

BVB: How would you describe those artists that Leymoun presents? Do they share something?

OR: Well in 2009 and 2011 we had nearly thirty performances each year, and it was a mix of more established and more emerging artists. Within that mix there were a few different generations.

First there was the generation that had started working in the early 2000s. Before the 2000s contemporary dance was nonexistent in Arab countries. In the early 2000s when we started to grow the contemporary dance scene in Beirut, (we were the first people to do contemporary dance in Lebanon), Taoufiq, in Morocco, was doing something similar. He was doing his own work, he started a festival, he was doing a kind of a training program... It was the same as what was happening in Tunisia, and also what was developing Syria. So there is this first generation that took the initiative to start something, and they were present at Leymoun in 2009 and 2011.

And then there was a second generation that were just starting to do their work. Maybe they had done one or two performances. They were starting to develop things.

And then there was a third generation of really fresh artists, most of whom were coming from training projects. For example many were coming from Takween, which was an education and training program that we organized in Beirut for three years. So in a sense we tried to really involve everyone we could in Leymoun. And it wasn't an artistic selection, I wasn't saying, "OK, because these artists share the same artistic direction as us we will invite them to the festival."

At first we tried to organize Leymoun very widely around presenting performances, giving studio presentations, and holding talks—there were lots of talks given by the artists themselves about their working conditions and what they were doing. Later on, in 2015 we wanted to be more focused, more selective. We felt that because there are more artists nowadays, and because the scene has grown a little bit across the Arab countries, we could afford to be more precise. And we are doing it, slowly. Our aim is to have a really intensive period, to be very condensed. We want to put artists in direct contact with art critics, with journalists, with international presenters, by creating an informal gathering.

BVB: You mentioned, as did Mia when I spoke with her, that before 2000 contemporary dance didn't really exist in the Arab world. What do you think caused it to spread after 2000?

OR: This is really a very interesting question, and we can look at it from a few different perspectives. I remember in the 90s, I was studying at the Lebanese University and I was dancing with

a company in Lebanon, which for me was important because I was dancing every day. And I was going to the Goethe Institute a lot because they had a huge video library. Over the course of a few years I saw everything they had. All the works of Pina Bausch, of Mats Ek, of Mary Wigman, Rudolf Laban. It was mostly German dance, but there were some videos from other artists too. At the university I studied theater as well as dance, and I started feeling that I was interested in a different kind of expression on stage, a different kind of meeting with the audience. And this was mostly because of theater people. But I felt that if I stayed in Lebanon I would not be able to have a career dancing and so I wanted to leave. When I finished my degree in theater studies in 2000 I went to England, and there I was in direct contact with contemporary dance.

In England I did a masters in dance studies, and I started a PhD at The Place that I didn't finish. I did about two years and then I decided I didn't want to continue. So in 2001 I got my MA in England, and I stayed there and tried to work a little bit. I made a few choreographies in different places and I worked with friends on other projects. Then in 2002 I went to Beirut to perform. I wasn't planning on staying in Beirut, because for me there was nothing there, contemporary dance didn't exist. But there was a surprising kind of connection during this performance. The performance was extremely well received. The first performance was in a two-hundred seat theater and sixty people came. But the next day we had a full house. We did six performances with a full house and then we moved into another theater and did more performances. The reviews were very unique, I remember, we got nineteen reviews. And then we traveled. We went to Egypt, to Tunisia, to France, to Romania. I mean, we had a big tour with this performance. And because of that performance I decided I wanted to stay in Beirut. But I didn't want to lose the connection with Europe. I did another performance in 2003, and BIPOD started in 2004. I'm saying all this, in a sense, also to say that there was a personal motivation, a personal initiative to find a different way of expressing myself on stage, a different way of seeing the relationship between the stage and the audience.

But to your question, I think that something that has helped the spread of contemporary dance from 2000 until today is the funding. At the end of the 90s lots of funding started happening in Beirut on many levels. Honestly, I believe it was a political decision at the time, definitely. This helped a lot for things to develop. Today dance is still not really funded, it's not really funded at all, but it seems to be a very influential art form.

In the Arab world dance is taking on a major role in terms of national interactions and local projects. In Lebanon for example, BIPOD is one of the most important festivals today. There isn't a theater festival. Theater was there at one point, but even today I feel that with the exception of some individual projects there is not a strong theatrical movement. But in dance, I see a lot of development. In Palestine, Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco there are very strong and dynamic scenes developing. They are kind of different, they go in different artistic directions, but they're active, they're dynamic, they're working.

BVB: Why do you think that dance has recently become so important?

OR: For me, personally, we are dealing with the body. When we are on stage we are totally open, we are... I'm trying to find the word in English... We are... You are totally transparent, you can't hide anything. It deals a lot with these issues, it deals with our everyday presence and existence. And it is a powerful tool for helping the younger generation in Arab countries express, resist, and change things. How do we deal with our bodies on stage? What do we do? I think it has a lot to do with presence, and with dance's ability to talk about urgent issues.

BVB: How has the dance scene in Beirut developed alongside BIPOD over the past decade?

OR: People are working in different ways. A lot of people who worked with us before, who were in Maqamat as dancers, now make their own work. Others who were a part of the Takween project are starting to do their own work. Others are starting their work through other workshops and meetings. It also seems that theater is coming back. Text is coming back, maybe because of this need for direct expression. Some people seem to want to go back to this sort of theatrical expression or "classical" connection with the audience. But in terms of dance it feels like people are digging more into history and balancing this with more contemporary thinking, more contemporary aesthetics. So there is this kind of transition where dancers, choreographers, artists, are starting to ask the question of, "OK, how does this relate to our culture? How does this relate to our perception of history?" Not history in a general sense, but history in terms of recent history, the war and the aftermath of the war. It seems that at one point people were taken in by the European contemporary dance but now there has been a shift towards being interested in what's happening here in the everyday. I'm one of them. I have started to be interested in what's happening here everyday. I am interested in the physicality and structure of the everyday here. Over time a different language, a different approach has started to develop. For me it's more about the experience of being in a performance than of watching a performance. But if we look at things in general you will see how until recently the movement language in the scene was based on certain European contemporary dance techniques. But today people are realizing that they don't have to put this on stage. They are realizing that they can create their own movement language and develop their own physical structures. I think that maybe when the scene first started to grow the movement language on stage looked very European. But this didn't last long.


Lithunania
BELARUS
NETHERLANDS
POLAND
GERMANY
BELGIUM
CZECH REPUBLIC
UKRAINE
SLOVAKIA
AUSTRIA
MOLDOVA
HUNGARY
SWITZERLAND
SLOVENIA
ROMANIA
CROATIA
BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA
SERBIA
ITALY
MONTENEGRO
BULGARIA
MACEDONIA
TURKEY

PERFORMANCE
PERFORMANS
III

THE MAIDS

VAHID EVAZZADEH / THE
COUNTER INSTITUTE

THE MAIDS / POST SHOW TALK
VAHID EVAZZADEH
ÇATI/TAL STÜDYOSU, TOPHANE

The Maids is TCI's new international performance project that takes place in Istanbul, Beijing and Stockholm. In each city the project is explored and later produced with a team of local artists, making thematic adaptations, which are suggested by the local community and relevant to the context of each society.

We are using the skeleton of Jean Genet's The Maids as a point of departure where a new version of the performance is developed in a residency each time in each of the three cities. The process of the work is guided by TCI's system of performance making, The Formative theater and the result will be culminated in a "pre-formance" shared with spectators in various stages of the work.

Hosted by A Corner in The World festival in cooperation with Çatı/TAL, The Counter Institute (TCI) opens the door of the its residency in Istanbul to the public and share the work-in-progress of The Maids project in two Open

izmetçiler, The Counter Institute (TCI)'un İstanbul, Pekin ve Stokholm'de gerçekleştirdiği uluslararası performans projesidir. Her şehirde proje yerli sanatçıların katılımıyla, her toplumun kendi ihtiyaçları doğrultusunda tematik olarak yeniden ele alınıp geliştiriliyor.

Proje, Jean Genet'nin Hizmetçiler metnini esas alarak her şehirde bir residency süreci sonunda yeni bir performans ortaya çıkarıyor. TCI'ın performans oluşturma metodu Formative Theater ile geliştirilecek pre-performans her şehirde izleyicilere farklı aşamalarda sunuluyor.
TCI, Dünyada Bir Köşe kapsamında Çatı/TAL ortaklığıyla 1 haftalık atölye ve 3 haftalık residency çalışmasının sonunda iki açık seans gerçekleştirecek.

VAHID EVAZZADEH: Let's start by saying who you are quickly. What's your name, what do you do, and why are you here.

AUDIENCE: I am , I am one of the volunteers, so I am here to help! [laughter] I am studying philosophy, and I am interested in performance arts.

AUDIENCE: My name is , I heard about you earlier from my friend , so I was curious about your work and that's why I am here. I was wondering, why do you need us to participate in your training experience?

VE: We will come back to questions.

AUDIENCE: OK.

AUDIENCE: I am , I teach literature at a local university. I am here because Vahid is my friend, and I like his work.

VE: And now you've seen it!

AUDIENCE: Yes. Finally.

AUDIENCE: My name is , I'm a student, and I know you from last year. I was curious about your work so that's why I am here. And that's it.



AUDIENCE: I'm , I was wondering how the things work. I've never participated in a workshop before so that's why I'm here.

AUDIENCE: My name is . I'm a performer and I recently wrote my own play and I am here today to see how you are working with the physicality of the actor. And I have questions too but I am keeping them.

VE: Introduce yourself please.

LARA FELISA: My name is Lara, I am a performerin Vahid's work. I'm doing a lot of other things as well, but now I am here.

AUDIENCE: My name is . I am curious about the works in the festival so that is why I am here. I am a dancer and translator.

VE: I think we will get back to you to tell about the festival, but introduce yourself.

FATIH GENÇKAL: My name is Fatih. I am part of the festival team, I am the director of the festival, and I have to see all the shows so... [laughter] I don't like him very much but what can I do?

LIDIA CANGIANO: My name is Lidia, I came to do a residency and to present a performance together with Zinnure Türe, and tonight I came to see you work.

AI KUO: Hello guys! I am Ai Kuo, I am from China, I also performed for Vahid, and... Nice to meet you guys! Should I say something else?

VE: You should introduce yourself whatever way you like.

AK: I am happy with you guys, you are very sweet. [laughter] How do you say sweet in Turkish?

AUDIENCE: ... Şeker?

AK: Şeker! [laughter]

AUDIENCE: I'm , I came here to watch the show.

AUDIENCE: I'm . I'm an actress. I'm helping one of the other plays in the festival, Kostis' play. This is my first time seeing a performance at this festival.

AUDIENCE: I'm , I'm from Copenhagen, I'm a tourist in dance and Istanbul. I'm a friend of Vahid's.

VE: And a member of the board of directors of the Counter Institute. And Claire? Before we go any further.

CLAIRE ZERHOUNI: Hi everyone, I'm Claire and I'm the residency coordinator of the festival and I've been working with Vahid now for three weeks.

AUDIENCE: I'm , working as a filmmaker making documentaries and I'm friends with Lara.

AUDIENCE: I'm , I have nothing to do with art I just enjoy it. I am here because of my friend invited me. This is the first reason why I am here. The second reason is that when I read what the performance is about I didn't understand it, so I said when I come I will understand it.

VE: We will try to correct that mistake... Or not. Welcome.

HATEM HADAWY: Hi everyone, I am Hatam. I am an actor from Syria. It's the first time I'm working with Vahid and I'm very happy.

AUDIENCE: Hi everyone, I'm , I am a volunteer here. I just wanted to be a part of some collective people trying to make a festival so I guess I wanted to help. And I am studying architecture. I was curious about the backstage of some of these performative arts, so today was also quite nice. I am thinking that maybe I can try to find some connections with the space and the performances, so that's it.

AUDIENCE: Hi I'm , I'm Vahid's friend from Denmark, so we are among friends, so that's good. I'm an architect and a journalist but I'm here as a civilian tonight.

AUDIENCE: I'm , I'm a musician from France, but living here since some years.

AUDIENCE: I'm , I'm an illustrator. Actually, I was just curious about the play of Jean Genet. I was expecting something different but actually I'm glad to see this. It is a better performance.

RONIT MERANDA: I'm Ronit. I'm from Istanbul. I live in England. I have been working with Vahid for six years on several different things. I'm a filmmaker but on this occasion I'm performing.

VE: Well thank you again for coming here and for getting involved with this. I think it would be great if you just say a few words about the festival.

FG: Maybe if you want to go on with talking about the work and we can tie it back to the festival later on?

VE: If you would like. So, anyone, anything you want to say I would be curious to hear and then we will get to the questions. Anything about your experience here today.

AUDIENCE: It has been an unforgettable ritual. Thank you very much.

VE: Thanks.

LC: I have a question. It looks like there is a language that you developed together with your actors. It looks like a very specific language that helps you understand each other quickly. You seem to have a lot of lines of connection in the space which are very subtle. So I was wondering, is it the first time that you work with these performers?



VE: The only one, this time, that I have worked with before is Kuo. We had worked together for two weeks in Beijing, and that's it. Everyone else I have met here in a five-day workshop that took place three weeks ago. From that workshop Lara and Hatem are the ones that have continued with us. So no, it is pretty much the result of these three weeks and our work together.

AUDIENCE: I have a question.

VE: Yes, but would you mind if we went back to the questions that I asked to wait during the introductions?

AUDIENCE: OK.

AUDIENCE: OK, my question was why did you want us to watch and learn about your training experience? How does it contribute to your development, or... your work?

VE: Well it's a good question, and also a complex one. I used to be very paranoid about human beings watching how I work. So for a long time, (until the year 2009), I never let anyone come to watch what I was doing with the performers in rehearsal. That included producers. They would just come see the end result. But first of all, it is very important for the performers to have the experience of encounter with the spectators for the purpose of training. It is not a kind of work that is one-hundred percent dependent upon being looked at but for both the craftsmanship and the ethos of the work it is extremely important for the performers to get engaged in such situations. On the other hand there is also a social aspect of the work which I consider important for both myself personally, and also for what I'm doing. It is not very different from baking bread. I'm doing it because I want to eat it, but there is sometimes a pleasure in sharing it with other people, (not necessarily with everyone), which adds to the whole activity, to the whole meaning of going through so much pain and meticulous process. It is primarily for us, but then there is both a pleasure and a kind of meaning in sharing. So that is, in a nutshell, the answer to that. Who was next. You.

AUDIENCE: OK, so you said the performance is not finished yet. Will you keep on performing together? You are going to keep up your work?

VE: Hopefully.

AUDIENCE: And when is it going to be finished?

VE: Well, this question of finishing is a little bit tricky. The idea is that we come back here next year and continue the work for a longer period, and go deeper into it. However, I have been trying so hard in the last several years not to finish a performance. I want to avoid this situation where we just we fix something, and put it

under lights, and bring people to sit in the darkness to watch and clap and go home. I even have a problem with this hour of the day, because we don't work in this time. For us work starts at 8:30AM. I come here at 7:30, Ai Kuo comes then as well, but the performers come here at 8:30, and by now, by evening, we're all in bed. Or, I'm hoping we are in bed. Some of us engage in other activities.

AUDIENCE: Are you asking us to leave?

VE: No. A part of my resentment for this idea of light and darkness has to do with the fact that our life is traditionally structured so that we spend our day being useful, and then in the evening we rest in order to become more productive to be able to go back to work and make someone else rich. I want to break that circle. I want to prevent you from going to work. I want you to come here in the afternoon, during the day. In that sense it's a process that involves everyone. But why I don't want to finish is because I don't believe it is possible to finish. All those small occasions, where something is crystallizing, suddenly burst. It is not possible to fix. That can only happen within an improvisation. And, for example, if we work for two months, we are going to fix a lot more things. Like the thing you saw in the beginning. Certain aspects of that first scene are fixed, so in that sense—

AUDIENCE: what do you mean by fixed?

VE: Fixing, so that you go there and repeat what you have done over ten days, or whatever rehearsal time you have. And, you need to pronounce it again for me Claire, the French have the perfect word for describing why I don't like theater, It is 'general repetition'?

CZ: Répétition générale.

VE: Répétition générale! So that means that you have done everything and then you go and repeat it, and the night before the premier is the "general" rehearsal. So I don't believe it is possible to fix. We fix everything in an order but only to help that unfixed thing to happen. So in that sense it only ends when we run out of money or time.

AUDIENCE: I was really curious about Jean Genet's Play. So during this residency you used this play I guess?

VE: Barely at all. Pretty much just the title. For those of you who might not be familiar with the play there are two maids who are plotting against Madame, who is their employer. They want to kill her. They have sent Madame's lover to prison on false accusations. But when the lover is going to be released from prison the maids are going to be found out, so they are rushing to kill Madame. They do not succeed, and they commit suicide using the poison which they wanted to give Madame. That's the skeleton of Jean Genet's play. So the two maids, the Madame-lover relationship, and committing suicide. That's all



that is really interesting in Jean Genet's play. Nothing more than that for me. I am very interested in Jean Genet, in his other experiences and works. In this project I am very interested in his relationship to Palestine, his joining the Black Panthers, basically becoming what today is called a terrorist, and his way of portraying himself in a very particular way in the French cultural context. In this I am very interested, but the play itself I'm not interested in at all.

AUDIENCE: Well, as a performer, if I worked with you I would love to finish the work. But now that I listen to you I see that there is no difference for you between an audience watching the process and the end result. I like this approach. First of all it breaks some frame... Actually, as I was watching I thought of The Maids and I was really surprised. All of a sudden everything clicked for me. I liked this very much. Because I felt that it is something beyond the text. And even if the three performers come from different countries there can be a certain new frame. There is also this aspect of knowing the text before hand. When you know the text beforehand as the audience you may still be lead to the point that the director wants you to be lead to. And this was interesting. Now, OK, as a performer I have questions, but I will keep them for a private session because maybe—

VE: You decide.

AUDIENCE: Yeah, I think it's better because if I start I think it will be a mess. But it was very interesting. Am I right in assuming that the text the performers recited was from The Maids?

VE: The texts they recited?

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

VE: NO. I don't know what those texts are. The one's they spoke during the improvisation? I know the texts from the first scene of what you saw, but other than that I have no Idea.

AUDIENCE: Because I don't speak their languages—

VE: Me either.

AUDIENCE:—I didn't understand what they were saying. So I thought maybe these texts could be the texts from Genet translated into their mother tongue.

VE: No, what you heard in their own languages we call training texts. Before we first met I asked each performer to bring a memorized text to the workshop. It's a text that you have to learn by heart, very well. And that's it. I don't know what they are, I don't know what they are saying.

AUDIENCE: OK.

VE: Somebody might speak English and I would understand them, still it doesn't

matter. Those are training texts. We use them for improvisation.

AUDIENCE: Yeah.

VE: It just doesn't mean anything, that text shouldn't mean anything during the training here.

AUDIENCE: Is your aim then to include the "music" of each language in this way?

VE: You mean do performers need to sing as well?

AUDIENCE: No, no, no, the "music" of each language like how Arabic, German, and Chinese, Mandarin sound differently.

VE: Ah, yes. So it is important for the performers to have their own mother tongue. Therefore, yes it is very important.

AUDIENCE: OK, thank you.

BVB: My question is about the international dimension of the work. In the program note it says that you have worked on this project in Stockholm, Istanbul, and Beijing. When you started this project did you specifically seek out opportunities that were far away from one another? Is that international dimension important to you somehow? And then, a follow up question, how has working across so many different contexts factored into the interest you just described of wanting to disrupt the normal rhythm of the daily office job.

VE: Well a big part of what I do is decided by life, and not by me. I am basically maneuvering between obstacles, and just exploring, as best as I can, the margins of possibility. However, this maneuvering does not always take the form I prefer. For example I hate traveling. I would love to stay in one place and just do the work there, but it is not possible production wise. It's a question of funding, a question of finding the right people, the right cultural context. All of this is very important. And as a result of all this, this environment and my reaction to it, my way of working has evolved. Each project that I have done in recent years has evolved through residencies in different places, and that has lots of positive and negative sides.

Working internationally also has different aspects. Production wise it's a whole different thing, especially in terms of who I work with. Pretty much everyone I work with comes from somewhere else, and lives somewhere else. I have collaborators with whom I have a lot in common despite our national, geographical, linguistic, and cultural differences. I don't know how to answer the other part of your question. But this is how I look at it, and how I experience the international. How does that shape what I am trying to achieve, or to pretend, or to get across in terms of how we live our lives and how I'm trying to create a parallel social existence

through what I call theater? It is very complex, I don't have a straight answer. The reason I get up and come here in the morning is not just the performance, it has to do with all the other things I'm pissed off about.

AUDIENCE: Sorry, Just a comment. I think the present time is imposing on us as artists—because I also work with international artists and we need residencies and we need funding because you cannot achieve an end result unless there is real funding. So I think this is the twenty-first century's advantage and disadvantage. This performance was very very good for me because I felt that I'm not really alone. Despite wars and everything... I think of course this is the theater that could spring, and Genet would love it. Because Genet did not like the theater of his time.

VE: You are probably familiar with the text that he wrote about the graveyard as the real theater. I can relate to that feeling of resentment towards theater.

AUDIENCE: It's maybe not a question for you Vahid, but maybe more for the performers.

VE: Yeah, go ahead.

AUDIENCE: About the technique, or the method, or whatever you call it. OK. So it seemed like you had many movements memorized. They were kind of building blocks that you then put together in a sequence. Is that right? Were these building blocks personal? Emotional? Whatever? How do you make these movements? How do you transform personal experience or emotion into this movement that you make? How do you work on that? I'm asking because I have no idea what you are doing in that sense.

AUDIENCE: Actually I have the same comment. How important is this personal experience to each performer? And how will it be for you, Vahid, to repeat this process elsewhere? Because to do it again you will have to work with the same performers.

HH: The text that I was reciting was a Sufi text that changed my life. It's a text that talks about the circle. I'm really, honestly, running around this circle looking for the truth. I'm looking for it.

LF: I'm not sure I got the question.

VE: Please repeat the question.

AUDIENCE: The personal experience that is your building block, how do you take the personal experience or your training text and transform it into part of a physical sequence. Do you think of it? Or do you just act and let your body do it?

LF: Well I try to think of it, but often it doesn't work. Like, often I try to say something and then I hear my voice and

it sounds like acting. There are few moments like that. I don't think of the text at all, about it's meaning, no. If I start thinking about the meaning then—

AUDIENCE: So does it get a new meaning for you? This building block?

LF: Yeah definitely. It's like on another level. I open my mouth and I see what's coming out.

AK: Let me try to answer your questions technically, without any emotions. First of all it is based on Vahid's training. A good example is the walk that you saw us do in space, in different spaces. Vahid guided us in several exercises to develop these walks. First he would ask us to stand and see a point in space. Then he instructed us to walk towards that point and imagine a string connecting our eyes to that point. Next, Vahid would ask us to project an image on the point in space, any image. Like the lamp, or the Titanic, or anything. And that is how we built our individual walks, for example. He would also ask us to be different things as we walked. Soldiers, Roman soldiers; or we're catching a butterfly, which means it's going to be soft. Once, after doing this training a hundred-thousand times, I pictured the image of Ice and I felt cold. I believed in it and really felt cold. We also worked with partners. When I see through their eyes it's like a relationship between anyone of us. It's happening. It's life. The relationship between us is happening. We all are influenced by that. You are not dead. You are not a zombie. You are you in this time. I am me in this time. We are us in this time. We are human beings. We are looking at each other. Sometimes bad stuff happens, but I force myself to feel that. It's actually believing. And this comes from the training, from the contact with partners, from being humans who have feelings.

AUDIENCE: Thank you.

VE: That's the very clear and practice based explanation of your question.

AUDIENCE: Would you agree with him?

VE: The thing is, sometime ago somebody asked me what kind of performers or artists I work with. I said I don't, I work with human beings. That human being is extremely important.

INTERVIEW WITH VAHID EVAZZADEH

BEN VAN BUREN: What has it been like to work on The Maids in three different cities?

VAHID EVADAZZEH: The Maids project is going on in Beijing, Istanbul and Stockholm. So far Istanbul has been the longest one. I had a workshop and a residency in Beijing, and a residency in Stockholm. I came to Istanbul earlier, in March and April, for a residency and now in October we had the workshop and the residency. So I have spent more time in Istanbul.

They are different places, with different activities, different qualities, and different kinds of encounters. But usually in every new city I work I start with a workshop. That is where I meet people, artists, to join the project. From those workshops I ask a number of people to join the residency. That is what has happened here. And the work that happens in the residency is always determined by the types of people who join from the workshop.

BVB: What were some of the differences between the three working processes?

VE: In Beijing we had a very large workshop. I usually allow a maximum twelve people in every workshop but there we had sixteen. And the difference between that workshop and the workshop here was that here a lot of people left after a couple of days, whereas in Beijing we pretty much had the same group throughout. So there I had to more actively select people to join the residency from the workshop. Here we didn't have that many people left so it was much easier to do a natural selection.

[laughter]

BVB: Trial by fire.

VE: So that's one thing, the other is more practical. Things like having to travel within the city to get to the studio, and then having to be out of the studio by a certain time everyday. These practical issues change the residency hugely. They effect not only the quality of the work, but also the mood.

BVB: What are the practical differences between how you organize the workshop and the residency?

VE: The workshop is pretty much the same in every place in terms of what it is and what we are doing there. It changes depending who is participating, but I usually lead a workshop called "Pre-Expressivity and Scenic Presence." It's basically the fundamental techniques of performance craftsmanship. So it is a number of exercises, which also change depending on the amount of time we have. There are certain exercises that we always do, and then if time allows we do more.

BVB: Are these exercises coming from a certain practice of theater that you have studied? Are they exercises that you have devised yourself?

VE: Both, and sometimes a mixture. There are exercises that I have taken from other people. Like, for example, there are two exercises that I have taken from two of the actors in Odin Teatret, but then I have modified them. There are also exercises which I have devised together mainly with my colleagues from *Hamlet Zar* so they are just our own. And all these exercises are nothing unfamiliar to anyone who has done any training in any sort of theater. But what is probably the main difference from other practices is the way the training relates to creating materials and improvisations. Whereas, for example, at Odin Teatret the training is a separate process from the creation of materials for performance for me those two processes are joined. My exercises prevent the performers from doing certain things and then invite them to explore what can be done within those limitations. So that's what happens in the workshop.

In the residency it depends again on the length. So here in Istanbul we only had two weeks, so we continued to work on the training. Because if the performer does not understand this idea of this kind of organic action, if it is not felt very purposefully, you cannot do much. Everything else would remain concepts. There is nothing wrong with that, but this training must be the foundation. Basically this residency is a continuation of the workshop in the sense that the workshop makes a strong foundation, and then we use that foundation to work on other things. For example, we started by improvising around the text of The Maids, but we progressed towards making an entirely new scene as well. A scene that was made much more mechanically, not just by using improvisation. And then we tried to find the life in that mechanical scene.

BVB: How do you direct the creation of this more mechanical scene?

VE: I basically organized two types of materials that were created by the performers: the materials that came from the exercises in limitation, and the materials that came from their own interests. As soon as I decide to work with a performer and they decide they want to work with me I ask them to bring lists of things they are interested in. It could be paintings, music, characters, books, or whatever they wish. I will go through this list and see what resonates with me. Very often there are things that I am not familiar with, or sometimes there are things that I find completely outlandish. I then ask the performer to use that list as a guide for making material. How they do this is very open. So, the scene we made together used both of those materials. And this second type of material could come from anything, could come from text, or anything.

What you saw in the open session

is just a very rough montage of these materials. Not to make it sound too complicated or pretentious but I would prefer to go through more improvisational structures so that there is no direction from me, as such. I would prefer to work until the performers are somehow directing themselves simultaneously, together, without having made any prior verbal agreement. But it takes a long time to arrive at that very precise structure. When the working time is short I have to interfere. But what be made in a short time is not nothing, it's not just a skeleton. It is a whole skeleton that needs us to give it life.

BVB: Is it important to you that your work be identified as theater? Could it also be called choreography?

VE: That is a very tricky distinction to work with. In terms of using different words, choreography, or dance, or theater...

First of all I want to confuse. I don't believe, or I don't accept the division between dance and theater. I think that is an artificial division created not longer than three centuries ago in Europe. Nowhere else, and during no other time have you had such division in the performing arts. For me a performer is a human being who is a dancer, actor, storyteller and musician all together. And, in my way of working, they must also be a composer slash director. But with choreography, that term.... On the one hand I probably should call myself a choreographer because of the opportunities, both in terms of the presence of my work as well as funding, which that might open up. On the other hand, I am a little wary of the connotations. For example, during the talk the other night some one mentioned "movement." I don't work with movement, I work with action. Meaning that there is a vocal and physical score, as well as a psychological sub-score which is extremely important. I feel that choreography usually refers to the externality of the movement, which is not what I start working with.

BVB: That is an interesting distinction. So you prefer to think about action, being motivated from inside somehow? How do you develop that psychological sub-score?

VE: A lot of dance education is preoccupied with external movement. There are many techniques that teach people how to do certain kinds of movements and how to put those movements together in a sequence. Whereas for me, (even though I probably am prone to be caught under this improper label of physical theater), it is important to understand that the old physical exercises are ultimately mental exercises. I also refrain from the word theater if I can, but I don't have any other thing to call myself. So in terms of theater I actually mean a very narrow corner of the world of theater. I identify myself as a theater person in the lineage of the those

reformers of the 20th century, who actually include a lot of choreographers and dancers. So you know, starting from Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, later on Grotowski, Barba, Merce Cunningham definitely would be there too, and a lot of traditional dance, like Brazilian Orisha, which has been extremely influential.

BVB: It's interesting that you mention Cunningham. I would have thought that he was the prime example of externally imposed choreography.

VE: Oh yeah, but the way his approach has made a difference in the dance world, culturally, is extremely important.

BVB: You mean how he made space for other possibilities in New York at the time?

VE: Yes, I mean the whole New York contemporary dance scene at the time was instrumental in opening up the possibility that anything could be considered dance movement.

BVB: I see.

VE: Yes, I think that just opening up that space was extremely important. I am not worried about how a performer is moving, I don't care. They just need to have a strong connection to what they do. I am not worried about whether it is dance or if it is theater.

BVB: In the post-show talk you mentioned that for the past few years you have avoided "fixing" or, we might say, "finishing" projects.

VE: I mean I would love to finish things, but it is not possible. So I just gave up chasing an impossible dream.

BVB: When did you decide that it was impossible to finish things?

VE: I always thought that whatever I imagined was much better than what I ended up making. So over time I discovered that that is a very bad way of working. I would envision something and then I'd try to materialize it, to impose an order, to try to do what I thought and it wouldn't work. I didn't realize it right away. It took a long time to realize this and stop trying to materialize what I imagined.

What happened was that after I left Iran in 2001 I had the very fortunate misfortune of not working for several years. In Iran I was a kind of established theater director. I went to Europe overnight and became nobody... Just a refugee. I spent several, well two-and-a-half years, in a refugee camp and then I spent several years trying to do things, and nothing worked. So that period of absolute failure helped me to get over certain mental blocks, both in terms of quote unquote career, but also in the way I worked. So, one of the things that I realized was that I had always struggled with fixing something, and that it just did not work...

BVB: Didn't work how? Was the audience not responding?

VE: I am usually worried about one individual audience only, and that is me. I wasn't convinced. So eventually the whole question of audience, spectators as I would prefer to call them, became even more important. As you have seen I don't think it is enough to direct the performance, you have to direct the spectators too. And you have to create an extremely controlled environment for chaos to happen.

So I am a filmmaker as well. That is actually my job from nine to five, and so creating performance is actually where I spend money. So for me film is a much more reasonable medium if you want to create something that you want to give to other people. I can at least burn a DVD and give it to my mom, and she could hang it on the wall if she doesn't watch it. But I cannot make twelve performers and give them to my mom to hang on the wall. So in terms of creating a product, an end result, in terms of communication, in terms of media and medium both, and in terms of expressing something, film is a much more suitable medium for me than theater.

Over time I have also kind of lost the need to express myself. I don't really need to express myself. I am perfectly all right. I want to change things. It might be very small but that's my problem and that's why I continue working in theater. For me the people, primarily the core team with whom I work, and those who work with us part time, and then ultimately the spectators, are the work. There was a discussion after the second showing about process and product and I was saying that I don't really belong to this on-going rhetoric of the process being more important than the product. No I am actually looking for a very specific product. Us. So the performance, or what I call performance is us becoming different, whatever that means. I just feel some sort of transformation, that has become part of me through doing what I do. In that sense actually the ethos of the work is way more important to me than the technique.

BVB: How do you measure success? What does a successful encounter with spectatorship look like? Is that too broad a question?

VE: I don't know. It's just like getting surprised. There are moments when suddenly we all feel different, and it's not very... You know, it's a strange thing, it happens in life as well but the only difference is that we are working in an artificial environment with artificial meaning. The idea is to create some sort of organicity which resembles life in that the performance situation. But the path to that is an artificial structure. So, the exact moment that something else other than what we are doing happens, that's success. You know all these masters they have their own way

of saying this, Grotowski called it grace, and Eugenio Barba explained it in terms of disorder, he also says that he makes performance in order to make the spectator have a dialog with themselves. These are all metaphoric, they don't really say anything, but once that sensation, of grace, of disorder, of dialogue, is there everybody knows it... So that is what we are trying to do. Also, the question of community is another aspect of the work for me. Not in a hippie sense, but in a very political sense actually.

BVB: Interesting. How so?

VE: It starts before we get into the studio. The reason for me to continue doing what I do is political by and large. I don't really have to do this but at the same time I feel compelled to do this because this is my way of interaction, immediate interaction, with the world. I am concerned with marginal societies, or marginal beings, the condition of marginality.

There are usually three types of reactions to being marginal. The main reaction would be moving to the center and becoming what is the norm there. The second would be to blame the center, and just bitch about one's own misery forever, and perpetually live in that condition. But there is a third alternative, I believe, and that is remaining in the margin, acknowledging your disadvantages, celebrating them, turning them into possibilities, and in so doing turning the margin into the center. That for me is political. It involves all aspects of my life.

So I am from third world, I come from extremely poor background. I don't have any formal education, I left school as soon as I could. I am an elementary school drop out. I never had a job in my life. I live a very frugal life in the richest country in the world, and I live in Europe... All these things, are a result of displacements, a sort of an anarchistic schizophrenia that circumstances have put me in. So I went through a lot of thinking. I went through a lot of mental and physical processes to get away from my own delusions. And that is why I have developed this particular way of doing. Together with my companions we have worked to create conditions whereby we don't have to work on terms other than what we think is suitable for that work at that moment. So yes it is political. It is creating certain a parallel social setting.

One of the most important aspects of the training is that it creates a different kinds of sensitivity. And I think that is extremely important for our political life. Since moving to Europe I have figured out that information doesn't lead to emancipation. People know way better than the way they act, the way they vote, the way they entangle themselves in the prison of consumption and mortgage that holds them in slavery. So why don't we do anything about it? These things are the motivation, the reason, to even to begin to do this. But then, in the work itself, yes, there is a different way

of connecting to the order of human beings. Again, I don't want to make it like this happy to go lucky... But in terms of my function as a director, it is not that I want to diminish my authority, I just don't think that it is my place to tell people, you stay here, you walk here, you say that sentence. They have to figure that out while they are doing it.

BVB: Could you describe your experience of moving to Denmark and starting to make work there?

VE: Well, I had no idea where Denmark was what Denmark was why Denmark was when I first went there. I didn't know Denmark. I took an airplane on the morning of March 9th, 2001 from Tehran and everything that could go wrong went wrong and I got stuck in Denmark up until now. It has been... Very formative for me, a very negative and painful experience... but I have learned a lot. I actually woke up from a brainwashed nightmare that most of us are infected with in the Third World.

So I'm a Third World Iranian intellectual. I am one of those who are not ashamed of calling themselves intellectual. In fact I insist on it. For Iranian intellectuals the sun doesn't rise in the East, it rises in the West. I come from a cultural, economic, social and family background that is not what I became. I made myself into an intellectual and by definition a petite bourgeois. Even when I became a theater director there I was a self-indulgent member of this club of wannabe civilized people. We read quite a lot. I always said that I was extremely well misinformed. I knew the cliché bourgeois account of the world inside out...

I came to Europe and overnight fell into the most vulnerable, atrocious, Kafkaesque situation of being a refugee, an asylum seeker in a barbed wire refugee camp. It was a very sobering experience. I had left Iran in a pursuit of freedom, self-determination, justice and equality but I found none of that in Europe. What I saw in Europe was injustice and insult. And so I had to figure it out—where was this Europe I had read about? I mean nobody in Denmark had read Søren Kierkegaard. So going there it was shock. It was my right of passage. I came out bloody, bitter and disgusted but wiser, I believe. And I think I wouldn't have had that vivid awakening if it was elsewhere than Denmark. Because Denmark is suppose to be such a mother. So much propaganda ... So much... It is great gimmick. Denmark is the greatest gimmick in the world. And this condition is mind-boggling, but at the same time if you can live through it the experience is so enlightening. My perspective about the world, about myself, about my history, my background, everything changed through that experience.

I think I mentioned earlier that a part of the problem in this part of the world, in the Middle East, is that we don't know anything about each other. I didn't know much about the Middle East until I left the Middle East. Actually, I was

talking to somebody, a very knowledgeable person who studies philosophy, and I was mentioning the union between Egypt and Syria, and they had no idea, had never heard of it. Just as I am sure that most people in this area have never heard that in the 1950s a new country was created by these two states which fell apart with a coup d'état. Just look at a list of the intellectuals from Turkey next to a list of intellectuals from Iran and you will find a lot of similarity, lots of recurring thoughts, processes, results, mishaps... But we don't know much about each other. This experience of reawakening in Europe helped me to come back, and to look, and to try to figure out what is going on. I have to add that encountering this knowledge can be very dangerous as well because it can very easily fall into the trap of hatred, blind hatred. Yeah, you know, "Europe the devil, created all this trouble in the world." True, the fact is that colonization did not start in India or in Africa it started in Europe. I mean there were daily flagellations in London and Bristol to make sure people would show up to work on time. The modern world has been created with torture. But I think that the only tools we have left to fight this narrative are the tools with which that narrative has been built. You might know this Argentinian scholar, Walter Mignolo, he is very interesting and he is one of the ones behind the idea of de-coloniality as opposed to decolonization, and he once said he was not so concerned with what Europeans had done, he just wants to know how they have done it. He has written a very interesting paper called *Epistemic Disobedience*. It's about how we, the Third World, need to reckon with the epistemology of the European metaphysics to get to the very root of it all. So that was the long saga of my coming to Denmark...

BVB: Why were you curious to come to A Corner In The World?

VE: Mainly because of the idea of bringing people from this neighborhood together. That was what we started talking about, Faith and I. I thought, well, this is a very good idea and I want to be a part of it no matter what. And they said, OK you are, just come and do whatever you want. But then, of course, just being in Istanbul is a great experience. I have a feeling here that I get in only a few other places, a feeling that something is about to happen. A lot of people are indicating this... Even though they can't put their finger on it.

CONCERT
KONSER
I

COLLECTIF MEDZ BAZAR

Collectif Medz Bazar was born through the meeting of eight musicians, who sing and play original arrangements of traditional music from Anatolia, the Caucasus, the Balkans and other regions.

While the group's music is rooted in this traditional repertoire, Collectif Medz Bazar also plays original compositions, which are the fruit of group sessions full of musical creativity and lyric writing.

On stage, Collectif Medz Bazar offers a successful balance between tempered instruments and music from the modal traditions, Middle-Eastern percussions and Parisian voices of various origins (Armenian, Turkish, and Franco-American), inspired from Asia Minor's or Iran's folk music, as much as it is from Caucasian rabiz, rhythms of Thrace, with touches of Venezuelian music, operette, hip-hop, jazz and bluegrass.

EZGI SEVGI CAN : clarinet, vocals
RAPHAËL DERDERYAN : percussion (dehol, darbuka, davul), vocals
SHUSHAN KEROVPYAN : double bass, vocals
VAHAN KEROVPYAN : percussion (dehol, daf, davul), vocals
ELA NUROĞLU : percussion (darbuka, bendir, davul), vocals
MARIUS PIBAROT : violin, mandolin, cuatro, double bass, vocals
SEVANA TCHAKERIAN : accordion, shevi, vocals
SERRA TORUN : vocals

Realized with the generous support of the French Institute, İstanbul and Club Quartier.

Collectif Medz Bazar Anadolu, Kafkasya, Balkanlar ve Ortadoğu geleneksel müziklerinin özgün düzenlemeleri üzerine çalışan 8 müzisyenin buluşmasıyla ortaya çıktı. Müzikleri geleneksel repertuvarı temel alırken kendi besteleri ve şarkı sözlerini de içeriyor.

Paris'te yaşayan Ermeni, Türk, Fransız ve Amerikalı sanatçılardan oluşan Medz Bazar, Ortadoğu perküsyonları ile Anadolu ve İran halk müziklerini, Kafkasya rabizi, Thrace ritimleri, Venezuela müziği, operetler, hip-hop, caz ve bluegrass dokunuşlarla harmanlayan repertuvarı ile karşımızda olacak.

EZGI SEVGI CAN : klarnet ve vokal
RAPHAËL DERDERYAN : perküsyon (dehol, darbuka, davul), vokal
SHUSHAN KEROVPYAN : kontrbas, vokal
vahan kerovpyan : perküsyon (dehol, def, davul), vokal
ELA NUROĞLU : perküsyon (darbuka, bendir, davul), vokal
MARIUS PIBAROT : keman, mandolin, cuatro, kontrbas, vokal
SEVANA TCHAKERIAN : akordion, shevi, vokal
SERRA TORUN : vokal

Bu etkinlik İstanbul Fransız Kültür Merkezi'nin ve Club Quartier'in desteği ile gerçekleştirilmektedir.







CONCERT
KONSER
II

NO BORDER

No Border came together in the streets of Istanbul, from Iran, Syria and Turkey, their tones have blended together the same way they did as individuals. They play Improvisational Fusion Oriental music with a twist of rocky and bluesy twist. No Borders in playing, no borders between us as human beings, they play together to spread the love and peace.

This will be the band's first public performance in İstanbul.

BAHRAM DEYJOUR: iranian ney, percussion and vocal
HOOMAN HOSEINI: cajon
EMRE GIRGIN: bass guitar
MOHAMMAD TAYARA: electric guitar
BARAN YILDIZ: percussion

No Border (Sınır Yok) İstanbul sokaklarında tanışmış ve müzikleri gibi kendileri de uyuşmuş İran, Suriye ve Türkiye'den müzisyenlerden oluşuyor. Rock ve blues dokunuşlarıyla harmanlanan doğaçlama oryantal füzyon müzik yapıyorlar. Çalarken sınır yok, insan iletişiminde sınır yok. Sevgi ve barışı yaymak için çalıyorlar.

Topluluğun İstanbul'daki ilk konseri festival kapsamında olacak.

BAHRAM DEYJOUR: i ̇ran neyi, perküsyon ve vokal
HOOMAN HOSEINI: cajon
EMRE GIRGIN: bass gitar
MOHAMMAD TAYARA: elektro gitar
BARAN YILDIZ: perküsyon


REGINA
PRO NOBIS


TURKEY
SYRIA

PERFORMANCE
PERFORMANS
IV

A BOY AND HIS DOG

KOSTIS KALLIVRETAKIS

A BOY AND HIS DOG/POST SHOW TALK
KOSTIS KALLIVERTAKIS
KADIKÖY TERMINAL SAHNESI, KADIKÖY



A Boy and His Dog is an adaptation of Harlan Ellison's Nebula Prize winning novella of the same title. Is a boy who was raised in Apocalypse, still able to love and build the new beautiful world?

In cooperation with A Corner in the World and Kadıköy Terminal Sahnesi, Kostis Kallivretakis presents the show as part of his one month residency in İstanbul.

Çocuk ve Köpeği, Harlan Ellison'ın Nebula Ödüllü aynı andı romanının uyarlaması. Kıyamet zamanında büyümüş bir çocuk gerçekten aşık olup yeni bir dünya kurabilir mi?

Çocuk ve Köpeği, Kostis Kallivretakis'in Dünyada Bir Köşe ve Kadıköy Terminal Sahnesi işbirliğiyle gerçekleştirdiği bir aylık residency programı sonunda oluşturulmuştur.

FATIH GENÇKAL: Thanks for staying. Usually we start the talks by letting the artists talk a little bit about themselves and about their work.

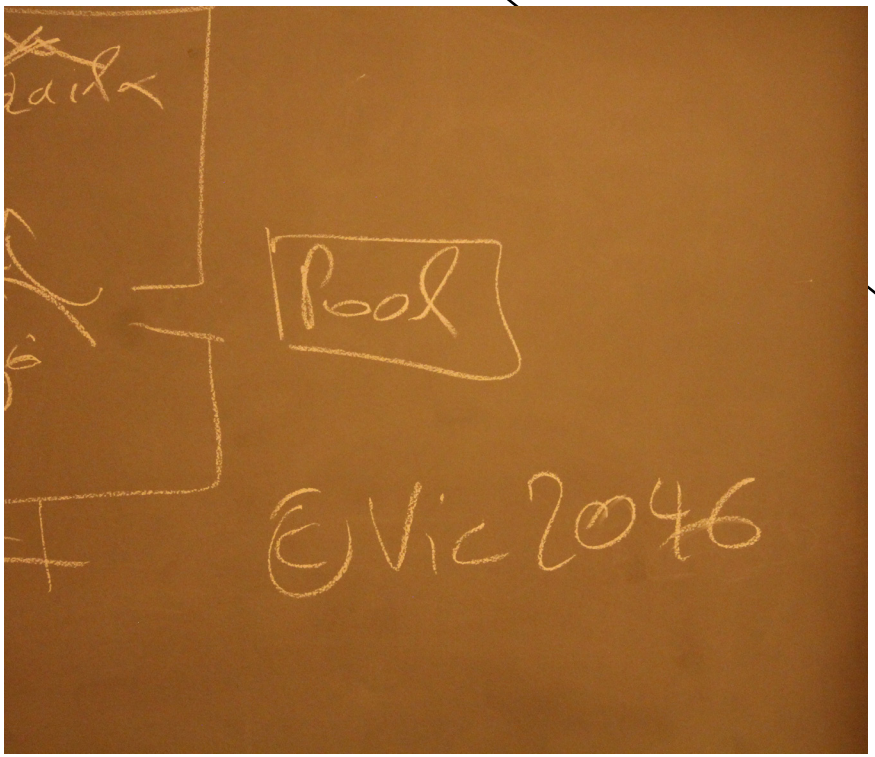
KOSTIS KALLIVERTAKIS: If someone wants to ask and discuss, in terms of the play, why this play, why a play, etc. I would prefer to do a small chat about this. I'm here doing an experiment. Well, two experiments. The first is to address an audience who doesn't speak my language at all, and the second is, for the very first time, to direct myself. For me also the "whys" for this thing developed here. I found myself picking up elements of people in the city that is hosting me, and that became interesting to me.

FG: For those who don't know Kostis has been here for one month now and has developed this show during that time.

KK: I would say... whatever project I do, whatever work that I do—especially in the last years—I try to connect it with my life. I'm not trying to change the world. I'm trying to find the reasons why my life is like it is, why my life is going like this. And as I try to communicate this to more people I find that the theater is the only thing, the only way to do it.

I think that this play here... I know all the difficulties, I felt all the difficulties

today. The audience was totally divided. Not only in terms of getting what was happening but also in terms of language. It was really, really, really, really



interesting being on stage and having this feedback. I mean there were people who were watching the surtitles, there were people who were really reading the printed translation, and there were people who chose not to read the surtitles or the translation. I found it very interesting. And maybe that was the most revealing part for me. Because those last people, they were just choosing direct communication. Maybe they were dropping a look at the surtitles thinking they would help a little bit. It was very interesting as a performer to do it.

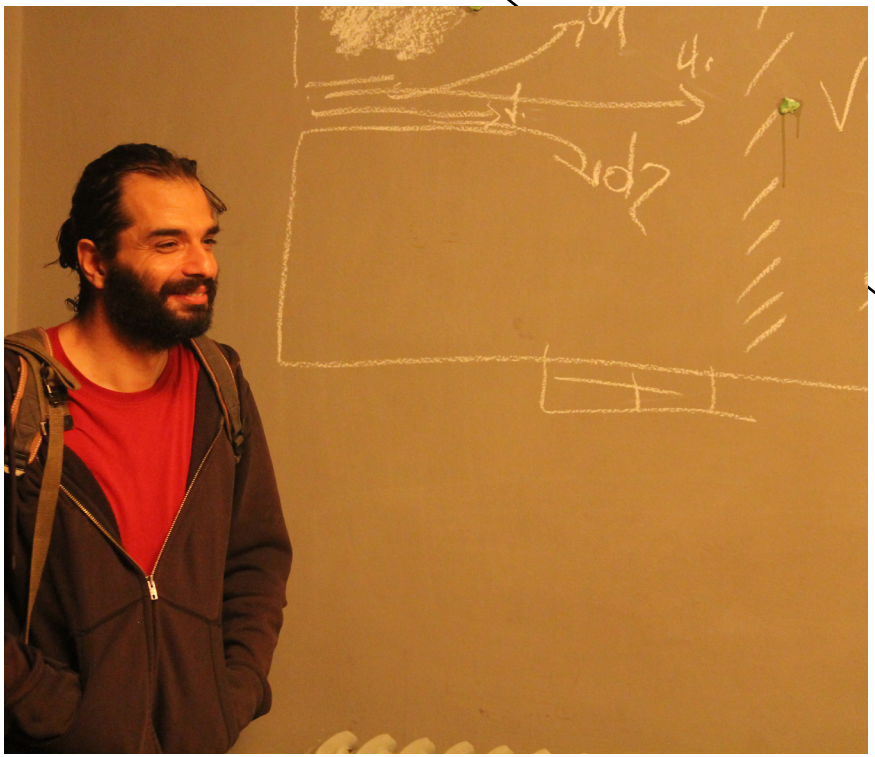
As for the play—not to start a big monologue since I already had one!—The play, well... I am living in Berlin, and in Berlin documentary theater is very in fashion. That is my opinion. Berlin has discovered, Berlin has rediscovered documentary theater. They die for it. They offer everything to have a documentary play in their theaters. So I said to myself, every play, small or big, that I'll be involved with will try to be a totally justified, non-documentary, play.

This play, *A Boy and His Dog*, was written in 1969 by Harlan Ellison and it's not actually a play, it's a novel, a short novel. And it was awarded a Nebula prize of Science Fiction, which is for us, (the science fiction freaks), is the highest prize for science fiction writing. I read it thirty years ago, when I was sixteen, and then two years ago I accidentally found my copy of the book in my old comic book collection.

And then when it was proposed that I come to this festival it was during the months when violence against women in Turkey was in the news a lot. There were four or five instances in one week of women getting shot, or killed, or raped. And so I said "fuck me... yes... " But this is the first level. Because this is a play that turns against me with a question mark. This is a play that on the first level ends with someone choosing to save his dog by feeding him a woman. But why? What's happening? What is this? At the surface it's really provocative as a story. Some people don't get it, I understand that that's what happens. But then I said OK it's not enough just to be provocative and make a science fiction bullshit onstage. Why? Why you? What's this story? Is it real? Is it something? Slowly it starts to

develop in my mind, and when I came here...

The second stage is that I thought that this is a story of a failed love.



Someone had lived the big love and failed. And maybe he created this story in his head to justify why this love failed. It happens to all of us. There are nights in our rooms when we just keep talking to ourselves to solve problems or to just not get crazy. Just talking to ourselves. So why can't this dialogue we have alone not suddenly become a dialogue with someone? With my pet? With my beloved dog, for example. So I started to develop this thing from my life, from our lives. And then I realized that there are people there on the streets who don't simply talk to themselves in the privacy of their rooms. Especially in Athens with what's been happening in the last years. I've seen it in my own family, and I've seen it in the streets of Athens. I know it happens everywhere, but now it's at a big peak—people are just walking and talking. There are some people just walking around and just saying a story, and we really get afraid of them, we get scared. We go away, we pass them. They are on the street lying down, or homeless, or they are just lying down speaking but we are too afraid to hear what they are saying. So I decided that this could be the story of a man who if you were in the street you would avoid listening to. But now, because we pay and because we are here in a festival we will listen to the story.

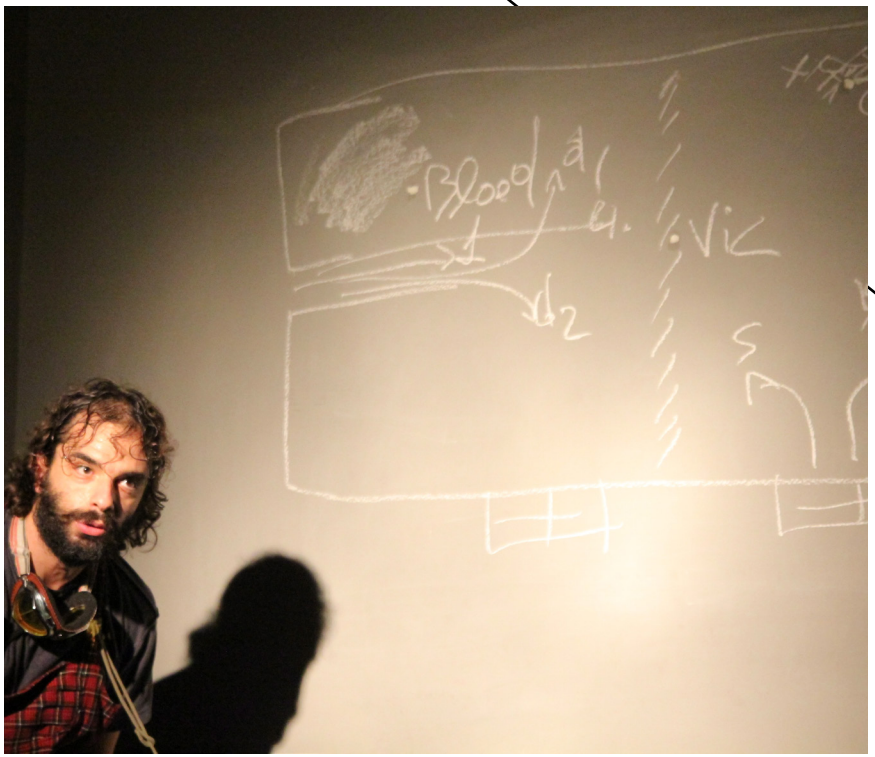
I know this is somehow an insult to these people. But I'm not trying to provoke them. These people might have very interesting things to say, stories to say, but they might sound like fantasies to us, like science fiction stories. We must see beyond these stories.... For Harlan Ellison that was a true story. But this book is something else. It's a story about love. And for me being already forty-six and having totally failed in my personal life, and hating all the people around me... So that was "why" and stuff.

VAHID EVAZZADEH: Did you ever consider doing the piece in the street?

KK: Yeah that could be. That's a great Idea, Vahid. I honestly I think that I should work on many more things in the piece, and I'm thinking about doing it in Athens in the summer.

VE: You are already doing it out there lying down on the ground as we enter.

KK: That was the last step of today.



Because maybe one or two people would say, “Fuck, there is a guy lying outside.” And for me it was more than enough that you just said that. Maybe some people will notice, from now on, every guy lying in the street. I don’t know, I don’t know. Because honestly Vahid at the moment Athens is highly… I don’t feel safe to try it in Athen’s. I’m not talking in terms of health or in terms of in security, I’m talking in artistic terms. Everything there is at a very very strange point. Most of the actors pay to play. Only two theaters in the whole country pay their actors. It’s a little, I don’t know…

And also, we have the text in English, German, and now also in Turkish. I was thinking that maybe in the years to come I would try to play it in Germany. We’ll see, I don’t know, it depends… Questions? Remarks? Observations?

ONUR KARAOĞLU: When you were entering the space, the beginning gesture of the whole piece, was so interesting. After you enter the stage, the storytelling clearly begins. But when you were talking to yourself in the lobby while we were all seated in the theater and there were no surtitles yet it was very mysterious. You were welcoming us in a different way. The quality of it was very strong.

KK: You know me, you know me as a person anyway. That’s the impression of someone who knows me.

VE: I think it doesn’t matter.

KK: I don’t know, I’m just asking in a way.

AUDIENCE: I thought it was a very nice entrance, it felt like you were wandering through a very dystopian landscape.

KK: The book was written the year I was born. The dystopia then was that of nuclear fear. But now we have discovered, In Athens, in Greece we have discovered that the dystopia is here in the head. We have it inside, and that’s an interesting thing to work on. It’s a complete dystopia. Especially after this summer where we lost hope completely—there is none left, there is nothing, there is no… This dystopia has completely conquered us.

FG: What do you mean it's in the head?

KK: I mean it starts... Yeah it can be... You can live in the best surroundings,



in a beautiful environment, but if the conditions are really difficult it creates an internal dystopia. It creates a whole labyrinth. There is no way out sometimes. You just keep going around your own things, your own sensations... My character, Vic, could repeat his whole story internally. He could stay on the same bench every night and repeat this fucking story. It's a great idea to do it on the street. We could do it one night just on the street without any organizing. Maybe, if an actor wants, they can do it in Turkish one day. They can sit on a proper Kadıköy bench and start doing it in the middle of the street.

AUDIENCE: Do you remember how you read the story differently when you were 16?

KK: Yes, I read it completely in the science fiction genre.

AUDIENCE: It must have spoken to you.

KK: There are a few stories that I really remember. I was one of the guys in my school who used to say all the time, "Guys, you have misunderstood completely. Science fiction is not about fiction, science fiction is a total reality and it's already around us." The best novelists, the best writers, use fiction conditions to describe the most pragmatic real things. They just use different ingredients. It's story. The good ones are real stories. Really, literature.

FG: You were mentioning Berlin. would you be interested in doing this show in Germany? Or, put another way, would you do this show in German in the first place. Or in Athens? what difference would it make for you? Or, is this not even a good question?

KK: The problem is that in Germany I would fall in the trap of trying to do it in German. When I work in Berlin I'm acting in German, but I'm not so well known there. I don't know, I don't know, I'm not saying this to lick your ass, but I really like that we did it here. This was the best environment to try things. Because in Berlin and in Athens... In Athens I'm someone who people

know, In Berlin I'm someone who people are getting to know, and here I am totally unknown, which is such a relief sometimes. I can work really...



FG: I mention this because you mentioned that they are crazy about documentary theater and I also noticed that there. Especially Greek and Syrian actors...

KK: We are the lapdogs. We are high in fashion.

ZINNURE TÜRE: I am thinking about what happens I am invited to empathize with a character on stage who is a bad guy. I just feel so bad about it. It's not a question, just an observation.

KK: No, it's a great question, and I just need to answer it.

AUDIENCE: Are you criticizing patriarchal systems?

KK: No. On the one hand I am not, no no, I'm not. Because don't forget when this text was written. But, on the other hand I think this is a play that in a way ridicules men. We see Vic as a totally weak person.

AUDIENCE: On the condition of what?

KK: It's a condition of survival. I think you also live in a war situation here. Some people don't even notice it, but you live in war conditions. It has a "peace" cover, but it is a war condition. That's my opinion as an outsider. And also the mentality of some people... I'm trying now to be very discreet... The mentality of some people, men, people here, is disgusting. Let's not forget that these people, they were raised like this. That's not an excuse at all, and this is why I did this thing... Because this guy, in my performance, destroys his life forever. He left, he did what he did, and now you see him here. In my imagination Istanbul was the second city that he goes too with his dog after the play ends. So you have a guy wandering years after years. Without a dog, of course, because it's been years after, decades after. He is cursed to live with this story and this guilt forever and ever. That was the original thought. I said OK, I want to take this piece that talks about rape and killing women, and let's see who the fuck does these things. But then I thought, in a way, that this is the whole situation that

we also lived though in Athens. It is totally different war than yours, totally different war than what is happening in Syria. I would never, never, compare the situation in Syria with Athens. But it's a Western war in Athens in a totally different way. I have seen my own people walking around the streets like they have gone mad, people that had had totally ordinary lives before, and then something snaped... I have seen my own father like this... So, I want to say that the end of the performances is an homage to the labyrinth of the dystopias in our minds.




ISTANBUL

PERFORMANCE
PERFORMANS
V

4 KAPI 40 MAKAM

YEŞIM COŞKUN /
MEZOPOTAMYA DANS

INTERVIEW WITH YEŞIM COŞKUN

BENJAMIN VAN BUREN: Öncelikle teşekkürler. Ekibinizin tarihinden ve neden/nasıl sorularından başlamak isterim. Ayrıca seyirciniz kimdir, kendinizi ilişkili hissettiğiniz diğer sanatçılar kimlerdir?

YEŞIM COŞKUN: 2005'te Mezopotamya Kültür Merkezi çatısı altında kuruldu Mezopotamya Dans. Bundan önce aslında bir dans company'si olmadan önce MKM'nin bir halk oyunları ekibi vardı ama bu çok fazla şeye cevap olmadığı için bir çağdaş, modern dans formu üzerinden bu ekibi kurduk. Ve Kürtlerde dans, mitleri nasıl ele alıp bugün için çağdaş olarak nasıl yorumlayabiliriz üzerinden yola çıktık. Bununla beraber başladığımız tüm eserler mitolojik eserler oldu. Mem-ü Zin gibi, Destane Kawa gibi. Daha sonra daha güncel formlara, güncel konulara da geçtik, kimlik arayışı, kadın sorunu gibi güncel konuları işleyen eserler üretmeye başladık. Biraz aslında Kürtlere ve Kürdistan'a özgü, Ortadoğu'ya çok hitap eden bir kitlemiz var. Özellikle Kürdistan diye tabir ettiğimiz Diyarbakır'dan başlayarak Mardin, Batman gibi Türkiye'nin güneydoğu bölgesine çok hitap ediyoruz ve oralara çok turneler yapıyoruz ama Türkiye'nin genelinde de gösterilerimiz oluyor. Bu taraftaki çağdaş dans camiasıyla da bir bağımız var. Yani kültürel olarak hala şöyle sorunlarımız var Türkiye'deki siyasal sürece baktığımızda: bir dil sorunu, kimliği kabullenememe sorunu hala gündemde. Dolayısıyla bizim bunu kurmadaki amacımız kimlik olarak da 'Kürtçe dans'ı oluşturmak. Çünkü ekiptekiler kimlik olarak da Kürt. Bunu böyle düşündük başlangıçta.

Fatih Gençkal: Herkes Kürt mü ekibin içinde?

YC: Herkes Kürt ama bu başka kimlik giremez, Türk giremez gibi bir şey değil. Proje kapsamlı bizimle Türk arkadaşlar da çalıştılar.

BVB: İşlerinizde Kürt kimliğiyle form düzeyinde nasıl ilişkileniyorsunuz? Bu konulardan bahsetmek işlerinize nasıl bir form veriyor?

YC: Bir kere aldığımız eğitim, hepimiz çağdaş dans mezunuyuz, Mimar Sinan Üniversitesi'nden. Aldığımız eğitimle eş eksenli yürüyor. Öbür taraftan bizim etnik kökenimiz, köklerden aldığımız aneneler, bilgiler bize yardım ediyor. Örneğin şu an burada 4 Kapı 40 Makam'ın içerisinde Alevi semah formları var. Ben Alevi kökenliyim ve buradan besleniyorum. Çocukluğumdan beri cemevlerine, kendi ibadethaneme gittiğim için oradan beslendiğim formlarla bu çağdaş formu sentezliyorum.

BVB: Bu ritüellerin ne olduğu, neye benzediğiyle ve çağdaş eğitimin ne olduğuyla ilgili konuşmak ister misin? Bu etkileşim nasıl oluyor? Okuldan gelen ne çeşit bir çağdaş eğitim ve diğer pratikten gelen formlar neye benziyor?

YC: Özellikle 4 Kapı 40 Makam'dan örnek vereyim. Bu projeyi çıkarırken, ceme gitmek benim zaten ritüelimde olan bir şeydi ama bu proje için ekstra bir araştırmaya gittiğim için cemevlerinde daha fazla vakit geçirdim. Dolayısıyla o form zaten etnik, bedensel olarak bende var fakat aldığım bazı formları çağdaş dansla, aldığım eğitimle dönüştürüp başka temaya çevirerek ikisini sentezlemeye çalıştım. Hareket üzerinden örnek vermek gerekirse, mesela günlük çağdaş hayatımızda selam vermek için merhaba diyoruz, tokalaşıyoruz. Alevi ritüellerinde ise biriyle selamlaşırken iki kişi aynı anda birbirinin sağ omzunu öper. Ben mesela bunları harmanlarken ne birini ne diğerini yapıyorum. Elimle omuzdan omuza süpürmeye benzer bir hareket yapıyorum, mesela. [Gösterir.] Aslında ikisinden yeni bir form yaratıyoruz. Ama bazı sadık kaldığımız formlar da var tabii.

BVB: Seyirciniz ilk dönemlerden bu yana değişti mi? Daha folklore yönelik işler yapmaktan daha çağdaş formlara geçiş sürecinizde.

YC: Aslında olmadı. Bu formları bu işte ve mesela Kawa'da işledik ama son eserimiz Leyla tamamen çağdaş bir form. İçinde hiç ritüel yok. Biyografik bir eser. Seyircide pek değişiklik olmuyor ama. Kemik bir takip eden kitleniz var ama onun yanı sıra ona eklenen başka kitleler var. Mezopotamya Dans için 'Şöyle bir kitlesi var' diyemiyoruz. Bölgede çok farklı, burada çok farklı ama her kesimden bir seyircisi var. Ayrılan, tanıma koyabileceğimiz bir kitle yok ama.

FG: Seyirciyle ilgili, daha önce Serhat'la oturduğumuzda da konuşmuştuk. Sizin biraz daha ayrı bir yerde durmanız meselesi. Mesela dans camiası ile bağlantınız nasıl? Biraz daha bildiğiniz, Kürt ağırlıklı seyirci dışında son zamanlarda nasıl değişiyor seyirciniz?

YC: Tabii ki değişiyor. Her kesime açığız ama gerçek seyircimiz, evet, MKM amblemini gören veya kültürel olarak seni ifade eden bölge seyircisi bizim gerçek seyircimiz. Kültür olarak daha yakın olduğumuz seyirci. Çünkü şeyi istiyor, ne ifade ettiğini. Mezopotamya mesela soyut işler yapmıyor. Metni olan, derdi olan ve gerçekten bir şeyi ortaya çıkarmak isteyen, bu güncel bir sorun olabilir, kimlik, kadın sorunu ya da Kawa Destanı gibi çok önemli bir şey olabilir, derdi olan ve gün yüzüne çıkmaya hasret konularla ilgileniyoruz. Soyut, ayakkabıyı alayım, masayı alayım

gibi dertsiz bir yerde değil. O yüzden seyircimiz de kimliğimizle bağlantılı bir yerde duruyor. O yüzden çağdaş dans camiasına çok hitap etmiyor ama orada da küçük bir kitlesi var. Gerçek kitlesi diğer taraf ama. Son eserimiz mesela. Leyla Bedirxan'ı kimse bilmez. Ama Leyla Bedirxan özellikle modern dansın çıkış yaptığı üç kadın döneminde, Isadora Duncan döneminde çıkış yapan bir dansçı. La Scala'da dans etmiş bir kadın. Ama kimse bilmiyor. O yüzden son eserde onu işledik. Onun gibi yani, gün yüzüne çıkmamış bir Kürt dansçı.

BVB: Sizin gibi Kürt kimliği ya da benzer sorunlarla ilgilenen başka ekipler var mı, onlarla bağınız var mı diye merak ettim.

YC: Maalesef dans grupları yok. Tek dans grubu biziz 10 yıldır. Ama mesela Diyarbakır Şehir Tiyatrosu bu anlamda yıllardır Kürtçe tiyatro yapıp devam eden ve çok iyi bir yerde olan bir tiyatro grubu. Onlarla sürekli her proje kapsamında birlikte çalışıyoruz. Onların da Mem-ü Zin eseri var mesela iki yıldır sahneye koydukları. Onu ortak proje olarak yürütüyoruz mesela, iki dansçı onun içindeyiz. Belli tiyatro ve müzik grupları ile ortak projeler içinde bulunuyoruz, bunlar daha çok bölgede oluyor. İstanbul'da daha çok müzik üzerine işbirlikleri yapıyoruz. Mesela Serhat'ın yaptığı Şop Projesi de öyle.

BVB: Senin kişisel dans geçmişine dönmek istiyorum tekrar. Dansa nasıl başladın, nerede eğitim aldın vs.

FG: Ben de ona Mimar Sinan dışındaki özellikle kendi verdiğiniz eğitimlerden de bahsetmeni rica ederek ek yapmak isterim.

YC: Ben 2003 yılında Mem-ü Zin projesi ile dansla tanıştım, öncesinde pek ilişkim yoktu, müzisyendim, bir grupta flüt çalıyordum. Serhat'ın beni projeye çağırmasıyla başladım dansa. O projeye çağırdıktan sonra kendimi projenin ortasında buldum ama dansçı falan değildim. Aa, çok yeteneklisin, dans düşün falan derken ben o yıl sınavda buldum kendimi. 1,5 aylık bir süreçte pıt diye okula girdim. Sonra okul süreci başladı, 2004'te girdim, zaten 2005'te grubu kurduk. Serhat beni okula soktu ama kendisi benden 3 sene sonra okula girdi, 3.sınıftan yüksek seviyeden aldılar onu, folklorcüydü zaten, ben 4teyken o 3ten okula başladı, benden sonra mezun oldu. [Güler.] Benim dans serüvenim öyle başladı, çok düşündüğüm bir şey değildi, ben liseden de resim bölümü mezunuyum. Bir yandan müzik yapıyorum, hiç alakası olmayan bir alanın içinde buldum kendimi. O zaman herkesin yapabileceği daha iyi bir alan var ve bu benim alanımmış deyip dansa girdim. Giriş o giriş oldu, her şeyi bıraktım. Müziği, resmi, her şeyi. Öte yandan kendi eğitimlerimizden bahsedecek olursam, özellikle ilk 5 yıl içimizde klasik bale ve modern teknik atölyeleri yaptık, dışarı kapalı olarak. Ama bunun dışında başından beri dışarıdan gelenlere yönelik kurslar da yaptık. Her yıl bir 10-15 öğrencimiz oluyor. Kasım sonu ve aralık başı gibi başlıyor, 8 ay sürüyor. Bizim çekirdek ekip 5 kişi ama projeler kapsamında dışarıdan takviyeler oluyor. Gerçi daha sonra herkes okuldan eğitim almaya başlayınca kendi içimizdeki eğitimi kısıtlamaya başladık. Herkes zaten akademiye girince, ilk 5 yıldan sonra, kendi içimizde ara sıra buluşup modern teknik atölyeleri yapmaya devam ediyoruz şimdi.

BVB: Ben okulda ve ekibinizde ne tür bir bilginin paylaşıldığını merak ediyorum. Oraya biraz odaklanmak isterim. Çağdaş adı altında nasıl bir eğitim var, hangi akım, teknik vs. öğretiliyor? Çağdaş olan bilgi nasıl bir geleneğe ait, nasıl bir tarihe ait?

YC: Okulda tek bir teknik yok, her hoca farklı teknikler öğretiyor. ama biz kendi içimizde bir repertuvar çalışırken birebir bir tekniğin üzerinden gitmiyoruz. Aldığımız tekniğin üzerimizde bir etkisi tabii ki var ama kendi hareket vizyonlarımızdan yola çıkıyoruz. Bu, bir teknik mi içeriyor, yoksa kendi etnik formlarımızdan yararlandığımız bir yere mi giriyor, bunun teknik bir adını bulabilir miyim bilmiyorum. Ama ben mesela birçok projemde -ya koreografisinde ya da dansçı olarak var olduğum yerde- hep yeni bir form elde etmeye çalışıyorum. Örneğin Leyla'da Leyla'ya dair elimizde hiç materyal yoktu. Video yok, sadece fotoğraflar var. Kadının nasıl dans ettiğine dair bir fikrimiz yoktu. Fakat şöyle alt metinler var, mesela bu kadın Mısır'da oryantal almış, Avrupa'da çağdaş dans tekniği almış ve bu formları birleştirmiş. Fakat şunun altı çiziliyor: Bildiğimiz oryantalle alakası yok, kadın kalçasını asla kullanmıyor. Farklı bir üst beden kullanımı. O yüzden mesela ben onu alıp yeni bir form yaratmaya çalışıyorum. Dolayısıyla bu benim içerde olan kendi formum da dahil, aldığım eğitim de dahil hepsinin sentezi bir şey. Bu formların içinden yeni imajlar yaratıyoruz aslında.

BVB: Yavaş yavaş sonlandırmak istiyorum. Ekibinizle çalışmanızın geleceğini nasıl görüyorsun? Bu işle ya da bu işin turne yapmasından ziyade mesela ekibinizin 10 yıl içinde nerede olmasını istersin? Ve bu yolda ne gibi zorluklarla karşılaşmayı öngörüyorsun?

YC: I don't know. [Güler.] Önümüzdeki seneyi bile göremiyorum. Öyle bir sorun var. Ama şöyle birşey de var: Mezapotamya Dans'ın kurucu üyesiyim. Ben ve Serhat birlikte kurduk. Hep şöyle bir hayalimiz var: Bunu daha ileriye

taşırken acaba nasıl devredebiliriz? Çünkü hep içinde kalıp kemik bir yapı halinde devam etmek istemiyoruz. Bu negatif birşey değil, pozitif birşey. Bunu devredip yeni kanallarda yeni enerjilere nasıl bırakabiliriz üzerine planlarımız var. Ayrıca, özellikle şu an bölgede dansa yönelik değil ama müzik ve tiyatroya yönelik konservatuarlar açılıyor. Bizim de amacımız acaba oralarda bir yerde gerçekten bir konservaruar açılırsa bir katkımız olabilir mi? Düşününce mesela Antalya'da İzmir'de Devlet Opera ve Balesi var, niye Diyarbakır'da yok? Neden orada bir dans okulu ya da konservaruarı yok? Yani halk dansları vs formları var? Ama biz mesela oralarda birşey yapabilir miyiz? Öncüsü olabilir miyiz ya da başka kanallar vasıtasıyla yayabilir miyiz bu enerjiyi üzerinden fikirlerimiz var. Ek olarak, bölgede çok fazla atölye yapıyoruz ve çok ciddi talep oluyor. 10 günlük atölyeye 35-40 kişi gelebiliyor ve insanlar bunu istiyorlar. Ama orada ders verebilecek zemin ya da bir oluşum yaratabilecek kanal yok, bulamıyorlar. O yüzden diyoruz ki, orada neden dans grupları türemesin ve kendilerini inşa etmesinler? Mezopotamya Dans'ın böyle bir amacı da var, hem kendi projelerini geliştirip devretmek hem de başka kanallara da yer açmak.

BVB: Sorumun diğer yarısına gelecek olursak, bunun zorlukları nelerdir, Türkiye'de Kürt kimliğine sahip bir sanatçı olmak nasıl bir şey?

YC: Birincisi böyle bir ülkede bu tarz bir işi bu kimlikle yürütmenin zorluğu zaten. Her ne kadar açık kapıların olduğunu bilsen de ya da insanların seni izleyip görmek istediğini bilsen de kendi eğitim aldığın statünün karşısında bile bulabiliyorsun kendini. Okulunun bile sistem olarak senin karşında durduğunu görebiliyorsun mesela. Mezopotamya ismi bir alerji oluşturuyor. Kimlik olarak durduğun yer karşı tarafı sistem olarak da rahatsız edebiliyor. Bu ülkenin farklı olana alan açmakla ilgili bir problemi var. Düşünce olarak bu tür zorlukları var. Fiziksel olarak aslında hepimizin yaşadığı zorluklar var. Son dönemde sahneler fazlalaşsa da biliyorsun fiziksel olarak kendimizi ifade ettiğimiz alanlar çok yeterli değil. İkinci şey: her ne kadar bizim kendi çevremizde bir kitlemiz olsa da dans camiasında ya da Türkiye içinde baktığımızda dansın, tiyatro ya da müzik gibi bir seyircisi yok. Avrupa'da insanlar dansı da müzik ya da tiyatro takip eder gibi takip edebiliyor. Bilinçli ya da bunu tercih eden bir seyirci kitlesi yok şu an burada.

BVB: Neden böyle sence?

YC: Bunun iki geçerli nedeni var benim için. Birincisi çağdaş formu çok benimseyemiyoruz gibi geliyor ülke olarak. Bizim halk danslarımız var, kültürümüz var gibi bir reddetme akımı her zaman var. Bir formu sen bambaşka şeylerle birleştirebilirsin. Mesela caz müzik yok mu Türkiye'de. Var. Bunun belli bir dinleyicisi yok mu? Var. Biri caz dinlediğinde Bizim halk müziğimiz var demiyoruz. Ama olay dans olduğu zaman, fiziksel birşey olduğu zaman, çok taciz eden bir noktada oluyor kültürel olarak seyirciyi. Farklı bir kontak gördüğü zaman rahatsız oluyor. Onunla ilgili bir örnek de verebilirim. Sınır ötesi operasyonlarla ilgili bir proje yapmıştım ben. Adı Sınır'dı. İlk iki dakikası form olarak gözaltında kalan birinin nasıl taciz edildiğini gösteriyordu, biri diğerinin sürekli üstüne çıkıp elini arkadan bağlamaya çalışıyordu. Üzerimizde etekler var, bacaklarımız açılıyor, saçımız başımız dağılıyor. Daha gösterinin ikinci dakikasında gösteriyi terk edenler oldu Batman'da. Kabul etmiyor çünkü bir erkeğin kadının üzerinde debelenmesini, bacağının açılmasını kabul etmiyor form olarak. Ben bunu izlemek zorunda değilim diyor. Ve bunu yapan Belediye Başkanı'nın eşi falan. Dediğim gibi müziği kabul edebiliyor, çünkü orada oturup izliyor. Tiyatroyu, sinemayı kabul ediyor. Ama form olarak başka bir şey zorluyor. Ben öyle düşünüyorum. Türkiye'nin dansa bakışta genel problemi bu.

BVB: Teşekkür ederim. Gösteriden sonra da belki başka sorularım olur.

YC: Bu izleyeceğiniz tamamen bir Alevi ritüeli üzerine.

BVB: Evet, programdaki yazıyı okudum, çok merak ediyorum.

—

INTERVIEW WITH SERHAT KURAL

BENJAMIN VAN BUREN: Ben normalde New York'ta yaşıyorum. New York ve Brüksel hala, çünkü orada PARTS okuluna gittim. Şu an New York'ta bir Yazarlık okulundayım. Yazarlık ve Yayıncılık, Kitap Tasarımı. Ben hep bir şekilde okuldayım aslında.

SERHAT KURAL: Ben ACNDC'de bir dans işi izlemiştim. Hatta İstanbul'a da geldi, bir kitapla yapıyordu. Bir solo, çok güzeldi. Bir PARTS öğrencisiydi. Amerikalı bir çocuk.

BVB: Daniel Linehan?

SK: Daniel, evet. 4 sena falan önceydi. İdans getirmişti onları, Müsahipzade'de yaptılar.

BVB: Sen o zaman nerede okuyordun, hangi konservatuarda?

SK: Mimar Sinan'da.

BVB: Ne okudun orada, çağdaş dans mı?

SK: Evet. Güzel sanatlar üniversitesi zaten. Bale, müzik, tiyatro falan var.

BVB: Birçok sanatçıyla bu çağdaş denen şeyin ne olduğu üzerine konuşuyoruz. Sizin okulda çağdaş denen şey nasıl bir bilgi, nasıl bir teknik olarak veriliyordu? Nasıl bir pratik? Ya da sen kendini çağdaş sanatçı olarak addediyor musun?

SK: Ağır sorular soruyorsun. (Gülerler.)

BVB: Kusura bakma.

SK: Ben bu sorulara kendim de cevap arıyorum. Hala tam olarak bilmiyorum. Ama okulda öğretilen şeyin ne olduğunu ben oradaki eğitmenlerin de bildiklerini sanmıyorum. Örnek verecek olursam, bunu özellikle çağdaş dans için söyleyebilirim: batıdan alınmış ve aşırı kopya edilmiş, hiçbir şekilde buradaki toplumsal tabakanın dokusuna ve özüne inmemiş bir durum söz konusu. O yüzden de şöyle bir şey var ki hiç samimi olmuyor buradan çıkan çağdaş işler.

BVB: Ne anlamda samimi değiller?

SK: Sanatçının sana sunmak istediği net bir fikri olmayabilir ama sen bir şekilde işin içinde fikir aramaya çalışıyorsun fakat bir fikirsizlik söz konusu.

BVB: Peki bu tür işler dışında çağdaş dansı karakterize eden ne var sence? Türkiye'de kim dans işi yapıyor şu an? Bu dansçılar nasıl işler yapıyorlar?

SK: Benim fikrimi mi soruyorsun?

BVB: Evet, eğer paylaşmak istersen.

SK: Modern Dans Topluluğu var devlet destekli. Fakat bana sorarsan bir dans topluluğu değil çünkü hiçbir şekilde o olanakları dans ve dans seyircisi oluşturmak için kullandıklarını düşünmüyorum. Bence iyi işler yapmıyorlar.

BVB: Bir dans seyircisi oluşturmak için yapmıyorlarsa ne için yapıyorlar?

SK: Şu an esas olarak orayı yaşatmak için yapıyorlar sanırım. Ama örneğin Zeynep Tanbay Dans Projesi, benim şu an da içinde olduğum ama içinde olmadan önce de çok beğendiğim ve olması gerektiğine inandığım bir topluluk ama o da artık sponsoru olmadığı için bitme noktasında. Çıplak Ayaklar Kumpanyası var. Geçmişte çok daha prodüksiyon olarak güçlü işler yapıyorlardı ama hala bağımsız olarak bir mekan yürüterek ve aynı zamanda kendi düşsel dünyalarını, hayallerini yansıtacak bir imkan yarattılar. Bu çok önemli diye düşünüyorum Türkiye'de. Bizim Mezopotamya Dans var 2005 yılından beri çalışmalarımızı sürdürdüğümüz. Kendimi bu anlamda ne çağdaş olarak hissediyorum ne de çağdışı bir şey olarak hissediyorum. Bugüne kadar çok isim koymadım. Ama Türkiye'deki çağdaşlık anlayışında değilim, o kesin.

BVB: Biraz provokatif bir kavram, farkındayım, o yüzden de ortaya atmak istedim. Peki, Türkiye'deki bu dans sanatçıları jenerasyonu eğitimini nerede alıyor? Dans bilgisini nerede, nasıl alıyor? Burada mı yoksa yurtdışında mı?

SK: Geçmişte herkes yurtdışından öğrenip gelmişti ama şu an Türkiye'de de ders verebilecek insanlar yetişti ve üniversitelerde kendileri eğitim veriyorlar. Ama dışarıdan da besleniliyor hala tabii ki.

BVB: Mezopotamya Dans'tan bahsetmek ister misin? Nasıl ve neden başladı? Tarihi ve gelişim süreci nasıl oldu?

SK: 2005 yılında kuruldu ama öncesine dayanan bir süreç var. Özellikle benim -dans alanında halk danslarından gelen biriydim- bazı arayışlarım vardı, biraz sıkılmıştım. Dans Buluşma'yla tanıştım, öyle başladı. 2005 yılında yanıma birkaç arkadaşımı daha alarak oldukça amatör bir şekilde bu yola girdik, sonra yavaş yavaş akademik ortama girerek bu işi daha bilimsel ve daha doğru metotlarla yapmak istedik. Anlatacak çok şeyimiz vardı bizim aslında, konu olarak, hikaye olarak, biraz da onun kamçılaması vardı. Gruptaki herkes Mimar Sinan'dan. Ya çıkışlı ya da hala okuyor.

BVB: Sen de eğitmenlik yapıyor musun?

SK: Yapıyorum evet. Kendi topluluğumda da dışarıda da. Önümüzdeki ay Tahran'a gideceğim, Tahran Konservatuarı'nda ders vereceğim.

BVB: Kendi eğitim felsefenden bahsetmek ister misin? Nelere önem veriyorsun?

SK: Ben açıkçası bedenimle ilişkiyi güçlendirdikçe teknik olandan kaçmaya başladım. Hatta artık izlemek de sıkıcı gelmeye başladı. Hareket ettiğinde o hareketin bir fikri yoksa o kolun kalkması çirkin gelmeye başladı. Fikrin bir bütün olarak tamamen beden odaklı ve fiziksel bir atmosfer içinde gelişmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Mesela çok hayvan imgeleri üzerinden gidiyorum, keçi özellikle.

BVB: Neden keçi?

SK: Yaratıkların enerji ve formsal durumları beni çok etkiliyor ve onu izlemeyi çok seviyorum, izliyorum.

BVB: Ben bir süre bir keçi çiftliğinde yaşamıştım. (Gülüşmeler.) Yeşim dans ve müzik arasındaki işbirliğinin ve etkileşimin yaygın olduğunu söylemişti sizin içinde olduğunuz alanda. Bu bağlamda bu akşamki projenden biraz bahsetmek ister misin? Mesela bu senin dansla ilgili düşüncelerinin neresinde duruyor?

SK: Bu projede tam olarak değil. Bu benim 4 yıl önce dansın yanında müzikle de ilgilenmemden gelen bir süreç ve bu akşamki tamamen bir müzik projesi. Dansla bir ilgisi yok. Ortak noktası belki, bu akşamki konserin bir alt metni, anlatmak istediği bir şey var?

BVB: Az önce bahsettiğin hareketin arkasındaki fikir ya da motivasyon gibi mi?

SK: Evet. Ama izleyeceğiniz klasik bir müzik konseri olacak.

BVB: Konserin motivasyonu ne peki?

SK: Aslında çok ilginç, bugünlerle öyle bir denk geldi ki. Biz Ruken'le birlikte daha çok Kürdistan coğrafyasında olmuş olan katliamlar üzerine çıkan besteler ve ayın zamanda geleneksel olarak söylenen şarkılar üzerinden bir konsept yaratmıştık. Yani aslında biraz tarihsel boyutuna bakmıştık. Bunun içinde çok eski ağıtlar da var, 20 yıl önce mesela Dersim için bestelenmiş şarkılar da var. O katliamlardan sonra Ankara olayı yaşandı. Tesadüfen, bir anda yaptığımız şey güncelleşti. Ama aslında Kürdistan'daki tarihsel süreci anlatıyor.

BVB: Seçimler de yaklaşırken bu festivalin Ankara olayıyla seçimlerin arasında kalmış olması sizin için daha anlamlı oldu mu?

SK: Benim için çok şey ifade ediyor. Ben Fatih'in mailini ilk aldığımda aynen onun gibi düşündüm. Dünyada ne olursa olsun sanatın sesinin kesilmemesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum ve bu şu an benim için büyük bir moral kaynağı festivalin oluyor olması.

FG: Biraz Yeşim'le de konuştuk, sen de değinmiştin daha önce: çağdaş dansın seyircisinin oluşamaması konusu. Bir form olarak kendini kabul ettirememesi. Sen de çağdaş dansın batıdan kopyalanan bir şey olduğunu ve yerelle iletişim kurmakta zorlandığını söyledin az önce. Bu konuyu biraz daha açmak ister misin? Dans seyircisi kimdir, nasıl bir dans seyircisi yaratılabilir? Çağdaş olan form ne ifade edebilir Türkiye bağlamında?

SK: Söyle söyleyeyim: Batıyı baz alırsak bütün sanat akımları aslında toplumsal tabakanın paralelinde gelişen ve biraz da öncülük eden bir misyona sahip. Mesela dünyanın globalleşmesi biraz da batının toplumsal olarak evrildiği noktayla paralel gerçekleşen bir süreç. Türkiye'de bu böyle olmadı. Şu an dünyanın teknolojik olarak geldiği noktayla sanatsal olarak da gittiği nokta gelişmiş toplumlar için baktığımız zaman kendi doğasıyla daha çok buluşabilen bir noktada. Fakat Türkiye'de feodal dönem tam olarak kırılmadan bu süreç yaşandı. Toplumsal bir olgunlaşmamışlıktan bahsediyorum aslında. Türkiye'de sanat da öyle gelişiyor. Toplumsal olarak çok fazla karşılığı olmayan -ama olabilecek, ele alış biçimi ve kullandıkları 'materyalle' -ki ben çoğu zaman bir materyal üzerine gidildiğine de inanmıyorum- ilgili bir sıkıntı olduğu için bir temas kurulamıyor diye düşünüyorum. Türkiye'de çağdaş sanat izleyicisi yok gibi bir sonuca gelmiyorum. Yaratılabilir, çok da iyi yaratılabilir. Ama buranın mevcut gerçekliğini işleyerek yaratılabilir diye düşünüyorum. Dokudan kopuk materyallerle seyirciyle konuşamıyoruz. Bir örnek vereceğim batıdan ne kadar etkilendiğimize yönelik: Mesela kimse buranın malzemeleri, buranın konuları üzerine bir şey yapmıyordu düne kadar. Ne zaman Akram Khan ve Sidi Larbi geldi Türkiye'ye, baktılar tamamen kendi kimlikleriyle buluşarak bir şey yapıyorlar. Baktılar ki farklı bir noktaya gidiliyor, bu Türkiye'de de gelişmeye başladı. Aşırı bir etkileşim var. Yani sanki sen bir şeyi söylemeden, ben senin söylediğin şeyi yaşıyorum ama yapmıyorum. Kendi gerçekliğimizden uzağız aslında. Sen mesela gelip beni izlediğinde benim sana anlattığım şeyle sen de bir etkileşim yaşamıyorsan, oradan bir fikirle çıkmıyorsan orada tabii ki bir seyirci oluşamıyor. Mesela bir projenin nelerinden etkilenebilirim? Bir dans işinde mesela ya işlediği konudan etkilenirim ya koreografın mantığından ve koreografi algısından etkilenebilirim ya dansçıların fizikalitesinden etkilenebilirim ya da genel prodüksiyondan etkilenebilirim. Bu dört temelin en az bir veya iki tanesinden etkilenmeyerek çıktığını düşün mesela. Ne anlatabilir o sana? Sen o işin izleyicisi olur musun? Bunu bir kere yaşıyorsun, iki kere yaşıyorsun, beş kere on kere yaşıyorsun, sonra uzaklaşıyorsun. Mesela ben Brüksel'de Sasha Waltz'un Medea çağdaş operasını izledim. Benim hiç hazır olmadığım birşeydi. O konuda hiçbir kültürüm yoktu. Ama çağdaş dansçı olduğumdan kaynaklı onun yapmak istediği şey hem prodüksiyon olarak, hem koreografik olarak hem de dansçı performansı olarak hayran bırakabildi beni. O yüzden demek istediğim ben çağdaş opera izleyicisi değilim ama bir daha olursa ben bir daha giderim.

BVB: Brüksel'de izledim dedin. Ne yapıyordun orada?

SK: Ultima Vez workshopuna gitmiştim.

BVB: Vim Vandekeybus'u beğeniyor musun?

SK: Çok.

BVB: Brüksel'de başka takip ettiğin birileri var mı?

SK: Rosas var. Şu an başka aklıma gelmedi.

BVB: Brüksel acayip bir yer. Çağdaş olma fikriyle ilgili takıntılı bir hal var neredeyse orada. Aslında pek bir sorum yok ama Brüksel'deki çağdaş dans alanıyla ilgili izlenimlerini merak ettim.

SK: PARTS'ın çizgisini çok beğenmiyorum aslında. Türkiye'de çok moda şu an. Oradan yetişen dansçılardan da çok etkilendiğimi söyleyemem. Daha Hollanda, Antwerp ve benzeri yerler daha çekici geliyor açıkçası. Fakat Brüksel'in çağdaş dansçı ve çağdaş sanatçı için yaşanılabilir bir yer olduğunu düşünüyorum. Şehri hiç sevmediğim halde.

BVB: PARTS'ın işleriyle ilgili ben de benzer bir hisse sahibim. Senin için işin hangi tarafı çekici değil? Bu, dans alanının 'çağdaş' kavramı etrafında belki de aşırı gelişmesiyle alakalı gibime geliyor. Az önce konuştuklarımızla alakalı bence bu.

SK: Ben oranın bir performans okulu mu yoksa dans okulu mu olduğundan emin değilim. Bir arkadaşım okuyor orada şu anda Türkiye'den.

BVB: Aslında geçen yıl programlarını radikal şekilde yeniden düzenlediler. Aslında ikisi de.

Sehat: Çok somut olarak birebir uzun süreli şahitlik durumum yok ama birkaç platformda karşılaştım dansçılarıyla. Özellikle ben okuldayken sürekli yurtdışındaydım Aydın Teker'le falan. O zamanlar birçok yerde buluşuyorduk onlarla ve açıkçası şaşırtıyordu beni. Çünkü Avrupa'da çok meşhur bir okul. O kadar bilinen ve talep edilen bir okulun öğrencilerini daha farklı bekliyordum. Anna Teresa, oranın baş koreografı, onun estetiğiyle ilgili de bir şey olabilir.

BVB: Ama o Rosas aynı zamanda.

SK: Evet, onları biliyorum anlamında söyledim daha önce, beğendiğimi söylemedim.

BVB: Bu belki de ayrı bir tartışma, PARTS, Rosas, Anna Teresa. Bunlar hala birbirine bağlı ama özellikle son on yılda giderek daha az bağlı.
SK: İmkan ve olanaklarından da kaynaklı olarak Avrupa'da bir Pina Bausch havasına giriyor ama ben açıkçası hiç öyle düşünmüyorum.

BVB: Sanırım yılda 1.7 milyon avroluk bir bütçesi var. Okulu ve topluluğu için.

SK: Zaten oranın kraliyet ailesiyle bir ilişkisi var sanırım.

BVB: Çok muhtemeldir. Flemenk hükümetiyle çok iyi ilişkisi olduğunu biliyorum. Sanırım onlardan en çok destek alan kişi.

SK: Benim bildiğim kadarıyla Belçika devleti nezdinde çok tanınan, bilinen bir ailenin kızı.

BVB: Sanırım Brüksel ve Flemenk hükümeti 20 yıl önce dansı çok büyük bir şekilde desteklemeyi seçti. Bu da oransal olarak başka bir yerle karşılaştırılamayacak bir düzey. Böyle bir yönelim senin de burada isteyeceğin bir şey mi?

SK: (Güler) Tabii ki.

BVB: Amerika'da da yok böyle bir şey. Senin herhangi bir sorun var mı bana ya da festivale?

SK: Bu akşam öğreneceğiz. (Güler) Ben hala bugün de çok rahatsızım. Festivali çok fazla gözlemleyemedim. Programına bakıyorum. Şu ana kadar bir sıkıntı görünmüyor (Güler)

FG: Dışarıdan öyle gözüküyor (Güler)

SK: Sizi çok iyi anlıyorum. Ben de bu işleri yapan biriyim, organizasyon işlerini.

FG: Biraz farklı grupların ve seyircilerin buluşması fikrinden bahsetmek istiyorum ben. Daha önce de konuşmuştuk, sanki herkesin seyircisinin ayrı olması durumundan. Sizin ekip olarak dans camiasının biraz dışında olmanız, dansçıların sizi daha az izlemesi vs. Mesela Ermeni bir müzik grubunu yoğun olarak Ermeni cemaatin izlemeye gelmesi, Kürt grubun kitlesinin farklı olduğunun var sayılması vs. Birbirine geçmeyen seyirciler. Bu festivalin amaçlarından biri de bu seyircileri de bir araya getirmek aslında. O konuda neler söylersin? Neden böyle bir şey var, bu nasıl aşılabilir? Seyirci yaratmak sorusuyla da ilgili bu aslında. Sen mesela seyirciyi ne üzerinden yaratmaya çalışıyorsun?

SK: İşin ilginç tarafı, benim bütün bu çelişkilerim toplumsal durumun paralelinde. Resmi devlet zihniyeti toplumu o kadar fazla televizyona bağımlı ve düşünmeyen bir hale getirmiş ki sanatçısı da siyasetçisi de o noktaya geliyor. Mesela Ermeni-Kürt olayına geldiği zaman görsel medya ve gazeteler herkesi o kadar terörize etmiş durumda ki insanlar bir aydınlanma da yaşayamadığı için birler onlar için teröristleriz.

O yüzden de bu ayrışma olayı bugünün sorunu değil geçmişten gelen bir sorun. Sanat ve dans camiasında da şöyle bir şey var: Bu durum son 10 yılda ortaya çıkan ve bir şekilde bir şeyler yapmak isteyen insanların çok kabul görmemesiyle de alakalı -bunun sadece bizim Kürt olmamızla alakalı bir şey olduğunu düşünmüyorum. Çok derin bir mesele aslında bu, uzatmak da istemiyorum. Kabaca Türkiye'de çağdaş dansı başlatmış olan insanlar kendi tekelinde tutmak istiyor bunu. Bu bir handikap yaratıyor. Bir hafta önce yaşadığımız bir meseleyi örnek vereyim. Biz bu yıl Mimar Sinan'dan onların stüdyosunda dışarıya açık bir atölye vermek için talepte bulunduk dilekçeyle. Bir hoca bizim bu talebimizle ilgili okulda yapılan bir toplantıda şöyle diyor: 'Bazı insanlar burada bazı çalışmalar yürütmek istiyor. Fakat şunu bilmelidirler ki bizim sanat anlayışımız çok farklı. Dolayısıyla da sanatsal bakış açılarımızın farklı olduğu insanlara alanımızı açmamız mümkün değil.' Çelişki işe şu: Okula başvuran öğrencilere şöyle söylerler: 'Biz farklı renkler, farklı düşünceler ve farklı kaliteler arıyoruz. Biz farklılık arıyoruz.' Ama farklı olunca böyle oluyor. Dolayısıyla bu samimiyetsizlik aslında.

BVB: Sence bu sanatsal farklılıktan neyi kastediyorlar?

SK: Ben şöyle algılıyorum: Aslında dediğim gibi, ben Türkiye'nin en önemli koreograflarıyla çalışan bir dansçıyım. Ben şöyle bakıyorum: biz Mezopotamya Dans olarak zaten bir alerjik durum yaratıyoruz, isimden de kaynaklı. Daha politik işler yapıyoruz. Ama zaten sanat politiktir. Bu bardakla ilgili de bir şey yaptığında buna karşı politik bir yaklaşım geliştiriyorsun. O farklılık dediği şey aslında bizim düşünsel farklılıklarımız. Türkiye devletinin resmi anlayışını yansıtıyor. Sonra 'çağdaş sanatçı' oluyor! (Güler)

CONCERT
KONSER
III

ŞOP

Şop blends Kurdish traditional music with contemporary forms. A new harmony is created by tracing the past and carrying it on to today. A journey called 'Trace'.

SERHAT KURAL: solo vocal
RUKEN YILMAZ: solo vocal
NURHAK KILAGÖZ: flute-saxophone
MERIH AŞKIN: fretless guitar
ARDA YAMAN: classical guitar
EREN TURGUT: contrabass

Ruken Yılmaz was born in İstanbul to a family originating from Eruh, Siirt. Graduated from Marmara University's Music Department and continues her artistic work with Mezopotamya Cultural Center.

Serhat Kural was born in Siyamir, Tatvan. He studied folk dances for 7 years before he started contemporary dance and making his own choreographies. He is a co-founder of the first and only Kurdish dance company in Turkey: Mezopotampa Dans. His choreographies toured nationally and internationally. Serhat's work has expanded to music in the last 3 years. He makes his own compositions and initiates projects like Diwan-a Dubeytî, which composed poems by the Kurdish poet Baba Tahirê Hemedanî.

Şop projesi, Kürt müziğinin toplumsal ve geleneksel noktalarına değinen bir repertuvarı çağdaş bir form ile yorumluyor. Geçmişin izini süren, geleneksel formları çağdaş normlarla buluşturarak bugüne taşıyan bu hikayeni adı İz.

SERHAT KURAL: solo vokal
RUKEN YILMAZ: solo vokal
NURHAK KILAGÖZ: flüt-saksofon
MERIH AŞKIN: perdesiz gitar
ARDA YAMAN: klasik gitar
EREN TURGUT: kontrabas

Ruken Yılmaz İstanbul doğumlu. Aslen Siirt/Eruh'lu. Küçük yaşlardan beri müzikle ilgileniyor. Marmara Üniversitesi Müzik Öğretmenliği bölümünden mezun olup, Mezopotamya Kültür Merkezi bünyesinde müzik çalışmalarıma devam etmektedir.

Serhat Kural Tatvan'ın Siyamir Köyünde doğdu. 7 yıl halk danslarında, 13 yıldır da modern dans alanında










ISTANBUL

PERFORMANCE
PERFORMANS
VI

A LOVER OF THE SAME FALL

ONUR KARAOĞLU /
STUDIO4 ISTANBUL

POST SHOW TALK/A LOVER
OF THE SAME FALL
ONUR KARAOĞLU/STUDIO 4 ISTANBUL
KARGART, KADIKÖY

A Lover Of The Same Fall tells the story of a person who lost his beloved in today's world. A Syrian immigrant Nasir, and his beloved Aziz.

Nasir poetically questions conflict between his love and the sources of his own life for the world he left behind. The words find their metaphysical meaning through lyrics, spaces and bodies to take us on a journey to find the sources of life. Nasir's story is also about what makes us human beings.

Theater, poetry and bodies will take us on an adventure through the deep questions and emotions of life in this play, A Lover Of The Same Fall.

Bize Yol Göster, içinde bulunduğumuz zamanda sevdiği insanı kaybeden bir aşığın hikayesine odaklanıyor. Suriye'den, Türkiye'ye göç eden Nasir ve kaybettiği sevgilisi Aziz.

Nasir'in, kaybettiği aşkıyla, inandığı ve ona hayatı veren dengeler arasındaki ilişkiyi sorguladığı şiiri; sözcükler, mekanlar ve bedenlerle, bilinenin ötesinde varoluşun nedenlerini aradığı bir yolculuğa dönüşüyor. Bizi insan yapan şeyin özü nedir sorusuna cevap arar Nasir'in hikayesi...

Tiyatro, şiir ve bedenin birlikte işaret ettiği bir evrende dolaşan Bize Yol Göster, yaşamın derin soruları ve hisleri arasında bir maceraya davet de olacak!

FATIH GENÇKAL: How many people here understand English and not Turkish? Who doesn't understand Turkish? OK, everybody speaks English. It's an international festival that we are directing! Thanks for staying guys. Welcome to the post show talk for *A Lover of the Same Fall*, presented as part of the Corner In The World festival.

ONUR KARAOĞLU: Hello, and thank you for coming tonight to the show. Fatih and I have been running Studio 4 Istanbul for a long time and this is the type of work we are doing. For us it is a kind of research and we are very into experimenting with different performance ideas. So this is not strange to us. I mean if you are seeing our work for the first time this is what we do.

This show is loosely based on a video I saw last year on the internet. It is a video that was shot by ISIS in Syria. It is a video of how they were executing the gays. They were throwing the gays from the top of buildings. I mean I saw the video and I had a very strong feeling that I couldn't explain. So while we were talking about doing something for the festival I decided I wanted to do something related to this video. I have never seen the video again, but it is still on the web and I think three weeks ago they posted another one of the same kind of executions.

So what you saw is a loosely structured story that I wrote as a response to this video. I started to work with these ideas a couple of weeks ago with the two performers, Can Güvenç and Lara Aysal. If you have any questions, I am happy to answer, any of us can answer. If you want to ask about Studio 4 Istanbul or the festival we can also address them. I am curious, how was the experience? I mean Kargart, this venue, is a room above a bar. It was a strange space to perform in. The festival had it's own theater space three months ago, where almost every performance was going to be held, but it was shut down for many reasons. So we ended up here. But anyway, I am curious what you have held from the performance, what was working for you and what wasn't. What did you think? Thank you guys.

BEN VAN BUREN: Thank you very much for the work. The experience of all lying down together as an audience was



really nice... Can you talk about how the content of the piece maybe relates to the decision to have the audience all lie down?

OK: Yes, I mean it is a tough subject. It was very conceptual in the first place. The name is *A Lover of the Same Fall* and the audience is on the ground as if thrown from the top of the building. That is the first perspective the audience is having, of being on the ground. And when you are lying down you look up into the sky and, somehow, the "God" is above, right? And you look into that. Not that I am in the least bit religious. Or maybe you will see the top of a building which someone has just been thrown off of. Of course, unlike a corpse, you won't stay there forever, but if you lie down here maybe you are going to imagine something like that. Lying down establishes the whole experience of the performance. In this room especially, the audience is a part of the experience. With audience lying down on both sides of the room performers only have a very narrow path down the center of the room as their stage. That was a big part of our rehearsal debate, whether or not we were going to step on someone's leg, or if someone was going to get hurt. We decided to give the audience strict orders. Everyone had to lie down or the show would not start, and if you left the room you could not re-enter. How did you feel when you were lying down? What was it like?

BVB: I experienced coming to terms with not being able to see all the action. I kept glancing at my neighbors to see if they were going to sit up and see more. No one did so I stayed lying down, which felt fine. And it was a comfortable position to be in, and it was a comfortable room to be in... It was warm... I don't know, I wondered if you were trying to create a sort of dreamscape.

OK: Maybe unconsciously, and somehow intentionally. I think that our projecting metaphysical aspects beyond what we see is a part of life. If somebody has lost someone, the place they will go to search for them is more metaphysical. It is not as though you literally look for someone that you know has disappeared. No, but you still must reconnect with that person in a way. And maybe that search happens through your imagination. Your imagination will go further than reality. It will bring you closer to the person you want to reconnect with, maybe. That is the experience we are looking for. It is not completely realized yet, a lot of things can be done. As I said, this is a research.

AUDIENCE: Was the idea to make the audience lie down there from the beginning? Or was it developed during the rehearsal process?

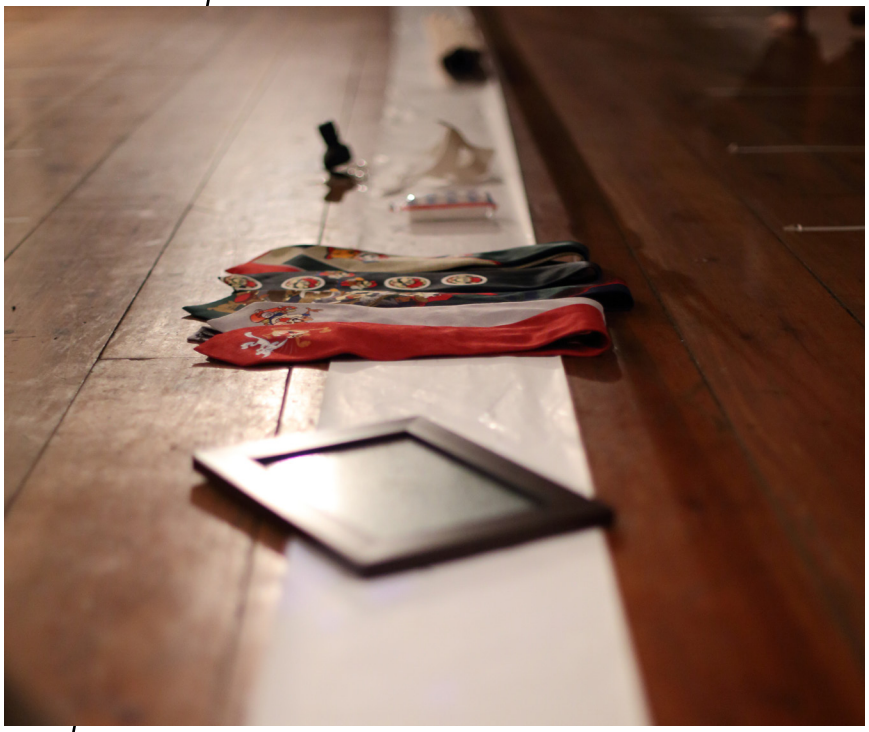
OK: In the rehearsal process, but very early in the rehearsal process we knew it.

AUDIENCE: And the performance space was always going to be here?

OK: Yes. At first I was very unhappy after we made the decision because it is very narrow and there is a lot of noise coming from downstairs. I don't like this space for a performance like this. It should be more contained, we should be able to control the space.

AUDIENCE: This is a performance about the love between men, but you chose to cast a woman as one of the only two actors. Why is that?

OK: It is very personal. In rehearsal we joked that she is the 'fag hag'. I was imagining that, even in Syria, if you are gay, and you are very in the closet, that you still find someone to share in the life that you are secretly living.



LARA AYSAL: As a women it is also difficult to live your life freely. So there are lots of things in common that we could share and that probably develop the relationship better. I think, at least, we thought so in rehearsal.

AUDIENCE: Is this piece related to your past work? Or is it something totally new?

OK: Whoa, hard question! Maybe? At the moment I feel like I am here researching this side of myself. I don't choose to say, "I did that, now I have to do this." I don't feel like that. The other day I was talking about how we are changing and how we are unaware of it. You have to critically analyze yourself to really understand yourself. Otherwise everything is happening without... It happens to me mostly with emotions I think. I always make plays about love.

ZINNURE TÜRE: I want to go back to the beginning, to the very beginning of the idea.

OK: Oh my god. OK, if you tell the story I will tell it too. Do you want me to tell what happened? Zinnure was very angry that I was making this piece. She told me it wasn't my right to do a piece about the people who had gone through those events in Syria. She was very angry with me, and she said, "No you can't do this. You are crossing the line. You shouldn't do this piece." I was so angry with her then, so let's listen to her now.

ZT: OK. It was a really big discussion. Because for me if it's not your subject, if you are not dealing with that issue, then you cannot understand it well enough to make work about it. You cannot reflect on it. That's all. So when you came up with this idea, I was really... I wasn't angry, come on [laughs]. We just had a discussion. I just felt that we are artists from Turkey, from Istanbul and to be looking at that video... I just found it kind of I don't know, yeah kind of superficial. But actually, now that I have seen the show I can start to see how it was just based on that video... Which is kind of... You actually cannot see the real connection with the real thing in the performance...

OK: In the piece we never reference the video... In the piece it is never announced that, "This is the fact, and this is the character who is living through this, and at the end this happens." It wasn't a storytelling play, it is not a play based on a text in that way. It is a good discussion actually if you agree with Zinnure. Can you make art about a controversial current event?

AUDIENCE: First of all I feel the pain deep inside everything. I felt it because of the story and the fact that we are lying down. I felt that somebody was expressing some kind of deep pain and here that has so many connotations. That to me... that changed me...I loved the performance. But my question is what does it means to perform this in Turkey?

OK: Last Saturday, well the previous Saturday, we had a rehearsal and the bombing in Ankara happened. And I am sure you remember the images. Bodies were on the ground. We were rehearsing and Lara was upset about it because we were talking about the audience lying on the ground too. In Turkey, as we were making this performance, all of the connotations of lying down suddenly had a different kind of reality. And I think in Turkey being gay... Oh don't make me start on this! [laughs] I mean, I don't know what to do because there are a great many things to do. I really don't know. I just try and I don't have any definite strategy that I know will succeed at the end.

AUDIENCE: First off, thank you for this



great experience. The feeling of lying down I have some personal comments about because I think it is so interesting. I am going to share my feelings about this. You choose to make the audience lie on the ground and that seems very good. And this video you mentioned, in my personal opinion, is not about being gay, it's not about anything but fear and pain. Two key words about this video, and this performance, I think should be pain and fear. It brings fear, very strong feelings of fear. So that's probably it. Thank you, and I hope next time I see this performance it is going to kick my balls.

[laughter]

OK: OK [laughs] it would be good to have a next time.

VAHID EVAZZADEH: First of all, it is great to see the work of your company. I have some questions that somewhat relate to the context of this festival and our environment in the Middle East. My questions are: What is gay? Who are the ISIS? How do we know that those guys being thrown from the rooftop are gay? And that those guys throwing them are ISIS? Questions such as that. Then, my question to you as a director would be how do you take all that information and begin the process of doing what you are doing? Particularly because, as you mentioned, this is not a representational dance piece, but something more abstract. Honestly, if you had not told me this piece was based on that video I would have never known. So I would like to hear about that and I might have something to say after I hear your thoughts.

OK: It was on purpose that I didn't declare any of the material the piece is based on beforehand. If you saw the piece and left the room and didn't talk to me at all I was happy that you didn't know anything about where the piece came from. The motivation to make the piece came from a personal experience of reacting to this video, and I feel good about doing this, because I feel like it is the only thing I can do about it.

About being gay, and who is ISIS, those kind of things ... I ask myself those questions as well. I will say again, I am not trying to make something documentary. This piece is based on what I can imagine. You were saying "fear" and "pain." And yes it is there for sure. It is there in our daily life. Fear and pain. This story, in my opinion is about looking beyond what is daily, and what is beyond pain and fear. It comes from my imagination, it is an attempt to go to a place that is beyond fear and pain. Does that explain anything?

VE: I think I would need to know the point of departure of your work and your process. Once you open the Pandora's box I think these issues become extremely relevant. And I have another question. You said you don't want to inform us of your point of departure to begin with, but why do you think you need to do that afterwards?

OK: Because the discussion here is the first time we are going to get feedback about the work from different perspectives. We have a lot of artists in this room and we are all coming with different motivations and concerns about making work. I don't know the answer. We have been discussing this among ourselves, but this is the first time we are getting real feedback. I am curious about this from a professional point of view.

AUDIENCE: I am really curious about this context actually. Are there normally discussions like this after performances in Istanbul?



OK: One of the reasons for making this festival was to facilitate the ground for this kind for discussion. We are yearning for it... Sorry, do you want to say something? I am talking all the time.

AUDIENCE: I have a question about the title, um—

OK: It is different in Turkish and in English.

AUDIENCE: Yes that is my question. Both titles make sense to me but the English is not a direct translation. I wanted to know if there was a reason for that.

OK: I think the only reason is that we came up with the English title first and when we tried to translate it into Turkish we couldn't find anything that worked. So I found a line from the text and made it the title in Turkish.

AUDIENCE: What is the direct translation of the Turkish title?

OK: *Show Us The Path*.

AUDIENCE: That makes me think about how you brought up God as something above us earlier. Did you feel you had to say that because of the context? Or is it related to what you personally believe in? I was trying to figure that out.

OK: Yeah... maybe I shouldn't say this... but I kind of believe in a God that exists. But it is not a God that I can describe. Earlier, before this talk, we were discussing what it means to be culturally Muslim. It is like being raised with something even though you don't believe in it... I am culturally Muslim. It is an inherited knowledge that I put on things and live my life with. You can't just disregard it. I don't know if that makes sense.

AUDIENCE: There is a moment when I thought Can was saying, "You are my God," to his lover. Which, to me, makes a lot of things really problematic. But I was wondering if that articulation was purposeful or if that was just my interpretation?

LA: I want to say something. Can's character is homosexual and I am a woman who is oppressed, and we live in a Muslim culture in a Muslim country, which is conservative. We can't relate to our culture directly, but we somehow we have to relate to it to continue our lives. I think that the way that my character approaches religion is more from a Sufi angle which has to do with a relationship between singularity and totality. And this is how I understand that line of Can's you just mentioned. He is saying "my God, you are my lover, so you are my God, so we are whole." I wouldn't take it the wrong way. I would suggest that when he says that it is about love being a universal thing that we try to understand.

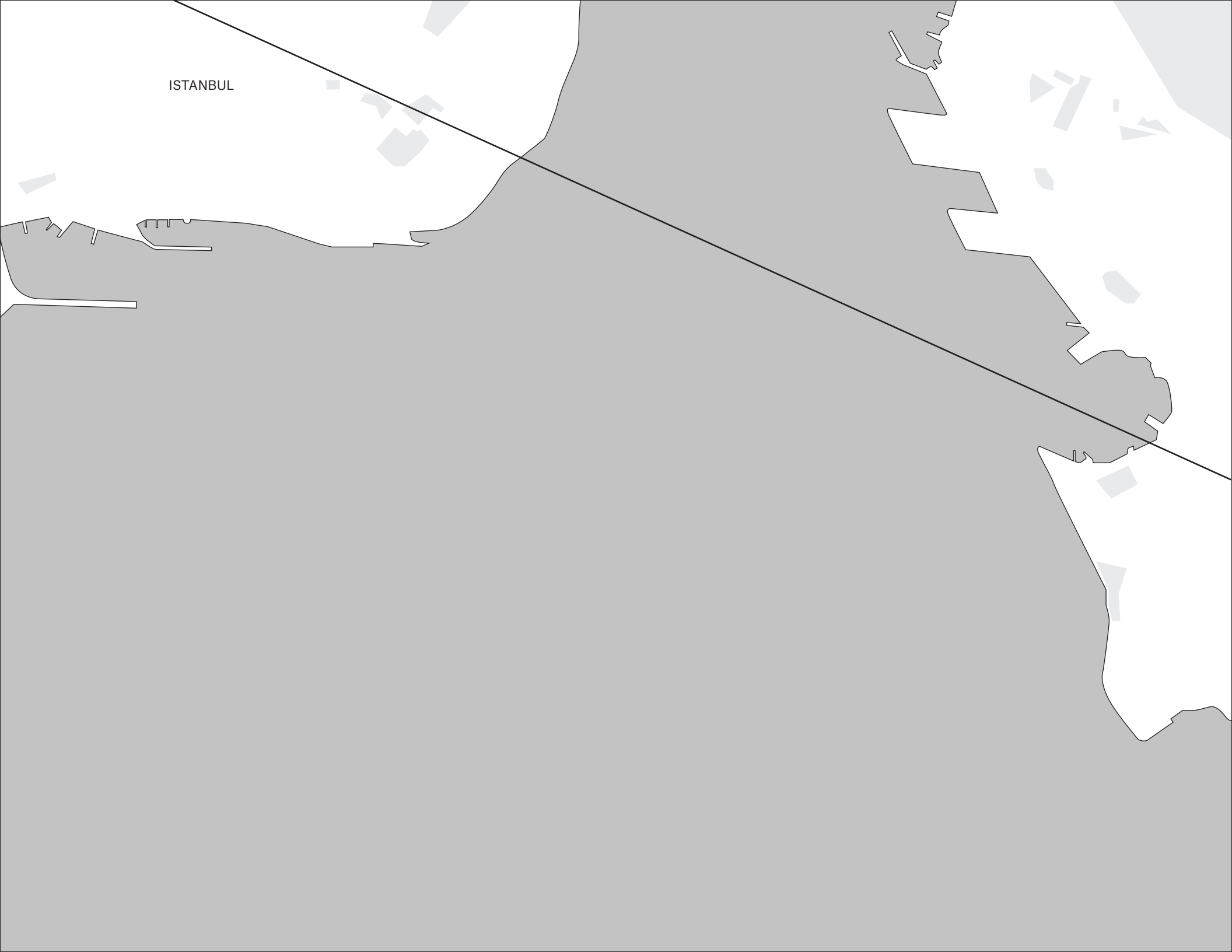
AUDIENCE: I didn't mean to say that it sounded wrong.

LA: It is very interesting.

AUDIENCE: Whether you believe in God or not, it just puts things in a different perspective. With Sufism the hierarchy is much more flexible, because you become one with God eventually.

OK: This character becomes one with his lover too, in that sense he fulfills the purpose of his journey.




ISTANBUL

PERFORMANCE
PERFORMANS
VI

DI TUWALETE DE

MIRZA METIN /
DESTAR TIYATRO

INTERVIEW WITH BERFIN ZANDERLIOĞLU & ALAN CIWAN

BENJAMIN VAN BUREN: Ekibinizden biraz bahseder misiniz?

BERFIN ZENDERLIOĞLU: 2008 yılının ekim ayında Destar Tiyatro'yu Mirza Metin'le birlikte kurduk. El değirmeni demek destar. Sonrasında bu aile gittikçe çoğalmaya başladı, yeni eklenen arkadaşlarımız oldu. Bu eklenmeler sonucu, kendi çalışmalarımızı disipline edebilmek, düzenli çalışmalar yapabilmek için bir mekan ihtiyacını duyduk ve Destar bileşenleri ile birlikte Şermola Performans'ı açtık. 2010 yılında. 2008 yılından bu yana 10'a yakın oyun yaptık. Daha çok yeniyi arayışımız vardı, kendi özgün teatral dilimizi oluşturmak gibi bir amacımız vardı. Şu ana kadar zorladığımız da o temelde bir tiyatro anlayışı oldu. Daha bedene yönelik, son dönemlerde daha hikaye anlatıcılığına yönelik, hem derdi olan bir tiyatro –bu hem siyasal anlamda bir dert hem de teatral anlamda, kendi dilini oluşturma, özgün dilini oluşturma anlamında- gibi bir derdimiz var.

BVB: Bu derdin altında ne yatıyor?

BZ: Türkiye'de yaşıyor olmanız başlı başına dert edinmenizi gerektiren bir durum. Sadece Kürt kimliğiyle ilgili değil –tabii ki bunun bizim tiyatromuz üzerinde bir etkisi oluyor. Kürt olmak bu ülkede daha baskıcı durumlarla karşı karşıya kalmamıza neden oluyor. Ama bizim derdimiz sadece Kürt olmakla alakalı birşey değil. Bir tarafta tabii ki kimlik olarak yaşadığımız sıkıntılar var, ama öte taraftan da bizim yaşadığımız sıkıntıların evrensel bir dili de olduğunu düşünüyoruz ve oradan bir bakışla buna bakmaya çalışıyoruz. Çünkü adı konmayan bir savaş var bu ülkede ama bu savaş dünyanın neresinde olursa olsun aynı yıkımla insanları karşı karşıya bırakıyor. Bir de dediğim gibi öteki anlamda bir derdimiz var, teatral bir oluşturma gibi bir derdimiz var. Hem bedensel anlamda, hem de hikaye anlatıcılığı anlamında Kürt mitolojisinden ya da Kürtlere ait özgün kaynaklardan yararlanarak bir tiyatro dili oluşturma gibi bir derdimiz var. Derdi iki şekilde yorumluyoruz.

BVB: 2008 yılından beri 10 oyun yapmak oldukça yoğun bir üretim gibi geliyor bana. Bu işleri yapmaktan kaynaklı bir sistematik, bir metot ortaya çıkmaya başladı mı diye merak ediyorum. Özellikle düşünce yapınızdaki bu iki meseleyi net olarak tarif ettiğiniz için. Bir çalışma metodunuz oluştu mu bu süreçte, bu iki meseleyle ilişki kurarken?

BZ: Aslında geldiğimiz nokta itibarıyla bir dilimizin oluştuğunu düşünüyoruz. Daha ziyade hikaye anlatıcılığı üzerinden bir teatral dilimiz oluşmaya başladı. Bunu yaparken de oyuncunun bütün olanaklarını, bütün bedensel ve ruhsal olanaklarını kullanma arayışı içindeyiz. Bizim ilk oyunumuz Reşeşeve idi. Karabasan diye Türkçe'ye çevrildi. Bir kadının –aslında erkeğin de- sistem tarafından nasıl kuşatıldığını anlatan bir oyundu. Orada da oyuncunun bedensel performansı çok ön plandaydı. Arka tarafta da tabii onu besleyen ruhsal süreçler vardı. Orada kadının canlandırdığı iki karakter vardı: geçmişi ve kendisi. Sonrasında bu bizim için teatral bir dil halini almaya başladı, birçok oyunumuzda bu dili kullanmaya başladık. Repertuvar oluştururken zorlamayla, bizim derdimiz şöyle, biz bunu yapacağız gibi bir noktadan bakmıyoruz ama bu kendiliğinden oluşuyor. Bu toplumun çok dışına çıkamıyorsun.

BVB: Oyunun oyuncusuna dönmek istiyorum. Alan sen ne kadar zamandır bu ekiple çalışıyorsun? Bu ekiple çalışma nedenlerinle ve Berfin'in anlattığı bu metodun, bu dilin içinde oyuncu olarak bulunmakla ilgili neler söylersin?

ALAN CIWAN: Ben 2009'da Destar'la çalışmaya başladım. Daha öncesinde Türkçe tiyatro yapıyordum, sonrasında Kürtçe devam etti. Benim için dil hiçbir zaman ön planda olmadı, şu anda da yok öyle bir şey ama içimde öyle bir şey de var, belki babaannemden dedemden duyduğum hikayeler hep Kürtçe olduğu için, içimde olan tını Kürtçe'deki tınıdır. Dil olarak değil esasen, ama o tını beni burada tutan, bu atmosferin içinde tutan da o tını sadece. Kelimeler değil, sadece o tını. Destar Tiyatro'nun hikaye anlatımında da en ön planda olan şey ses, tını, fısıltılardır. Bunlar da haliyle o dile ait olan, benim geçmişimde olan şeyler. Öteki türlü, yani başka dilde, ben sahne üzerinde kendimi tam olarak ifade edemiyorum. O süreçte olduğu zaman ben çok daha kolay bir şekilde gidiyorum oraya. Destar Tiyatro beden üzerinden hareket ediyor, çok ifade edemediğim ama içten gelen bir tür hırıltıyla yola çıkıyoruz biz. Ve onu ne tam olarak aktarabiliyoruz ne de anlatabiliyorum ben. Çok içsel bir şey o. Bu oyunda da, izleyince göreceksinizdir, anlatamadığınız bazı durumlar vardır. Onları gerçekten kendi içimde yaşıyorum ve anlatınca da bozulacağını düşünüyorum açıkçası. Ama genel olarak beden performansına ağırlık veriyoruz, kendi geçmişinden her zaman besleniyorsun, yaşadığın her anın burada başka bir anlamı oluyor –dışarıda ya da geçmişte yaşadığın küçük bir an teatral bir düzlemde, farklı bir boyuta gidiyor ve sen farkına bile varmıyorsun. Küçük düşündüğümüz hayaller burada gerçekleşiyor ama daha büyük

bir boyutta. Aslında son iki üç yıl içinde benim içimde oturmaya başlıyor birçok şey. Daha önce tiyatro yaparken proje yapmak, oyun çıkarmak, sergilemek , seyirciyle buluşmak, alkış almak üzerine ilerleyen şey benim için son dönemde anlamını yitirdi. Sadece çalışmak, sadece o anda olmak, o provada onu yaşamak. Haliyle oynamak da zorunda kalıyorsun tabii. Benim için oynamaktan ziyade o mutfakta olmak, çalışmak daha büyük bir anlam ifade ediyor.

BVB: Bu senin kendi başına yaşadığın bir süreç mi yoksa başkalarıyla, ekiple birlikte mi?

AC: Son iki projemizde böyle oldu. Bu benim solo oynadığım bu proje ve bundan önceki Gor projesinde de aynı duyguyu yaşadım. Son iki üç yıldır diyelim.

BVB: Seyirciniz kim? Bu süreçte seyircinizde bir değişme gözlemlediniz mi?

BZ: Aslında her kesimden seyircimiz var. Biz sadece bir kategoriye koyamıyoruz. Kürtçe tiyatro yapıyoruz ama üstyazı kullandığımızdan herkese hitap edebiliyoruz. Bir yaş aralığı verecek olursak 20 yaşından başlayıp 65-70 yaşına kadar var olan bir seyirci kitlesi var. Bazen yabancılar geliyor İngilizce üstyazı da kullanıyoruz. Bunu bir tek Disko 5 Nolu'da kullanıyoruz gerçi, Almancası da var onun, gittiğimiz yurtdışı turnelerinden kaynaklı. Ama artık onu her oyun için düşünmek lazım çünkü yabancı seyirci geliyor artık. Onu yaptıktan sonra fark ettik, neden diğer oyunlar için de yapmıyoruz dedik. Mesela Erasmus öğrencileri geliyor, başkaları geliyor. Ama esas Türkçe üstyazı bizim için çok iyi oldu bu, hedef kitlemizi genişletti, sadece Kürtlerle sınırlı kalmadık. Zaten öyle bir hedefimiz yoktu. Var olan bir tiyatroyu elimizden geldiğince herkese ulaştırmak istiyoruz. Neticede sen ne düşünüyorsan tiyatro için, hangi hedef kitlesine ulaşmaya çalışıyorsan ben de ona ulaşmaya çalışıyorum, sadece kullandığımız dil farklı.

BVB: 2010'dan beri yürüttüğünüz mekandan bahsedelim. Orada nasıl şeyler oluyor? Sadece ekibin çalışmaları için mi yoksa başka etkinlikler de oluyor mu?

BZ: Başta hedeflediğimiz kendi çalışmalarımızı daha disiplinize edebilmek ve düzenli çalışmalar yapabilmek için bir mekan oluşturmaktı. Ayrıca haftanın iki günü de seyirciyle buluşabileceğimiz bir yer olmasıydı. Onun nedeni şuydu: Bizim tiyatromuz biraz oyunculuk merkezli bir tiyatro. Bu bilinçli bir tercih. Sonrasında bunun bizim için lüks olmaya başladığını gördük, birçok özel tiyatro gibi. Türkiye'de 'Ben bir mekan açtım ve orada sadece kendi oyunculuk denemelerimi yapacağım' diyebileceğin bir gerçeklik yok maalesef. Bizim tercih ettiğimiz, daha çok, 'Evet bir mekanımız olsun ama orayı haftanın 3-4 günü kendi denemelerimizi yapacağımız laboratuvar olarak kullanalım, haftanın 3 günü de bunu seyirciyle buluşturalım. Ama sonra gördük ki öyle ayakta kalınmıyor. Oranın kira problemi oluyor, oranın varlığını sürdürebilmesi için bir sürü ihtiyacı oluyor. Ekonomik olarak ayakta kalabilmek için başka gruplarla paylaşmanız gerekiyor. Bunu işletmek için ayrıca çalışana ihtiyaç duyuyorsunuz, o zaman da para yine işin içine giriyor. Bunları koordine edebilmek için o grubu kim kurduysa onlar sorumluluk alıyor. Bizde yürütücüler benle Mirza ama bize destek olan, 3. kişi Alan. Diğer arkadaşlarımız kısmen destek olabiliyorlar, işlerinden arta kalan zamanlarda destek olabiliyorlar. Böyle bir durumda gerçekten çok daha fazla zorlanıyoruz. Dediğim gibi farklı gruplarla paylaşıyoruz ama o zaman da iş yükümüz fazlalaştığı için çok parçalanıyoruz. Yani aslında şu an birçok özel tiyatronun yaşadığı problemi biz de yaşıyoruz, çok parçalanmışlıktan biz de şikayetçiyiz. O zaman 'Ben oyuncuyum, ben yönetmenim, ben sadece yazarım ya da ben sadece sahne işlemeciliği ile uğraşıyorum' diyemiyorsun. Bin parçaya bölünmek zorundasın. Bunların hepsinin aslında birer parçasını taşımak zorundasın. Bu bizimle ilgili bir durum değil. Türkiye'deki sistemin, kültür politikasının, doğru dürüst bir kültür/sanat politikasının olmamasından kaynaklı. O yüzden de doğal olarak tabii ki biz yaptığımız tiyatroyu gerçekten yapabiliyoruz diyemiyoruz. Yapabildiğimiz kadarını yapıyoruz.

BVB: Bunu işin kendisiyle ilgili mi söylüyorsun?

BZ: Evet, yani biz çıkış noktası olarak daha çok bir laboratuvar tiyatrosu düşünüyorduk. Orada sürekli oyunculuk çalışacağız gibi. Ama bu kadroyla da alakalı bir şey. İnsanlar çalışıyorlar, hepimiz başka işlerle uğraşıyoruz. İnsanların oraya günün 5-6 saatini vermesi mümkün değil. O yüzden iş saatlerinden arta kalan zamanda bunu zaten yapamazsın. Ya da sadece Pazar günüyle. Ama bunun altyapısını sağlayan şey de ekonomi. Öyle bir gerçeklik yok. O yüzden aslında sorun sadece buradaki tiyatrolarla alakalı bir şey değil. Bütün tiyatrolar bir şeyler hayal ediyor ama herkes hayalinin çeyreğini yaşıyor. Biz de bunu arkadaşlarımıza sunamadığımız için –ki biz neden sunalım, o da ayrı konu- doğal olarak herkes parçalı şekilde dahil olmaya çalışıyor.

BVB: Metottan bahsettik biraz ve metodun konu edindiği iki meseleden.

Bu konuyu biraz daha açmak istiyorum, ikinizin deneyimi üzerinden. Yeni bir işe başlamak için prova odasına girdiğinizde neyle başlıyorsunuz ve oyuncuları fiziksel ve ruhsal sınırlarına getirme süreci pratikte nasıl gerçekleşiyor? Burada kullandığınız araçlar neler?

BZ: Bizim ilk başlangıç noktamız egzersizler oluyor. Klasik anlamda ısınma çalışmalarıyla başlıyoruz. Bedenin ve sesin tamamen ısınıp hazır olduğu bir kıvama ulaştıktan sonra önceden bir tema doğrultusunda doğaçlamalar yapmayı tercih ediyorduk. Çünkü zaten yönetmenin kafasında belirlediği bir çerçeve oluyor ve o çerçeve doğrultusunda oyuncu da var olan bir şeyi açığa çıkarmaya çalışıyor. Mesela ilk oyunumuzda doğaçladıklarımızı yazdık, yazdıklarımızı doğaçladık ve oturduk Mirza ile bir metin oluşturduk. Reşeşeve öyle çıkan bir metin oldu. Biz tiyatromuzu oluştururken kurduğumuz bir cümle vardı, kendi metinlerimizi kendimiz oluşturmak istiyorduk. Şu ana kadar yazdığımız metinleri genelde ikimiz oluşturduk. Bugünkü oyun bir Kürt edebiyatçısına, şairine ait: Renas Jiyan. Bu bizim için de bir ilk oldu. İlk defa başka bir yazarın oyununu çalışmış olduk. Geçen yıl farklı yazarların anadil temalı oyunları projesinden başlayan bir süreç oldu bu. Bu metni yıllar öncesinde okumuştuk, yapmak istiyorduk ama bu yıl kısmet oldu. Biz böyle bir kültürden geliyorduk, daha çok doğaçlama kültüründen geliyorduk. Doğaçladıklarımız, oyuncuların yaratıcılıklarıyla metne dönüştürülüyordu. Şimdi biraz da bunun dışına çıkmak istedik. Metinlerimizi kendimiz yazmaya başladık. Şimdiki süreçte hali hazırda bir metin oluyor. Yönetmen kimse o ya metni yorumluyor, oyunculukların yaratıcılıklarıyla daha farklı bir hale sokuyor, yazar isterse onu tekrardan düzenleyebiliyor. Aslında biraz iç içe geçen bir yaratım süreci de var. Ama neticede işin başında zaten bir metnimiz var, yönetmenle yazar arasında bir iletişim varsa onlar zaten konuşuyorlar, oyuncular da o sürece dahil ediliyorlar. Bunların hepsinin toplamında, bizim için tabii ki bütün bu parçalar önemli ama asıl belirleyici rol kişisini oyuncu olarak koyuyoruz merkeze. Son iki yıldır şöyle bir şey de var, Mirza daha çok ona evrilmeye başladı. Geçen kış SALT'ta yaptı mesela. Diwan diye bir atölye oluşturmak istiyor. Daha çok oyuncunun bedeni, sesi üzerinden bir çalışma yürütüyor. Bu net olarak oluşturduğu bir sistem değil, daha çok oyuncuyu bir denek olarak kullanıp –kendisini de tabii, mesela Disko 5 Nolu'yu çalışma sürecinden önce kendisinin de geçirdiği bir süreç var- hem kendi deneyimlerini oyuncularla paylaşmaya çalışıyor, hem de oyunculardan aldığı verileri de şu an yaptığı araştırmanın içine katarak bir çalışma var etmeye çalışıyor. Buna da Dengbej Laş diyor.

AC: Deng ses, bej hikaye, laş da beden demek.

BZ: Şu an Mirza onu öyle formüle ediyor. Ama bizim tiyatronun başından beri kendi mitolojik öykülerinden beslenme, öz kaynaklarından beslenme gibi arayışlarımız zaten vardı. İlk oyunumuz mesela bir dengbej parçasından esinlenerek yazdığımız bir oyundu. Buka Leki diye bir oyunumuz vardı, kara komediydi, benle Alan'ın oynadığı, o da İranlı yazar Sadık Hidayet'in 'Perde Arkasındaki Bebek' hikayesinden esinlenilerek yazıldı. Sonra Antigone2012 var, onu Antigone günümüz Türkiye'siyle nasıl buluşur, 2500 yıl önceki olay bugün nasıl olur diye düşünerek, o hikayeden esinlenerek yazdığım bir metindi. Aslında temelinde çok belirleyici olan nokta var olan mitolojiler, hikayeler, söylemler bizim tiyatromuzda daha çok bedenle, bedenin ön planda olduğu bir oyunculukla dile geliyor.

BVB: Akşam oyununuz var, daha fazla zamanınızı almak istemiyorum.
Çok teşekkür ederim bana zaman ayırdığınız için.


UNITED KINGDOM
POLAND
BELARUS
GERMANY
BELGIUM
CZECH REPUBLIC
UKRAINE
SLOVAKIA
AUSTRIA
HUNGARY
SWITZERLAND
FRANCE
SLOVANIA
CROATIA
ROMANIA
BOSNIA
SERBIA
ITALY
BULGARIA
SPAIN
MACEDONIA
ALBANIA
TURKEY
GREECE

PERFORMANCE
PERFORMANS
VII

IMAGES: CONTAINERS AS SOCIAL LANDSCAPES

AYLWYN WALSH,
MYRTO TSIL &
ZOE MANTA

IMAGES: CONTAINERS AS SOCIAL LANDSCAPES /POST SHOW TALK
AYLWYN WALSH, MYRTO TSIL & ZOE MANTA
KADIKÖY THEATRON, KADIKÖY

With additional materials from: Kostas Avramidis & Georgia Moustaka

The project documents the impacts and implications of migration, and the neo-liberal crisis through photography, film and architectural design. The results are an eclectic mix of materials that speak to the scale of the flows and mobility of people in relation to the wider narratives of globalization and 'progress'.

Myrto Tsilimpounidi and Zoe Manta have considered the uses of containers in Athens in juxtaposition with the containment and detention of migrants passing through to other European countries; while Kostas Avramidis and Georgia Moustaka have posed an architectural design solution that reflects on the crisis in the Mediterranean sea as many migrant boats break and sink before reaching the destinations. Their located design is proposed for London's container city and will be presented for the first time in İstanbul.

Fotoğraf, film ve performansı buluşturan bu iş göçün ve neoliberal krizin etkilerini bir yaşam alanı olarak konteynerler üzerinden Avrupa bağlamında araştırıyor. Küreselleşme ve ilerleme anlatıları içindeki insan akışları ve hareketlerinin boyutlarını eklektik bir malzeme havuzu ile karşımıza çıkarıyor.

Myrto Tsilimpounidi ve Zoe Manta, Atina'da Avrupa ülkelerine geçmeye çalışan göçmenlerin kaldığı –tutulduğu– konteynerlerin farklı kullanımları üzerine düşünürken Kostas Avramidis ve Georgia Moustaka Akdeniz'de batan göçmen teknelerinin yarattığı krize mimari bir çözüm öneriyor. Birlikte yarattıkları tasarımlar Londra'da bir konteyner şehri için önerildi ve İstanbul'da ilk kez gösterilecek.

MYRTO TSIL: OK, so I think it's about time we introduced ourselves and what we do. I am Myrto and I am a sociologist, and I work with Ally as a colleague. I am stuck in the academy, being an academic, having all this data, not being able to do anything with it, and having to disseminate it in a specific way. All of this demands a different way of approaching a topic. So together with Ally I founded The Ministry of Untold Stories. And this is what we do, we find different ways of disseminating research. And then, with Zoe, I am part of the artist team based in Athens for the Containers Project. So I'm a sociologist and Zoe is a visual artist, and we work together too.

AYLWYN WALSH: My name is Ally Walsh, I'm a performance studies scholar. As Myrto said, we use the forms that we practice, our art forms, to engage with research and our studies. So this is the question that I wanted to start with: how can art practice, and the process of making art, attend to some of the difficult questions of our times? Things such as violence, state violence, or the kinds of things that are raised by our exhibition such as migration, and all the things that come before, including war. This would be my first question to pose to you and if anyone wants to respond that's great.



ONUR KARAOĞLU: Hello, I am Onur, I am a theater director, and I am working for the festival. From only a theater director's perspective the performance you made was really moving. I felt very much moved by it. It felt like you were speaking to us directly. It was so simple. You framed it as a lecture, but it was a

performance from my point of view. It made me think. At this time, the way you are dealing with these issues is sufficient, I think... Your performance is simple, you look directly at us and you speak. It's like starting some kind of conversation, some sort of dialogue, in a way. It's not a question it's a comment. I really like what you are doing in this form, and thank you for this.

AW: Thank you. I am going to respond a little bit and we can see if someone else has a question about that. Part of the reason we chose to present our work in this way was the sense of responsibility which accompanies a difficult topic such as state violence. How can we tell these stories, in art practice or on the theater stage, without creating a distance between the audience and the story? Without creating that specific kind of distance that lets you go, "Oh, but that's just one story of suffering." However, what the talk that Myrto gave as part of the performance was trying to do, and what I was trying to do by eating all those onions, was to say that state violence is not one story. It's not a story that is over there in the distance. It is a story that we are all a part of.

AUDIENCE: The sense that I got from the process I have just been put through was like being in church. It felt like a sort of liturgical process, as if a process of sanctification was going on. But I wasn't absolutely sure what was being sanctified. Of course I don't like being in church very much. [laughter] But my question is, what is it that is sacred? What are you sanctifying?

AW: I supposed that what the text Myrto reads is trying to say is that the only thing that can be sanctified is presence, mutual presence, and the body. Because other than that anything can be destroyed by violence.

MT: I think, sorry if I may interrupt, I think it speaks to other things as well. I come from a completely different perspective, I'm not an arts practitioner, I'm an academic. Whenever I have an audience I'm used to being the expert. Normally, I would be here and I would have a PowerPoint and I would parade all these images of suffering, and somehow people would expect that I am the expert. And because I'm Greek I would also be a representative figure of that country. But that is something that we wanted to move away from here. Coming from that background I felt that speech was not enough. How do you describe the dances of solidarity that we have seen in Athens? How do you describe different points moving in the central square, and the formations that are actually happening there? Do you agree with that?

AW: ... Yes.

MT: You can disagree.

AW: Shall we see if there were other questions? Or comments? Two in the front row!

AUDIENCE: I have a comment and a question. I'll give the comment first. It's about the onions. When you were eating the onions and they were making you cry it made me think of Susan Sontag when she talks about the power of images. To me the onions seemed to demonstrate your belief that there is no real way to "represent" other people's pain. And so I thought you went the other way and totally faked it by stimulating real tears. I thought that was really, really, smart and powerful. Because it still touched me, because you managed to convey how you felt helpless to con-

vey the pain of others.

And my question is, since your performance has a very didactic attitude, I was just wondering what your desired outcome might would be in an ideal scenario?

AW: Revolution!

[laughter]

AW: It's a great question actually. It's a really great question about where you place your work and how you find spaces to do this kind of work. People in the academy don't talk about it, they don't know what to say. They go, "Oh God I felt something so now I have to keep quiet because I don't know what to say!" But in art spaces it's different. This is why we wanted a conversation, and so it's really great that we have one. Here people are more used to articulating feelings and responses. The desired outcome is this possibility for dialogue about what questions the performance raises for you. We don't have a set solution to propose.

AUDIENCE: You sound a little bit shy about that—

AW: Oh no!

AUDIENCE: Well, I'm sorry perhaps you weren't shy, but do you see what I mean? You seem a little shy about it. A little bit, "Oh... well... um... it's... um... revolution...."

AW: Oh no! I mean this is the bottom line, it's revolution, you know?

AUDIENCE: Yes, yes.

AW: And some places, like here and in Athens, you can make a claim for revolution and people can understand it.

AUDIENCE: So you want people to join, you want this to add to that sense of a revolutionary process?

AW: Yeah.

AUDIENCE: So, to some extent, in the performance when we are asked to stand up and sit down we are praising this particular kind of revolutionary idea. Do you want us to actually "join" you somehow?

MT: That's an interesting question, because that's the whole thing. I get the didactic element of it, but basically you can do whatever you want—

AUDIENCE: Well I know that.

[laughter]

MT: The only thing we really criticize is the idea of a bystander. The person who actually experiences all these things and doesn't take a position. So that was the only thing we criticize. Basically it's a call for action, it's a call to stop turning a blind eye to certain things. We don't want to parade suffering but we do want to actually recognize that it exists. So those are two different standpoints. On the one hand we don't want it to be spectacular because spectacle is a completely different thing. Spectacle is the monopoly of big business, the state, and so on. But then on the other hand how do you communicate? How do you represent these kind of issues?

AW: Yeah I think also, just to mention, we've shown this in a few paces using this performance lecture format. And we noticed in the UK, for example, that there can be a very different way of engaging with action and participation.

MT: Can I just add one small thing.

We know that at this moment, with what just happened in Ankara last week, and with what is ongoing in Athens, that all these different things can be seen in what we do. So in a way we tried to bring everything together and say look, there is something here called systemic violence. Sometimes we just see the spectacle, we just see the sexy images because they are easy to grasp, easy to understand, you know? There is tear gas in the street: violence. There are cops splitting up anarchists or leftists: violence. But what happens behind closed doors? Or, what happens, on the street level, when someone just has a different performance and gets a weird look. Is that violence?

AUDIENCE: You've thought, you've obviously thought about this a lot. What's your best shot at how you resist violence? What have you got to tell us from the front line? What would you say? What story would you tell? How do you resist violence?

MT: You speak up. You take positions. I think that's the only thing.

AW: I think the moment where I give the onions to audience members and say, "You have the weapons of mass construction, either in your pockets, if you are carrying the anger in your pocket, or in your mouth." The idea is that we have the responsibility to make a constructive response to violence, everyday. And to be doing this in our own ways through words and through actions.

VAHID EVAZZADEH: I had a very practical question in the middle of this very revolutionary talk. I just want to know how this project and this exhibition came about?

AW: So I am a South African theater maker, I will say in exile from my own country. And I have been collaborating with Myrto for about five years. We have a collaboration that is an attempt to see how two disciplines and two approaches to knowledge and the world could have a conversation. It was always our intention to create dialogue, conversation, and sometimes argument. A lot of the time those things are kept very separate. What happens when they are not? This has been our approach over a couple of different styles of presentation. This process has led us to think about how we might broaden our conversation to include other practitioners. When we first came to Turkey, some years ago it was an amazing experience. We met some amazing colleagues and friends. Of course it takes time to make things happen and to raise money. This project came about because my university gave a grant which allows this project to happen in Athens, Istanbul and London.

MT: Can I justify containers a bit? And why shipping containers? So I'm from Athens, I lived in London, and I was visiting Istanbul. Three very different and very dear places. And slowly I was realizing commonalities. So I lived in London after the Olympic Games when no one could afford the rent anymore. Intellectuals and artists were forced to move outside the city. There was this new trend called container cities. It's still a container but it's hipster and it's trendy, so let's all go and live in a container and be amazing artists. So that was the idea in London, and we all thought, my god, what is happening here? And then when we came to Istanbul for a conference and we spent some days with our friends we realized that there was a similar story happening here. The story of the neoliberalization of space, of people not being able to afford their rent, of populations moving

in and out. So there was a battle here as well. And finally, Athens. Athens had the Olympic Games in 2004. During the preparations for the Olympics immigrants were coming into the country in containers because everyone knew they could have a job. So the amazing European profile of Athen's was built with cheap and illegal labor. Those same containers, eight years after the Olympic Games, are now being used as detention centers. So these places share a common protagonist: the container.

When you are think of containers, what is the word that comes to mind? Isn't it globalization? Global trade? The container is the protagonist of all that because it makes transportation costs minimal, so we can go to our supermarkets and have bananas from Ecuador and so on and so forth. But what are the by-products of this process of globalization? What happens when a container is not moving anymore? Who gets contained and who doesn't?

AW: I'm going to stop you right there because it sounds like you are doing a lecture right now.

[laughter]

BEN VAN BUREN: In the performance you outlined a concept of "stasis" as a possible answer to violence. I was hoping you might you talk a little more about what you mean by that. Is it a concept that you think about artistically as well as academically?

AW: This idea of stasis is something that has been taken up in light of the crisis. One way to think about it is not so much as stillness, but rather as the potential for further action that exists in stillness. This might be particularly useful in dance where stillness is never really simple stillness. It always punctuates further action, further movement. Also, to come back to our point about revolution, we can't always be active. Sometimes we need moments of full pause that still hold, within themselves, the possibility of something in the future. That is, a kind of breath, or a moment of gaining the power to move in a stronger way. I think this is where the idea becomes useful for both parts of our work.

AUDIENCE: Thank you very much for this work. My questions is about the reception of this work in Athens and here. Can you talk a little bit about differences and similarities? Because I want to challenge your vision of violence. This festival, I think, has made a really good move in the performing arts scene in Turkey, which, in my opinion is not violent enough. So is it possible to think about it from that perspective as well? To think about a necessary, or productive, violence?

AW: In Athen's people wanted to engage with their experience of state violence immediately. They wanted to engage right away and talk about their experience with state violence. That was my perspective.

MT: Yes. Thank you, that is a really interesting question. I'll speak for myself, I'm like you, I'm not a pacifist. I think we do need violent reactions, and yet, we were talking about state violence and that is something really specific. What I was trying to say during the performance is not that we don't need violence, but that we don't need to turn away, we need to react. I'm not saying we should exalt violence, or celebrate it. No. But how do we react to it? Our reaction can be violent as well, but can we re-define violence? Can it be something more constructive? All these questions are there in the piece, for me.

AW: There is a need for art to be violent in the face of where we are at right now in the world.

VE: I am trying to think about what feels uncomfortable here, trying to formulate it. It doesn't really have that much to do with art. This probably won't be a question, but more me attacking you as intellectuals.

AW: Excellent.

VE: I am wondering two things. One has to do with the question of violence, and if you have any alternatives to the police being violent. I live in a very peaceful country, and only very rarely do the police beat someone up in the street. But the only reason it doesn't happen often is because people are completely obedient, like robots. The police do not need to show muscle, but this doesn't mean they are not violent. So, why are you surprised that police are violent? The other thing relates to revolution. The other country I'm from, the Islamic Republic of Iran, had a revolution, an actual revolution. But the desire for revolution as we are speaking about it here, in many places, seems to me to be rooted in a lack of actual experience of what revolution means. So, even if revolution was a desirable outcome, how do you think that telling me things I already know in a damn basement in Istanbul is going to change the status quo and lead to that process?

MT: May I?

AW: Yeah, go!

[laughter]

MT: Thank you for that question. I was hoping someone would ask that. So number one I don't think that our performance tonight is going to cause a revolution. I'm not saying that we should go out there, and we should start the fight. So let's start with the obvious: there is no definition of revolution, it should always escape a definition, or resist a definition. So that is my first point. And secondly, when we ask the audience to stand if they have experienced state violence, I want to say thank you all for standing. We have been performing this mainly in the UK and people don't really realize that yeah, it's violence. It's not about the cops on the streets, it's not those spectacular moments.

VE: But I'm saying we all pay for them to be on the streets, to beat us up, to tear gas us, to hang us, and put us in dungeons. So why are you surprised?

MT: We aren't surprised. We were not presenting this piece like some big revelation. We are just saying the obvious, stating the obvious, to get people to understand that, "Wait, It's happening everywhere?" Exactly! And now what do we do? How do we move? Do we move towards action? What is action? What is revolution? Please give me your definitions, I don't have any.

AUDIENCE: Just to carry on from that, maybe this is not about revolution. I think Ally had a valuable question in the beginning. If art has the potential to initiate, or to be a part of social change, then how do these social wounds and art talk to each other? So I will ask this question: do you have any ideas, or strategies, for how to make this work reach different people, and how do you think you can measure its effect?

AW: I am going to jump right into that. Because the first thing that happens is that we are here, in a space, we have already come together as a group, and even if we are not like minded I would hazard a guess that most of us are not

of the fascist variety. This we can probably assume. Now, we might have a good experience here, we might have a good conversation, but it's not going to do that huge scale shifting of mindset that is necessary. And this is the reason why I wanted to make this project across different art practices. To see what possibilities emerge when you work in a different way. I am also interested in seeing how you can take certain kinds of practice into different communities beyond intellectuals and artists. So this is a really useful point. I'm not sure if we know yet, but yes the desire is there to take it out. But maybe there are some other ideas about how you can use art practices outside of their normal context? Because that seems to be the question of the day, if not the question of the year.

AUDIENCE: One starting point is having a dialogue. And I really wanted to thank you for giving us this opportunity, because this is often what I miss when I go to an exhibition or a play. Maybe afterwards I talk with friends, but it is not the same as all being together and hearing each other's opinions and exchanging ideas. I think this can be really powerful.

AUDIENCE: I think one way of bringing art and activism together is actually to take advantage of the power of organizing. Organizing people. Organizing organizations. I don't know how this would take place but if someone from a more privileged position were to help people to self organize... I don't know. The example I am thinking of is Thomas Hirschhorn's Gramsci Monument from two summers back, which was basically a project in which he created this spectacular setting within which people were teaching each other skills. A lot of people were skeptical of the project but I read really good things about it. I think this was a good example of how art and activism could come together.

MT: When Zoe and I were taking pictures in Athens we had to ask ourselves, what are we doing here? There is a crisis, what are we doing here taking pictures for ourselves? We didn't know if we could make those pictures a part of this project. It's too soon. We talked a lot about how to present those images in this forum, or whether or not we even want to present those images in this forum. And I think it has a lot to do with time.

AUDIENCE: I'd like to say that I am grateful to you as well. It strikes me that what you have sort of put your finger on is this passivity that is implied in the system. This system that seems to render us passive. But that isn't easy to recognize, and it's not an easy task to know what kind of action is needed to address that passivity. It's clear that reacting to violence could be simple and mechanical. We could react simply by physical violence, and that's often the case. But what's interesting about that situation is that it focuses on violence as something that only happens to the human body. And maybe that needs to be looked at in a different way. Because we all are aware, in principal, of what violence is from the point of view of the body. It breaks up the body and it causes pain. And obviously as sentient beings we want not to experience pain. But the other thing that we know about violence is that it breaks people up. It doesn't just break people, it breaks people up. It disperses people and it fragments people one from the other. It seems to me that that's why we look to art: to make connections. Because it's no good just going back to your home and thinking, "Well how can I possibly

do what I want to do during my day to change everything?" That's a dreadful responsibility. It's a question of trying to find situations in which you can move across difference and set up relations that build the possibility of something. That's what I have taken from what we've said today and it's very interesting. I'm trying to take away what one wants to take away from these sorts of conversations, which is something valuable.

PANEL DISCUSSION
PANEL TARTIŞMASI

OCTOBER 25TH, 2015
25 EKIM, 2015

BEN VAN BUREN: Greetings! I am excited to be joined on stage by a number of the artists from this first edition of A Corner In The World festival. Can we start with some introductory remarks from each of you? Perhaps you could describe the corner of the world you are coming from and give us a sense of what you are busy with in your work?

VAHID EVAZZADEH: Shall I start? My name is Vahid. I'm from the Islamic Republic of Iran, and I live in the Kingdom of Denmark. I am a filmmaker by profession that's my nine to five, even though I do it in other hours too. And then, when my Jekyll doesn't Hyde, I'm a theater director, for lack of a better word.

I think my corner of the world just follows me wherever I go. I don't have a solid base in the sense of belonging to a community that my work takes place in. I just move around, like a vagabond.

AYLWYN WALSH: A smart vagabond.

VAHID EVAZZADEH: Or a dumb vagabond, trying to do impossible projects within the mayhem of the real world. Which is my motive for being involved in what I do. Being stubborn and continuing on when I have every reason to say, "Fuck it, I don't want to be a part of it."

I quit school when I was very young. I wanted to become a movie star. I enrolled in an acting school. It was a lousy school but I learned two lessons there: A) I didn't want to become an actor anymore, and B) there was a guy there called a director and I wanted to become him. So I quit acting school and started directing a performance. From there on I have just always been involved in cinema, theater, and TV. When I was in Iran I belonged to the class of artists and intellectuals who circulated in the Iranian Third World environment. Meaning that I grew up having a kind of broad understanding of arts and culture in the global bourgeois sense. I was very well misinformed about the issues of the world. When I left Iran, went to Denmark, and ended up sitting in a refugee camp for two and a half years I realized that all of the things that I thought I knew about the free world were just a chunk of bollocks. I had to re-think anew my relationship to the world. So a new corner appeared from that darkness. All that is basically the background of my work.

In practical terms, I used to have an organization until about three years ago when we decided to shut it down to be able to think. And so we did. And we spent two years thinking. Then last year we decided to register a new legal entity called the Counter Institute. Now, we are still trying to figure out what this Counter Institute is. We know we are going to do three things: films, performing arts, and what we call intervention. Intervention meaning reacting and getting engaged with issues that matter to us regardless of the form that that reaction takes. Could be conferences, could be publication, could be movies, could be coming and burning your house down, depending on how pissed off we are about that particular issue.

ZINNURE TÜRE: So I am Zinnure Türe. I am an actress and have been living in Istanbul for a long time. I started making theater when I moved to Istanbul about fifteen years ago. I did my bachelor's degree in urban planning, and then I did my masters in acting. While I was studying urban planning I was also doing community theater in my university, and in some ways my focus has always been on a more physical approach to research. That's why I take some contemporary dance classes and do some circus stuff as well, instead of just focusing on classical theater.

What am I doing actually? For the festival I am also a part of the orga-

nizing team and I made a work for the festival with Lidia Cangiano. She is an Italian actress who lives in Berlin. Our focus was on eroticism, our experiences of some specific places, and the exploration of the body... We were searching for what eroticism means and how we can get rid of a patriarchal way of looking at eroticism. We wanted to ask how we can create an understanding of eroticism from the point of view of a women, let's say. We were investigating that and we have discovered so many things about it.

Usually I'm searching for connections. How art could be useful for us, and how we can get rid of the idea of just making an advertisement or a piece of simple entertainment. How can art make people come together? That's the question for me. I guess it's because I feel so lonely!—

[laughter]

[Mirza Metin joins the group on stage]

FG: Ah Mirza is here with us. Hello Mirza! Mirza didn't come to his own show because he was in Bursa performing, so this is the first time he is coming to the festival.

ZT: —But so many things happen in Turkey, And I like to be here. I like to work here. I love Istanbul. I know the people here and I know the problems. For me, my work just focuses on these problems. I know the problems of this region, this environment, so I try to suggest, try to offer, solutions for these problems. That's why in my works I like to focus on local things instead of talking about other places. That's my own preference. I plan to keep working as an actress, as a director, as a teacher, as a human being, as a neighbor, as a friend, as a lover, as much as I can. Because I don't think we will survive without it. Without coming together, without doing something. Even if we are struggling with our ego's—and as artists we have so much ego. I'm searching for all of that, and also trying to deal with my ego, and also trying to deal with my superficial artist's ideas. But I'm just working on that. So in the future, hopefully, I will find a way to be more wise.

AW: I'm gonna be kinda short. I'm from South Africa but based in the UK. I'm going to sound a bit apologetic about being an academic, because that's not the bit I want to be doing in my life. As an artist, my interest is in performance within social and community contexts. Most of my background as an artist has been working in prisons which I'm really happy to talk about. In recent years I have been focusing more on practice as research. That is, how an arts practice can both inform research and in itself be the research. And I'm writing something about that. I approach my academic side with an interest in radical pedagogies. Most of my interest at the moment is in working collaboratively. I'm sitting up here alone today, but yesterday I presented work as part of a team. I was up here yesterday with Myrto and Zoe, and we also worked with two architects, Kostas Avramidis and Georgia Moustaka, who haven't been in Istanbul at all during the festival. This is the background of what I am interested in. In terms of how I approach arts practice... As much as possible I try to work with others and build a sense of creative conversation.

YEŞIM COŞKUN: I am Yeşim. I am a dancer with Mezyopotamya dance company. I live in Istanbul and pursue my works here. Mezyopotamya dance is the only Kurdish dance company in Turkey. I have also worked with other companies as an individual. For me, my corner of the world is the country I live in. It's a very multicultural society, there are many different cultures living side by side. So it's relatively easy for some of us to feed off of other cultures and put this experience into our works.

When I start to do a project, or choose to perform in another project, the most important thing to me is to be able to meet another culture. In this festival I also, without realizing it, got in contact with different cultures. I worked with Vahid's actors for two days. I taught them some stuff, and we had a very special training session together. My work in the festival was *4 Kapi 40 Makam*. It is a work heavily based on my cultural background, my Alevi belief, and my experience of Sufi dance practices and rituals. When I worked with Vahid's actors on these themes we had a very interesting and spirtual two days. For me, the whole idea of the Corner In The World festival came together in the moment when I was suddenly working with a Chinese actor. He became a part of my corner in the world through sharing this work. This moment was very important to me.

I used to believe that because my background is in dance training that everything starts with movement. Maybe it also has something to do with our dance education in Turkey. But in the recent years I have started to shift my point of view. So my practice has shifted to not be only about the body and about movement, but also about relationships with different art forms, like theater, cinema, and performance. So for me the next step is to have more interaction with different forms, different disciplines, and still be able to include, and get in touch with different cultures through my work. Thank you.

MIRZA METIN: I am coming from Bursa, a very particular neighborhood called Nilüfer. I was performing there. It's like Europe, there are no problems, everyone is happy, it doesn't seem like it's part of Turkey. When I leave that city, the degree of happiness goes down. The degree of happiness there is 85.7 percent. And I took the happiness from there so I am smiling at you now.

I have this all the time. I get called into some panel, some discussion, and then I realize there are two sides of the conversation. I feel far from the festival because I have been in Bursa for a while rehearsing and performing. But two days ago a play that I directed was performed here, in this very space. I have only limited information about what happened with my piece and how the environment was, but I guess I have a corner here too.

I am doing theater in Kurdish, and when I started doing theater in my mother tongue it was banned in Turkey. I think my corner is a little too sharp. I think we tend to try to soften the sharp edges of our corner but then something else breaks and it becomes sharp again. I think Turkey is a very sharp corner in the world right now.

What I base my works on is what I have gone through and what I have witnessed. I am making work in response to the sharpness in this corner. In this country to create theater, and especially to create theater in Kurdish, is a form of rebellion. You don't have to take to the streets in our case. To produce work in Kurdish, even if the content is not at all political, is a political act.

Making theater in Kurdish grew up hand in hand with the Kurdish movement. Instead of developing political reflexes we are creating artistic reflexes and re-defining the idea of the political within our art works. I think Yeşim's work is an example of this. She is feeding off her cultural identity and creating a place for more political discussion. I'm also using older Kurdish storytelling techniques, and creating a practical method of working with this baggage. But as this artistic research is going on, in Turkey, there are massacres going on too. How do we share these stories with the audience? We also tell very contem-

porary stories, like the Gezi protests. I wrote a short play during Gezi and it was produced while the demonstrations were going on.

So, for me, my work is an ongoing process of research, and it is where the political and artistic reflexes sort of meet and talk to each other.

YC: One thing to add. When Gezi was happening it was possible to do something about it, right then. But for me it is a different story when you want to go to the South East of Turkey, the Kurdistan region, and try to do work there. Once I brought a project there and when I got there fighting was going on. The theater was a little damaged, and presenting the work was almost impossible. So when I go to Diyarbakır and I can't perform the distinction between stage and street sort of disappears. So for us, for those of us with this cultural identity, terms like theater and dance become a luxury.

ZT: This is really my question also, especially these past few years. What are the differences between Diyarbakır and Berlin and... Patagonia... and—

YC: Well, Istanbul and Diyarbakır are in the same country.

ZT: Yes, but you have touched on a really important point and I want to open it up more. When the festival began last Wednesday Lidia and I performed the opening show. The Saturday before that was the Ankara massacre. We needed to rehearse on Sunday but we couldn't do it. It would have been stupid to rehearse then. In this situation art is a luxury. I felt so stupid going to the studio and talking about eroticism or the body. It's bullshit, fuck that shit. You need time to digest what has happened. Everything is so new and... I have say something that is maybe too sharp ... Artists shouldn't touch something so fresh. After a certain point the time for art is over and it becomes the time activism, the time for politics, the time for doctors and lawyers... We need to face reality. And artists help people create distance from reality.

AW: I disagree.

ZT: OK! Just let me finish. Maybe I will change my mind in the future, but for now this is how I feel. When a baby is killed, for example, I don't want to see any art about it. I just want to mourn, and then to do something to stop it happening again.

AW: I agree that you don't want to be making an art practice about a corpse... But I am a little bit worried about two things: 1) the distinction you draw between art and reality, and 2) the kind of seriousness that you give to doctors and lawyers and humanitarian activists while suggesting that an art practice is sort of light and free and lacking the same kind of moral and ethical weight. I think that distinction comes when we think about art as an outcome and not as a process. We don't have to make a play, or write something down that is produced in light of a massacre. But, for some people the art practice, or the creativity if you like, is a part of survival. In the same way that having to make a claim for presenting work in your own language *is* the performance somehow. People in prison who are using creative innovation in order to survive, that's the performance. It is a performance of resistance that is about the self. The self in your community. Whichever degree of community that you perceive.

ZT: Maybe I need to be more clear about what I'm thinking. I am not thinking about creative reactions to disasters. During Gezi we had so much of that. I think there are some situations that are beyond our capacities as human beings to handle, and that's why we try to create a certain distance from the facts. But for us, we have so many genocides behind us, so many things we have to face, and with art we are just aestheticizing that. This is my question, how can we keep the reality and also speak artistically?

AW: I had a poetry professor, an amazing poet, and he was always asking how can the form of the work be what the work is about. This is great for poetry but I think it's also possible to apply to other art practices. How can the need for a period of mourning shape the work on the level of form? How can you take that and make something possible for yourself? If it's about healing, if it's about not aestheticizing, that could still be a thing that you do in an art practice.

VE: Well it was good to listen to you guys first, because if I had started earlier I would have said something different from what I am about to say. The idea that simply making work is rebellious is a condition that I am familiar with. I used to live in an environment like that. In Iran nobody of my generation was all that bothered by the content of the work, we just wanted to do theater. The mere fact of the possibility of social gathering without political prosecution was meaningful in itself. That context has changed for me, I live in Europe now, in one of the most free countries in the world in which I can basically do whatever I want as an artist. So, my reaction to your question, "Why art?" Or, "Does art do any good?" Is I don't think so. I think I have dealt with that delusion, overcome it, and concluded that this pouring of responsibility into whatever an artist wants to be in relation to our political, economic, and social issues is either simply naive, or, part of the charlatan game of bourgeois mentality. I meet a lot of artists, unfortunately—most of them are stupid, ignorant, and ill educated—and I see lots of works of art which are meaningless and poor in production and craftsmanship. I have a constant feeling of being in a cheap sleazy whorehouse whenever I am exposed to the art market. So I have actually very little to do with the whole charade. In my context in Denmark, where public funding is available, all of the talk about the importance of art, the importance of process, the importance of audience encountering meaning blah blah blah is bullocks. So part of my quest is to cut the bullshit and try to pretend as little as I can.

I want the activity itself to be meaningful. I have also cured myself of the need to express myself. I don't need to express myself. I need to change things In my life, in my surroundings, and within the vicinity of my powerlessness. My powerlessness in the social, political, and economical context is my motivation to create a corner of freedom that enables me to survive in a world filled with atrocity, stupidity, and indifference. Of course everybody "likes" posts about people dying in Gaza, but nobody really gives a fuck in the West. We are outraged with bad news, but it's just bad news. Everybody who has sent me an email in the past two or three weeks has asked me, "How's Istanbul? Is it safe?" I've felt pretty safe. I know atrocity is going on but I haven't been exposed to it, I'm an artist. I'm just living in an OK hotel, walking on quiet streets, and going into the studio. But if I was reading the news from afar I would probably have reacted like those who emailed me. The fact is that living in this virtual reality, this hyper reality, wherein the affairs of the world are somehow coupled with the self-designated importance of the Western universal man, is part of the total meaninglessness of artists. Artists, who somehow believe that it is their responsibility to express, if not to solve, the issues related to our lives. To me this is a dangerous thing. It is the very

basis of inaction. When this is happening in such comfortable contexts, in places where making a declaration is achievable, nobody takes any risks.

AW: I agree with you that there is a lot of shit out there. People are making a whole lot of meaningless crap because they fancy themselves as artists. And some people actually make money doing it. But at the same time, I suppose, when you are an artist you have to do it! That is what we have to respond to our world.

VE: There is a choreographer in Denmark who makes performances about his penis. He is well funded, and that's probably his reality. His life, his penis, and his art, are all related to each other in some absurd way. If, however, at some point he starts to think that he is being political, which at times I'm sure he does, that's where I have problems. Because he has a mortgage, he has a very expensive theater, he's always mourning his budget being cut by millions, and that sort of stuff. And that's what I have problems with. But if it's real, if it's your issue than fine, I just need to believe that.

BVB: Fatih, can I ask you to describe what prompted the organization of this festival?

FG: The idea behind this festival came out of a shared feeling that something was missing in Istanbul and in this region. Although we live very close to each other, not only in neighboring countries, but also here in Istanbul, we don't often meet. The first time that I met with Greek and Syrian artists and saw their work was in Berlin and Hanover, in Germany. It was really weird for me. These artists are so close culturally, historically, and geographically, but I never saw their works here. I don't go to their countries because there is a lack of funding, and the general idea is that they are even in another part of the world, another part of the Middle East. So with this festival we wanted to bring together works that don't usually come together. Of course Europe has the public resources to make festivals like this. But for us facilitating mobility was a big issue. When we started planning we realized that we basically needed to make the impossible possible. There was no money to bring a guy from Iran, or a piece from Lebanon, but we really wanted to try and see what we could do. And when we started to try, things actually became possible. I had no idea that we would have a two week festival like this. Things added up and became possible. It was a big surprise. We realized that if you have something in your mind, if you have a vision, then you shouldn't worry if it fits with the general conceptions of art, or the general conceptions of how people come together. You should just try to make it possible. For next year I am really excited that we might even be a bigger festival.

ZT: And also, it's really important to have had the experience of making this festival happen. It was the first experience for us. We went to so many places looking for funding, and we just got responses from so few of them. But now we know where to go, and which places to contact, and who our friends are. We are learning. We are all actors and directors, and writers and painters. We are not really experienced in dealing with big funding organizations.

ONUR KARAOĞLU: What I have liked the most about the festival is that after the shows thirty or forty people often stay for the talk back. We made sure to give a lot of importance to those conversations, which are very important to me at the moment. So I wanted to ask the artists here today, how can we go on with this communication? In Istanbul it is important to practice this. We don't talk after presenting work, and it's one of the great aspects of this festival for me.

VE: I think it is extremely important. But in fact, in terms of us, in this festival, I had an expectation that we would have more interactions than we did. For example, I am surprised to learn about the lack of experience in fundraising. Why haven't we sat down one evening and talked about that? So I would like to pose the question a everyone: what does fundraising really mean? For you. What is it? In Denmark, for example, it means you send out an application and sit back and wait.

AW: I'll talk about the work that brought me here, which was funded by my university. You make it sound so easy, "Send out an application and sit back and wait." It takes a lot of work to get that application ready! I've done something like fifteen applications so that we can make our project bigger, none of which have yet been successful. I think from my side it's about finding money for research, because there is a lot of money for research in Europe right now. Big big budgets of millions of euros. So if I can harness some of that money to help pay artists, that's my plan. We'll see.

ZT: We don't have money and you cannot apply for anything here so all you can do is find some people who you trust, who you want to work with, and work with them. We sell tickets, we sell drinks, and that's the only money we are getting. So everybody is trying to survive by doing other things, like teaching or working somewhere else, and they spend what they earn on making theater.

VE: Is there really no money for any sort of theater here? Or is there just no money for your sort of theater here? There has got to be some public funding somewhere.

ZT: Yeah, there is money from the cultural ministry and they are giving it to some theater companies, but it is a tiny amount and it was cut even more after Gezi.

VE: I have one more question for all the Turks, but particularly for you festival organizers. Some of us in the festival came here from other countries, is it possible for you to use this international presence when appealing to whoever has public funding? Can we use our international presence to show solidarity and start to make a space to do art differently here?

OK: I think this festival is a moment in that process. But it doesn't happen in the short term, it happens in the long term.

VE: So how can you do that? You were asking how this communication could go on. Why don't we actually talk about real possibilities and make a plan of action.

OK: It's a good idea.

VE: Why don't we carry that out?

YC: There could be a mailing list. So before the festival I could be writing to the participants, and while the festival is going on the list can grow. But as you well know, in the Middle East it is very difficult to find funding. Private theaters and dance companies have no chance. There is no dance funding, it's too much of a luxury. The municipalities used to have small funds, but in the last two or three years they have disappeared. So let's say I'm doing a project and I need four-thousand Lira for the music. I don't have the luxury of applying for funding. So I go to Vahid, I got to Zinnure, I go

to Fatih and I ask them to do some shows, and the money we collect from there gets used for my project. In the recent years this is the kind fundraising that most of us have been using. Fundraising as solidarity. Solidarity as fundraising. It's a good thing on the one hand, because it creates a community of solidarity, but it also lowers the professional level of your work, I think. When you fundraise like this for a long time you start to lose something... It looks like you are always asking for things.

MM: You owe everybody all the time.

[laughter]

ZT: But I would also say that has something to do with Turkey being in-between everything. We don't know what kind of country we are. Is it European? is it Middle Eastern? Is it Balkan? We don't know. It's really a bastard. Which I like. We are really between East and West. So we have traditions, but we are also trying to adapt to Europe, to our Western side. So when we ask for solidarity I think it is coming from a particular sense of tradition. For example, when you have a wedding ceremony you ask people to gather and you make a meal. It's tradition. And If someone is hungry you feed them. You don't question it. It's tradition. On the other hand we are trying to get involved with Western society, and the European Union, and all those things. So we are stuck in-between. Of course we need solidarity within our arts community, but we also feel guilty about asking for things. I think this guilt is coming from the Western side of things. Why should we feel guilty? It's stupid to feel guilty. This is our reality and we need to help each other.

MM: That's a good point, and I think the community here is beginning to change. There are many new theaters in Istanbul. Downstairs, in apartments... There are hundreds of small spaces. Not only spaces for theater but for other art forms as well. There is no money. The state has closed down much larger theaters and cinemas, but these small spaces keep multiplying. It looks like there is a resistance. And this resistance looks like it is turning into solidarity. In the beginning of this wave of new theaters audiences were responding very positively. But in the last couple of years the audience has begun to shrink, and as a result the artists have begun to talk about how we need to transform somehow, or else this new generation of artists will die off. We have made some meetings... We have discussed the eight percent tax taken from all registered theaters and how we don't want to pay it.... We aren't a trade, we don't run a commercial business, we aren't making money.

Furthermore, the relationship between theater people and organizations can sometimes be problematic. Our relationship with NGOs and other entities are generally weak, and we need to examine this to start to think about how to create the conditions for the next ten to fifteen years. How do we see ourselves growing? How do we want to make art in this country? We need to be activists for our own jobs and create the environment for the future.

BVB: How would you describe the work of those artists who are in danger of, as you say, dying off? How have you seen these changing conditions shape their work?

MM: It is turning into something that is consuming itself. These alternative "scenes" as you might call them are always asking for help, and it is always the same people doing the asking. There is always this idea of asking for help. And not only for productions, but also for starting your own theater, or your own space.

YC: From a certain point onwards you are not working to create another project but to survive.

MM: This can't go on. We need to find a better way to focus this energy, and find a better situation where we can get more funding.

YC: But you were asking about specific projects right?

BVB: Yes.

MM: I think that the type of space effects the work quite a bit—

YC: I think that the current limitations sometimes produce work that all looks the same.

BVB: How so?

YC: Think of a country where there is a massacre every two weeks. Before we can digest the first tragedy something else happens. The agenda of artists is being dictated by this in some way. The topics of many different works can start to appear similar. But while the topics are the same, the artistic levels and the level of production are different. There is, as Vahid said before, a lot of bullshit work, but there is also a lot of really strong work.

VE: I want to answer the question based on the works I have seen in this festival. What I observe is that there is a disparity between the ideas and the technical craftsmanship. In a very practical sense, the ceilings of many of the spaces I have been in are very low, and you can't do anything about that. And there has been almost no scenography. The biggest scenography was in Onur's piece, which was still almost an empty room. So I think, regardless of the quality of the work the real conditions of the space are imposing something, which to me seems to limit the potential of the ideas.

ONUR KARAOĞLU: I think those limitations are everywhere. There is Kathryn, for example who lives and produces work in Europe and in New York which are places with other kinds of limitations. I think the physical limitations are one aspect of what you are talking about, but there are also mental limitations that might be unique to being here in Turkey. I think that those two kinds of limitations, physical and mental, are always coming together and effecting the work being made anywhere.

VE: Yeah, that's what I mean. And you are right, it could be anywhere in the world, it doesn't have to be here. When you are where conditions are limited and resources are scarce you are maneuvering in that.

MM: I don't think everybody wants to use bigger resources to create their art. I'm working on storytelling so I'm looking for venues which are more appropriate to that.

AW: I think we are getting stuck on what we think theater *should* look like, or what aesthetics *should* be. It doesn't have to be like that. An action in a prison that is completely bare of any aesthetic but that somehow transforms the space is something else. Of course we all have to work with the limitations of resources, funding, and so on, but we can chose how those things get manifested in terms of aesthetics. And sometimes that can make the need for innovation really great.

VE: I think, again, from my brief observation of the works at the festival, I think the biggest challenge is time. In order to actually be able to challenge the standard, the status quo time is of the essence.

FG: I think time is really an issue for the festival as well. Our biggest limitation as a festival has to do with time. For example, most of the festival artists couldn't be here for this discussion because they are rehearsing, or they are working somewhere else. What you learn when you talk to these people individually is that the most difficult thing for them is finding time to rehearse, finding the time to come together and do something. So more than the space, I would say time is the biggest challenge. I think that finding funding to get time is more important than finding funding to get lights, costumes, and all that.

OK: This is somehow an experimental theater festival. Would anybody object to me saying that? No? OK. So next time around maybe the people are making the festival, not the artists making the festival. There is a form that could be invented for this. We are all familiar with the idea of experimenting within the tradition of theater, but I think we could push ourselves to experiment with the way a festival is organized. Maybe the organization has to be as specific as possible to be as strong as possible, but maybe not. I don't think we need that any more.

FG: Don't need what?

OK: I think maybe we need precision in the works, but maybe not precision in the organization? Maybe it's about simply gathering together and discussing something. We can be as cooperative as possible, but we can also disagree. Maybe we are simply motivated to come together and make a festival somehow, rather than curating artists who present work in a festival. I think this could be another level. This could be a festival in the future.

AUDIENCE: I was curious to hear you speak about your relationship with audience. Are you interested in numbers? Are you interested in a certain type of audience?

VE: I'm interested in numbers, maximum twenty.

AUDIENCE: Per performance?

VE: Yes.

YC: I'm not interested in the number of audience. I am more interested in reaching to furthest possible corner in the world.

AUDIENCE: What do you mean by the furthest corner?

YC: I have been to Europe and performed in Europe, and I have been to the furthest corner of Turkey and performed where there was no building, no stage. I have performed for an audience that had never seen dance before. For me, the wider the variety of audiences from different cultures the better. Because everybody has a different view of art.

MM: I think very similar to her, but it can also change project to project.

VE: The number issue was an inside joke. But I am very interested in encountering people from outside the artistic circle.

AUDIENCE: That's a challenge. What is your strategy to accomplish this?

VE: I try to refrain from making performance type performances. I do research projects that involve more practical research, that are more academic. Following those projects are usually a number of spectators not from the art world that come visit us. I am very interested in seeing how people with no direct artistic involvement react to the issues I am dealing with.

ZT: I really like to meet people by chance. On the street, for example. And when it is possible I like to meet with people who are not a traditional theater audience. People who are not paying for a ticket, and who are not coming to a performance consciously. It can be done with site specific performances and street theater, which I have worked on and continue to work on. I work as a storyteller as well, and I like it a lot because I can just go somewhere and start to tell my story. You don't need anything. You don't need costumes, you don't need resources. It's just you and your soul and you go and start to perform.

VE: Can I add a little confusion to your question? A few days ago Ben asked me how I measure the success of what I do. I try not to think about the spectators when answering that question, but at the same time there is an encounter with other people which is extremely important. So while the kind of work I'm doing is not dependent on the eyes of the outsiders it does find a different kind of existence once that encounter happens. I don't know why it is successful sometimes and I can't figure out what is lacking other times. I just know that there is this issue of relevance. Beyond the subject matter, topic, content, whatever, the gathering should feel relevant. If it doesn't it's just a wet handkerchief.

FG: Yeşim needs to leave.

BVB: And I am afraid we are running over time and have to cut this conversation short—

YC: Thank you all, I have enjoyed being a part of this platform and this conversation.

[applause as Yeşim leaves]

FG: Quickly, from the festival, I just want to say a couple last things. First of all, it been a real learning experience for us. It's been wonderful—beyond our expectations. Starting with the artists here, they all believed in this idea and that is why they are here. They agreed to come and make their performances under very limited means. Also a big thank you to the performance spaces, like Theatron and the ten other venues that we are using in the festival. They are all helping to make this possible. So thanks again to them. We are very grateful to them. And, as Onur was saying, we will be continuing to make this not only something that belongs to us but something that more people can embrace and help make possible. Next year we hope to include more people in the organization and more people from more parts of Turkey and more parts of this region. OK. Thank you all for coming today.

[applause]





CONCERT
KONSER
V

SABA BARADA

The group was formed in 2014 by Syrian musicians fled their country and took shelter in Turkey, "Saba Barada" performed in both Gaziantep and Antakya.

The group plays both Arabic songs and pure music of their compositions as well as from their tradition as they come from various heritage backgrounds of Syria. Their compositions talk about the hope emerging from the sorrow, the life trying to defeat the death.

They focus on performing for all audience Syrians Turks and international to show that Syrians are like everybody else looking for production, fun and life.

WASSIM MUQDAD: oud
ALHARITH ALSALEH ALABID: oud and vocal
MAHER KAT: percussion

2014 yılında ülkelerinden kaçarak Türkiye'ye sığınan Suriyeli müzisyenler tarafından kurulan Saba Barada, şu ana kadar Gaziantep ve Antakya'da çaldı.

Grup Arap şarkıları ve kendi bestelerinin yanı sıra üyelerinin ait olduğu Suriye'deki farklı müzikal geleneklerden esinlenen bir repertuvar sunuyor. Bestelerinde keder içinde filizlenen umut ve ölümü yenmeye çalışan yaşam temaları belirgin olarak var.

Hem Türkiyeli, hem Suriyeli hem de uluslararası bir kitleye hitap etme amacındaki grup üretim, eğlence ve hayat dolu bir Suriye'yi bizlere hatırlatıyor.

WASSIM MUQDAD: ud
ALHARITH ALSALEH ALABID: ud ve vokal
MAHER KAT: perküsyon









CONCERT
KONSER
VI

VOMANK

The band Vomank [Arm. Others, a Few] is based in Istanbul, an important center of Armenian culture. As a self-proclaimed alternative band, Vomank expresses itself in its mother tongue but incorporates aspects of its location in Turkey. It gains inspiration from traditional Armenian music but takes a more alternative approach to its interpretation.

Vomank has a wide music repertoire, which includes well known traditional songs of Anatolia that are sung with similar melodies but in different languages by people that were or are living there. Vomank has its own compositions in Turkish and Armenian and also has works inspired from the poems of Tanyel Varujan, an important figure of Armenian literature.

Vomank's aim is to narrate the present story of Anatolia and other lands in which Armenian culture used to and still exists, and to meld the past and the dream of the future together.

LARA NARIN: vocal
SARO USTA: keyboard
ÖZCAN GÜL: duduk
ARI HERGEL bass guitar
İLKEM BALSEÇEN: drums
İBRAHIM ODAK: electric guitar
RUPEN MELKISETOĞLU: clarinet

Vomank (Kimileri), Ermeni kültürünün önemli merkezlerinden olan İstanbul'da bir araya geldi. Kendini alternatif müzik grubu olarak tanımlayan Vomank, günümüzde 'azınlık' haline gelmiş bu kültürün müziğinden ve dilinden, yaşadığı yeri ve dünyayı anlatmaya çalışıyor. Bunu yaparken geleneksel Ermeni müziğine yakın duruyor ama onun sınırları dışında da dolaşıyor.

Vomank geniş bir repertuar yelpazesi sunuyor: Bir kısmı bu coğrafyada çok iyi bilinen ve farklı dillerde de söylenen geleneksel ezgiler; Arto Tunçboyacıyan, Sayat Nova ... gibi Ermeni müziğinin önemli müzisyenlerinden eserler; Tanyel Varujan ... gibi şairlerin şiirleri üzerine yapılan beste çalışmaları ve söz – müziği Vomank'a ait olan Türkçe ve Ermenice özgün eserler.

Beste ya da cover ne icra ederse etsin, Vomank geçmişin hikayesini ve geleceğin hayalini bir arada tutarak bugünü anlatma gayreti içinde...

LARA NARIN: vokal
SARO USTA: keyboard
ÖZCAN GÜL: duduk
ARI HERGEL bass gitar
İLKEM BALSEÇEN: davul
İBRAHIM ODAK: elektro guitar
RUPEN MELKISETOĞLU: klarnet




ISTANBUL

PERFORMANCE
PERFORMANS
IX

KURTULUŞ'TA OTURUYORUM

MIHRAN TOMASYAN &
SARO USTA

KURTULUŞ'TA OTURUYORUM/POST TALK SHOW
MIHRAN TOMASYAN & SARO USTA
ARAMYAN UNCUYAN DERNEĞI, MODA

This performance is about the music we grew up listening to, singing and playing, loving and discovering. It takes the first baby steps now.

It is about the songs that we danced to and sang at the top of our voices, lyrics that touched us in Istanbul, in Beirut, in Paris, Los Angeles, Montreal, Buenos Aires, Sao Paolo, in Kairo. Songs that maybe we stopped singing now, but nevertheless songs that made us who we are.

Cassette recordings, archival sounds, clichéd songs, maybe halays, a bit of live music and dance, and on top of that all: color!



Bu gösteri denemesi; dinleyerek, söyleyerek, çalarak büyüdüğümüz, sevdiğimiz ve keşfettiğimiz müzikle ilgili. Daha çalışma aşamasında, bebek adımlarını atıyor.

İstanbul'da, Beyrut'da, Paris'de, Los Angeles'da, Montreal'de, Buenos Aires'de, Sao Paolo'da, Kahire'de ve birçok şehirde bilinen ve içinde bilmeden dans ettiğimiz ve avaz avaz söyleyerek büyüdüğümüz, sonradan sözlerinin derinliğine indikçe şaşırdığımız belki de artık söylemekten vazgeçtiğimiz, bizi şekillendiren şarkılarla ilgili.

Kaset kayıtları, arşiv sesleri, bükülen ve klişeleşmiş şarkılar, belki halaylar, biraz da canlı müzik ve dans, bi de renk tabii!

FATIH GENÇKAL: Festivalde bütün gösterilerden sonra sanatçılarla bir sohbet gerçekleştiriyoruz. Bu bizim için festivalin önemli bir parçası. Hem seyirciler ile sanatçıların buluşması için hem de konuşmak istediklerimizi konuşmak için bir fırsat bu. Nasıl başlamak istersen öyle yapalım Mihran.

MIHRAN TOMASYAN: Sizin sorularınız, merak ettiklerinizle başlamak daha iyi olur.

SEYIRCI: Kurtuluş? [Oyunun festival broşüründeki adı Kurtuluş'ta Oturuyorum'dan bahsediyor.]

MT: Sen verdiğimiz yazıyı okumadın galiba. [Ekip, seyircilere dağıttığı yazıda projenin çalışmaya başlarkenki ismi olan Kurtuluş'ta Oturuyorum'u sonunda çıkan işi yansıtmadığı için değiştirmeye karar verdiklerini ancak henüz yeni bir isim bulamadıklarını söylüyor.]

SEYIRCI: Bir Dağ Hikayesi isim olarak 10 numara 5 yıldız bence.

MT: Onu şu yüzden istemedik: Gösterinin ismi Bu Bir Dağ Hikayesi olsaydı ve sen geldiğinde ben yere Bu Bir Dağ Hikayesi yazsaydım çok etkili olmazdı. Şu an hala gösterinin ismini arıyoruz. Bu Bir Dağ Hikayesi uzun süre gündemimizde yer tuttu ama sonra bu nedenden dolayı koymadık. Kurtuluş'tan bölümler de gördün yani?

SEYIRCI: Kurtuluş'ta yaşayan insanlardan.

SEYIRCI: Kurtuluş'u neden değiştirmek istiyorsunuz?

MT: İşin artık o isme çok cuk oturduğunu düşünmüyoruz. Ama sen diyorsan ki olur, düşünelim.

SEYIRCI: Çok güzel bir işti, elinize sağlık. Müzikler bu iş için özgün olarak mı tasarlandı?

SARO USTA: Evet. Zaten kullandığımız birkaç şarkı geleneksel orijinal şarkılar. Onları biraz efektleme yoluyla bozduk. Onların dışındakiler de birlikte doğaçlarken çıkan pasajlar.

MT: Aslında yola çıkarken müzik üzerinden düşünerek yola çıkmıştık. Geleneksel müziğe nasıl dokunabiliriz? O biraz dokunulmayan bir yerde duruyormuş gibi. Sonra doğaçlamalarla şimdilik buraya vardık ve bence iş devam ediyor. Daha bitmedi.

SEYIRCI: Şu an işi evriltme alanınız nedir? Mesela malzeme anlamında farklı birşeyler düşünüyor musunuz? Yoksa kağıt malzemesi sizce doğru mu?

CEM YILMAZER [gösterinin ışık tasarımcısı]: Pardon araya giriyorum ama, bu malzeme zaten Mihran'ın 3-4 senedir takıldığı bir malzeme.

MT: Kağıt ve plastikle uzun süredir çalışıyorum. Kağıtta geldiğim son nokta bu! (Seyirci güler.) Ama daha da gidecek çok yolu olduğunu da görüyorum. O yüzden de çok bittiğini düşünmüyorum.

SEYIRCI: Adamın imza materyali! (Gülüşmeler)

SU: Kağıt biraz her seferinde farklı bir hissiyat veriyormuş gibi oluyor ama aslında belli bir yol da sunuyor bize sürekli. Çok büyük sürprizler değil ama sanki her çalıştığımızda farklı fotoğraflar görür gibi oluyoruz.

MT: Kontrol edemiyorsun. Bu arada bir sürü farklı kağıtla denedik, craft kağıt falan. Kalktığı zaman dağ gibi duruyor-durmuyor, yırtılıyor-yırtılmıyor vs. En son –ve tabi ucuz olduğu için- bunu seçtik.

SEYIRCI: Sizce ışık biraz daha parçası olabilir mi bu işin?

MT: Hemen orada oturuyor bak ışıkçı arkadaş! Çaprazına bak. Cembir!



CEM YILMAZER: Olabilir tabi. Biz de hala bu iş bitti demedik sonuçta! Her gittiğimiz yerde bulduğumuz bir delikten ışık verme derdindeyiz. Burada da o kapı vardı. Zaten teknik olarak çok mükemmel bir yerde değiliz. Bu fikri başka yerlerde de uygulayacağız.

MT: Fikrimiz bu gösteriyi yaptığımız yerlerde ışığın dışardan gelmesi. Ana fikir bu. Burada da elimizde bu kapı vardı. Her gittiğimiz yerde acaba bulabilir miyiz böyle dışarda, spotun gözükmediği bir yer?

SEYIRCI: Ben özür dileyerek sanırım ilk kez izledim sizi, en azından uzun bir zaman sonra. Kağıdı o yüzden ilk defa gördüm ve çok heyecan vericiydi. Muhteşem bir duygu yaratıyordu. İki ayrı yoldan etkilendim aslında, o çok güzeldi. İki farklı şey: birincisi hikayesi. Bende çok net bir hikaye oluştu ve o çok keyif vericiydi. Ama bir yandan da bundan bağımsız o kağıdın hareketinin verdiği o plastik zevk muhteşemdi. Elinize sağlık. Ben ışığı da çok beğendim bu arada. Bu salonda çok şey izledim. Oradan ışığın gelmesi beni çok heyecanlandırdı. Helal olsun dedim.

MT: Sağol canım. Aslında bu mekanı seçmemin, derneğe gelip istememin nedeni şu boş alandı. Kağıdı rahat serip içinde oynayabileceğim. Yine de çocukların üstüne çıktım bir yerde.

SEYIRCI: Bizimkiler için gidip bir dans gösterisi izlemenin heyecan verici bir şey olabileceği alt metni oluştu kafalarında, bence çok güzel oldu. Çok eğlendiler.

SEYIRCI: Bir parçası oldular çocuklar.

MT: Evet, dağın etrafında. Başka aklına bir şeyler gelen?

SEYIRCI: Siz Kurtuluş olarak düşündüğünüzde ne vardı kafanızda da sonra değişti, artık Kurtuluş değil dediniz?

MT: Aslında çok bir şey yoktu. Saro'yla biz çocukluk arkadaşıyız ve bir sürü şeyi beraber yaptık ama bu anlamda bir gösteri kurmayı –en azından 20li yaşlarımızdan sonra çok zaman geçirdik ama- böyle bir şey yapmayı denemedik. İkimiz de Kurtuluş'luyuz ve muhtemelen Kurtuluş'ta devam edecek hayatımız gibi duruyor. Ben Saro'ya gittiğimde ya da o bana geldiğinde genelde hep müzik dinleriz, müzik konuşuruz. O yüzden de daha hiç prova yapmadan bu iş daha otobiyografik bir yerden, Kurtuluş, dinlediğimiz şarkılar, geçtiğimiz sokaklarla ilgili olsun dedik. Ama ne olabileceğini bilmiyorduk. Fatih bizi sürekli arayıp hadi isim verin isim verin diyordu. (Gülüşmeler) Açıkçası böyle oldu, en son Kurtuluş'ta Oturuyorum olsun dedik. Ama ilk provadan onun olmayacağı belli oldu. Böyle de rezil olmuş oldum gibi bir şey oldu aslında yani.

SU: Fatih'e teşekkür ediyoruz.

FG: Kurtuluş fotoğrafı bulana kadar anam ağladı.

MT: Hatta o kadar fotoğraf istedi yollamadım, sonra kendi google'dan bulmuş koymuş. O hatıra olarak saklayın dediği kitapçık öyle oldu yani. (Gülüşmeler)

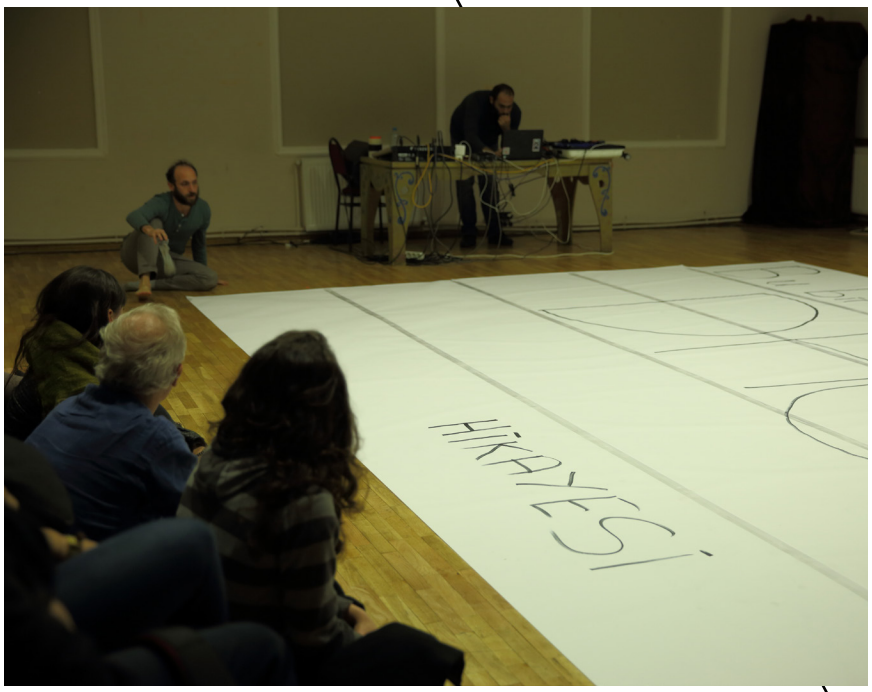
SEYIRCI: Ben ona katılmıyorum. Biyografilerin iç içe geçmesiyle alakalı olabilir. Liseden arkadaşlarım Saro'yla Mihran benim. Ama ondan evvel ben burada doğdum büyüdüm. Bu sahnede ilk şarkımı söyledim. O anlamda aslında çok ilginç bağlantılar kurdum. Kurtuluş'ta Oturuyorum aslında tam da bir dağ hikayesi oldu benim için. Çünkü ben tam da bu sahnede ilk Ermenice şarkımı söylemiştim vs. Sizin de çocukluğunuzdan bugüne gelen şeyler vs. –bilmiyorum, belki biraz da etnomüzikolog deformasyonu. Sizin biyografileriniz,

benim biyografim, bu sahne ve dağ öyle bir hikaye oluşturdu ki ağladım aslında. Başka bir okumayla belki bana değdi. O açıdan da açıkçası biraz da şunu sorguladım: Kurtuluş'ta, Kadıköy'de birbirimize değen hayatlar, bu mekan, Saro'yla Mihran burada ne yapıyorlar şu anda, 2015'teyiz neredeyiz, uçmak gitmek falan, hakikaten çok çok duygulanmış durumdayım.

SU: Aslında bu bizim çalışma sürecinde yaşadığımız...

MT: Konuştuğumuz...

SU: ...meselelere, yaşadığımız sıkıntılara da sinyal veriyor. Öyle bir şey oluyor ki ne yapsanız, sonuçta Ermeni müziği içinde ne yapsanız bir tarafı bir yere dokunuyor ve bir şey bir şey oluyor. Ya da ben hiç bu tarafından düşünmedim işi ama bu söylediklerin çok güzel yerlere



gitmiş ama üretirken bizi kısıtlayabiliyor, geri çekebiliyor. Çok klişe bir örnek olarak söyleyelim: İki Ermeni Bu bir dağ dediği zaman Ararat olur o yani. Burada da görüldüğü üzere. Dağdan kaçmamızın bir sebebi de bu.

SEYIRCI: Ben konuyu okumadım ama ben de Ararat'ı hayal ettim. Sembolik olarak oradan dağılan, özgürlüğe kavuşamayan, hala dağ gibi problemleri sırtında taşıyan, küçük küçük özgürlükler bulup yine de torbalara tıkılan bir Ermeni toplumunu hayal ettim dansınızda ve etkilendim. Herkeste başka bir şey. Konuyu onun için okumadım, bakalım ne verecek bana diye.

MT: Buna kesinlikle katılıyorum, ben de böyle bir okuma yapıyorum. Ama aynı zamanda dağın bugünden okuduğumuz zaman bugüne de bir gönderme yaptığını düşünüyorum. Kendi adıma. Ona Cudi Dağı desem de bu sefer hikayeyi başka türlü okuyabilirim ve yine sanki o torbaya girermiş gibi bir tarafı da var. Ama aynı hislerle.

SEYIRCI: Kurtuluş olmasaydı daha genel düşünebilirdik.

MT: O olmayacak.

ONUR KARAOĞLU: Başka kağıdın üzerine yazdığın, çizdiğin şeyler var ya onunla ilgili konuşmak ister misin? Ben Hikaye kısmını okuyabildim, baya arkada oturuyordum.

MT: Oraya Bu Bir Dağ Hikayesi yazıyorum. Bunu da çok konuştuk, yazalım-yazmayalım. İki üç tane şöyle prova yaptık: Bu Bir .... Hikayesi. Çünkü belki başka izleyen için belki bu bir emek hikayesi, onur hikayesi...

SEYIRCI: Çok açık aslında.

MT: Evet. Ama sonra da bu kadar dağ üstüne konuşup, dağ üstüne çalışıp yazmamak olmaz, hadi yazalım dedik.

SEYIRCI: Mihran, dağ kadar olup da ignore edilen şeyler var ya. Konuştukça da şu noktaya geldim. Bu bir dağ değildir. Hani, bu bir pipo değildir gibi. Bu bir dağ değildir yazıp, projenin adını da Dağ Hikayesi yapmak. Dağ hikayesi ama bu bir dağ değil.

MT: Sen ismi bulmaya çalışıyorsun.

SEYIRCI: İstem dışı!

MT: Biraz da tabi, Ararat üstünden gidersek, garip bir cümle olabilir, sonra bunu kişisel olarak ayrı konuşabiliriz isteyenlerle, bu dağla ilgili garip bir durum var, aslında onunla da ilgileniyorum ama onu ayrı söylerim. Çocuklar var şimdi.

SEYIRCI: Ben şeye takıldım, dağdan çok: dağ ilk gördüğümüz ve Ararat, tamam. Sonrası beni ilgilendirdi. Kuşun gitmek isteyip gidememesi, geri dönmesi, sanki ortada manyetik bir alan var da ondan kopamayışı ilgimi çekti. Tam da bugün bienali gezdim. Rum okulundaki işlerde de sürekli bir gitme, o göçmenlerin durumu, gitmek istemiş ama bir şekilde gidememiş, ya gemi batmış ya bir şey olmuş, tuzlu su falan. İkisi üst üste gelince ben hep gitme tarafına takıldım. Gitme-gidememe. Yani dağdan çok oralara gitti benim kafam.

ÇOCUK SEYIRCI: Dağ oluyor, sonra parçalanıyor. Kar mı eriyor? (Gülüşmeler)

MT: Yok, bence... Kar eriyor olabilir evet. Hayır demek olmaz çünkü.

SEYIRCI: Kutupların erimesi.

MT: İklim değişikliğiyle ilgili bir gösteriydi. Hepinizi kandırdım. (Gülüşmeler) Ama kar olarak da okusak güzel bir yerlere gidebilir bu arada. Tamam o zaman ben şöyle bir şey de sorayım,

bizim için iyi olabilir feedback olarak. Benim tıkandığım ve bu aralar geçmeye çalıştığım bölümlerden bir tanesi de siyah çöp torbasının o dağı yuttuktan sonra, ya da çöp torbasına dağı tıktıktan sonra...

ÇOCUK SEYIRCI: Belli ki acıkmış. (Gülüşmeler)

MT: Kesinlikle. Sonra onun delinmesi. Orayla ilgili bir şeyleriniz var mı?

Onur: Orada bizle ilk defa çok ciddi ilişki kurdun ya. Bana o, oradaki hikayeyi kırıyormuş gibi geldi. Belki o eylem kendi dünyasında kalabilirdi. Hiç bakmayabilirdin seyirciye.

SEYIRCI: Eğer biraz daha battal boy bir çöp torbası olsaydı ben bütün hepsiyle beraber içine gireceğini düşündüm.



MT: Yok, halaya mendil taşıyacak birisi lazımdı.

SEYIRCI: Bugünü varsayarak izledim ben bütün gösteriyi ve kısıtlanmaya çalışılan özgürlüklerin bir anda kendini yırtmaya çalışarak uzaklaşmaya çalışması gibi geldi.

MT: Aslında şöyle bir şey yapmaya çalışıyorum da beceremedim onu daha. Her şey o çöp torbasına girse de seyirciye de bakıp biz, beraber o torbayı delebiliriz yapmaya çalışıyorum da daha tam gelemedim oraya.

SEYIRCI: Tıkarken yardıma gelmek istedim.

MT: Öyle bir his geliyor di mi bu arada? Başka birileri daha söyledi.

FG: Bana çok geçti o dediğin. Özellikle bakman çok işe yaradı. Al bak açıyorum, sen de açabilirsin hissi geçti bana, çok iyi bir aksiyondu o. Bir anda bakmaya başlaman direk o dediğini hissettirdi bana. Hatta hafif kendinle dalga geçen bir his de geldi. Bunu ben tıktım ama açıyorum işte gibi. Bir kırılma.

SEYIRCI: Meydan okuma.

SEYIRCI: Şey gibi mi? Oraya kadar belki geçmiş anlatılıyordu. Orada sanki şimdiki zamana geldik ve şimdi biz bir şey yapıyoruz. Öbürleri olmuştu, biz anlattık sanki de ama bundan sonrasında biz kendimiz delip açabiliriz oraları.

MT: Size katılıyorum. Her düşünce değerli aslında. Ben de şöyle düşünüyorum: geçmiş bir şey falan değil de ne olursa olsun –yüz yıl sonra da böyle şeyler olabilir ama- o mendil, o halay başı hep olacak gibi hissediyorum ben sonunda.

SEYIRCI: Bir şey sorabilir miyim? Bu şeye doğru gidiyormuş gibi bir hisse kapıldım da: dağ yıkılması gereken bir şeymiş gibi. Benim anladığım kadarıyla dağ özgürleştiren bir şey de. Çöpün içine sokulan şey, öyle bir okumaya doğru gidiyoruz sanki dağ ayıran, yük gibi ama ben öyle bir şey okumadım. Sanki sende dağın özgürleştirici tarafı, dağın var edici tarafı gibi bir açıdan baktığında farklı bir yöne de gidiyor.

MT: Ama onu ne kadar engelleyebilirim ya da oraya yönlendirebilirim bilmiyorum.

SEYIRCI: O çöp koşetiyle alakalı olabilir mi? Özellikle çöp poşeti olmasıyla? Çöplerin konulduğu birşey.

MT: Şöyle bir öneri gelmişti yakın bir arkadaşımdan: Hiç başka bir malzeme girmesin t-shirtüne tık dedi mesela. Ama ben çöp torbası imajını, mantığını seviyorum. T-Shirt ile aynı şey olmayacak, ne bileyim bu sefer belki insan gibi olacak.

SEYIRCI: Bu dağda yaşanmış birçok artı ve eksi deneyimler var ve bunların hepsini eşit şekilde hazmedip içselleştiremedikçe hep yük olarak kalacak gibi hissediyorum bunu. O noktada bunların hepsinin bir araya tıkılması ve orada tekrar yırtılması ve tekrar dışarıya çıkması –baharda dalların çıkması gibi- oradan belki yeni bir şeyler tekrar olabilir gibi hissediyorum.

MT: Devam edebilir yani değil mi? Bitmez gösteri anlamında.

SEYIRCI: Evet.

MT: Evet, bugün Cembir de –ışıkçı arkadaşımız- dedi ki o siyah torbayla daha iş var. Delmeden önce belki sadece siyah torbayla bir şeyler olabilir daha. Belki Aramyan Derneği bize yılbaşından sonra bir gün daha verir, bitmiş halini yaparız.

[Gösterinin ismi SAR oldu ve 9 Ocak 2016'dan itibaren Çıplak Ayaklar Kumpanyası'nın Çukurcuma'daki stüdyosunda sergilenmeye başlandı. Sar, Ermenice dağ demektir.]



EXHIBITION
SERGI

CAMERA HERE: SYRIAN SHORT FILMS

A Corner in the World in cooperation with Bidayyat for Audiovisual Arts, Hamisch Syrian Cultural House in Istanbul and halka art project presents a selection of short films reflecting on the multifaceted experiences of the Syrian people today.

The opening of the exhibition will take place on October 14th at 19.00 in halka art project.

The selection includes short films by Gerard Agabashian, Orwa Costa, Amal Salloum, Lina Alabed, Saeed Albatal and Ghiath-Had among others and will run for the duration of the festival in halka art project, ArtHerelstanbul, Hangart and Komşu Café.

Artistic Director: ALI ATASSI
Selection: OMAR BERAKDAR, ZOLFAQAR SHAARANI, FATIH GENÇKAL
Project Supervisor: ŞENAY ÖZDEN

Bidayyat is a Syrian non-profit organization, launched in early 2013, to support and produce Syrian documentaries and short and experimental films, and to organize specialized training courses on documentary filmmaking.

Bidayyat hopes to cast light on the complexity and richness of Syria's sociological reality through a language of documentary cinema which interrogates reality just as much as it records it, which privileges art over propaganda, people over rulers and revolution over the status quo.

Hamisch (Margin) is a new independent space-in-exile for critical debate, exchange and communication of ideas, and experiences and practices in the field of culture. It is also a venue for collaboration and partnership between artists, academicians, intellectuals and writers from Syria, Turkey, and elsewhere.

halka art project is a non-profit, independent art initiative focusing on the production, discourse and presentation of contemporary art and culture.

Dünyada Bir Köşe, Bidayyat, Hamisch Suriye Kültür Evi-İstanbul ve halka sanat işbirliğiyle Suriye'de yaşanan farklı deneyimler üzerine düşünen bir kısa film seçkisi sunuyor.

Aralarında Gerard Agabashian, Orwa Costa, Amal Salloum, Lina Alabed, Saeed Albatal ve Ghiath-Had'ın da bulunduğu birçok yönetmenin filmleri halka sanat, ArtHerelstanbul, Atölye Hangart ve Komşu Kafe'de festival süresince izlenebilir. Serginin açılışı 14 Ekim Çarşamba saat 19.00'da halka sanat'te gerçekleşecek.

Sanat Yönetmeni: ALI ATASSI
Seçki: OMAR BERAKDAR, ZOLFAQAR SHAARANI, FATIH GENÇKAL
Proje Danışmanı: ŞENAY ÖZDEN

Bidayyat, Suriyeli belgesel, kısa ve deneysel film yapımını desteklemek için 2013'te kuruldu. Prodüksiyon desteği ve eğitimler aracılığıyla belgesel sinemayı destekleyerek Suriye'nin karmaşık ve zengin sosyolojik gerçekliklerine ışık tutmayı amaçlar. Belgesel türünü gerçekliği kaydetmekten öte onu sorgulayan bir form olarak ele alır, propaganda karşısında sanatı, status quo karşısında devrimi savunur.

Hamiş, kültür alanında fikir, deneyim ve eylem paylaşımı, iletişim ve eleştirel tartışma ortamı sağlamak amacıyla sürgünde kurulmuş yeni, bağımsız bir alandır. Hamiş Suriyeli, Türkiyeli ve dünyanın diğer yerlerinden sessizleştirilmişlerin ve halkın bir parçası olduğunu savunduğu sanatçıların, akademisyenlerin, entelektüellerin ve yazarların ortak mekânıdır.

halka sanat projesi, çağdaş sanat ve kültürün üretim, söylem ve sunumunda çalışan, kâr amacı gütmeyen, kurumsal sponsorluğa dayanmadan kurulmuş olan, bağımsız bir sanat inisiyatifidir.


ANKARA



TEAM

FATIH GENÇKAL, artistic director

ZINNURE TÜRE, program coordinator

UTKU KARA, technical manager

NIL DELAHAYE, logistics and team coordinator

HILAL POLAT, ticket sales and printed materials

SARP SÖZDINLER, design director

ERGE YEKSAN, design application

TUNAY SEVINÇ, publicity videos

CLAIRE ZERHOUNI, residency coordinator

BEN VAN BUREN, event coordinator and booklet editor and designer

CAMILLE GERVAIS, booklet designer

ONUR KARAOĞLU KATHRYN HAMILTON, associate producer

VOLUNTEER TEAM

Marta Montevecchi, Ezgi Mutluer, Özgül Akıncı, Hatice Delen, Derya Günaydın, Deniz Güzelmeriç, Sema Öztekin, Başak Gürer, Derya İnce, Ahu Özden, Berat Gültekin, Deniz Fidan, İrem Tellioğlu, İpek Süer

EKIP

FATIH GENÇKAL, genel sanat yönetmeni

ZINNURE TÜRE, program koordinatörü

UTKU KARA, teknik yapım sorumlusu

NIL DELAHAYE, lojistik ve ekip koordinatörü

HILAL POLAT, bilet satış ve basılı malzemeler

SARP SÖZDINLER, tasarım direktörü

ERGE YEKSAN, tasarım uygulama

CLAIRE ZERHOUNI, residency koordinatörü

TUNAY SEVINÇ, tanıtım videoları

BEN VAN BUREN, etkinlik koordinatörü ve editör, tasarımcı

CAMILLE GERVAIS, tasarımcı

ONUR KARAOĞLU KATHRYN HAMILTON, ortak yapımcı

GÖNÜLLÜ DESTEK EKIBI

Marta Montevecchi, Ezgi Mutluer, Özgül Akıncı, Hatice Delen, Derya Günaydın, Deniz Güzelmeriç, Sema Öztekin, Başak Gürer, Derya İnce, Ahu Özden, Berat Gültekin, Deniz Fidan, İrem Tellioğlu, İpek Süer