

Master Presentations

29-30 April

Juan Miranda
Mazlum Nergiz
Andrej Nosov



DAS
theatre

What Theatre Can Do

Silvia Bottioli

We have curated the programme of this year at DAS Theatre around the question 'What Can Theatre Do?', inviting participants and guest artists to engage in a collective research aimed at exploring the performativity of theatre as a complex apparatus that stages bodies and gazes, organises space and time, and models the past, the present and the future.

While we formulated this as a question, aiming to state that the answers can only be multiple and idiosyncratic, the works made by the artists and curators who are currently studying at DAS emerged as possible articulations of the plural doings of the theatre.

As always, the Master Presentations of DAS Theatre are an undefinable collection, not a curated programme. We stand for a diversity of artistic practices and as a master programme aim at supporting participants in developing according to their learning goals and artistic desires. And as a school we commit to being an

'agonistic site' and trust that art constitutes public spheres where current hegemonic narratives can be dismantled, and alternative narratives can be constructed that can shape not just our collective imagination, but also the world to come.

The works of the eight graduating students Andrej Nosov, Asa Horvitz, Eli Steffen, Juan Miranda, Mariana Senne, Mazlum Nergiz, Pankaj Tiwari and Tom Oliver Jacobson offer an encounter with strong voices of independent artists and curators, that are surely injecting change into the theatre field and engaging its complex geopolitical realities.

We hope you can enjoy these works, proudly presented live in Amsterdam for a small audience, and carefully documented by the artists and the school in order to support further dissemination afterwards.

*Silvia Bottioli
and the DAS Theatre team*

Juan Miranda

Pathos



COLLABORATORS
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María García Vera
Bruno Zaffora

TUTOR
Marjorie Boston

EXTERNAL ADVISORS
Laura Fobbio
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The family is our closest enveloping membrane. Its interiors and domestic architecture become a mirror for those who live in it. A speculative setting that accompanies and defines us even when far away from it.

Pathos is a six-hour performative installation in which the spectator is invited to circulate in and between two rooms that are simultaneously being operated. The conversation between these rooms, sustained by audiovisual as well as performative codes, produces a two-fold experience that can not possibly be embraced in its totality, and therefore prompts questions around presence, absence, image, flesh, bonds, and family.

Pathos is an ephemeral celebration of traces under natural morning light and the course of time – an extremely carnal way of relating with emotions and the ghosts of beloved ones.

“My research is triggered by the pathos that lies behind images and how this can be embraced from the scene. What makes an image present? Through my work I look for an excessive and passionate performativity, one that leads the gesture to exhaustion.”

Juan Miranda’s work sits at the intersection between theatre, visual arts, and performance. He investigates the ephemeral body of emotions, images, and flesh, and the tension created between action, presence, and space.

After accomplishing his theatre studies in Buenos Aires, he obtained a BA in Stage Directing and Dramaturgy at the Institut del Teatre de Barcelona. He is currently undergoing his MA at DAS Theatre with the support of “La Caixa” Foundation Fellowship.

Miranda combines his artistic practice with educational frameworks exploring other forms of transmission and knowledge in the field of Performing Arts. Since 2009 he co-directs the company Chroma Teatre in Barcelona. Until 2018, he taught at Chroma Teatre Estudi, and he is Associate Professor of the ERAM Performing Arts Degree at the University of Gerona.

Pathos experience

Laura Fobbio

When is a space between bodies considered separation, and when proximity? When the spectators leave the space, what images of the performance do they take with them? Where does the experience reside? These and other questions keep echoing inside the *Pathos* experience.

Noli me tangere by Fra Angelico functions as a trigger, it highlights the way Miranda actualises that painting and other textualities and discursivities, from a clear commitment to the pandemic context. The *mise-en-space* of *Pathos* conjures performance, installation, theatre, dance, music, video, and plastic art; it sets out two rooms with different proposals occurring simultaneously and whose sum does not pretend to constitute a whole, as it is the spectators who appropriate time and space, and through their moving between rooms expand possible readings and prolong the performance, taking away its limits.

The *mise en abyme* is one of the procedures that stands out in *Pathos*' creative process, in devices that include one another. Thus, in one of its rooms, homemade video footage is being projected of Juan

and his mother dancing within the context of a class, in different physical spaces, yet sharing time in abyme (that of *Pathos*, that of the recorded virtual encounter, that of the bond between mother and child), while the audience is invited to assume its own territoriality in the room they are inhabiting, alone or with others. In the other room, the artist's body is present, choreographing for about six hours in a place stripped of elements. There he interacts with a slime dough whose colour and texture take centre stage, translating the interweaving of reflections, searches that evolved into *Pathos*, while a projected video of his family gathered around a table is showing on a television set.

The artist goes further than the treatment of 'Do not touch me', recurrently translated as the interaction between resurrected Jesus and Mary Magdalene, to precisely assume the challenge of choreographing the *between* of the bodies that do not get to touch each other. On one hand, in *Pathos* creation is translated through various procedures that make porous the boundaries between artist and work, fiction and reality, flesh and

virtuality, presence and absence, detention and movement, the sacred and the profane, the familiar and the social; safe distance and latent danger? On the other hand, the *between* functions as a passage connecting the two rooms that the bodies of the spectators fill-in and empty, (re)situating themselves: standing, sitting, listening, deciding what to look at, how long to stay, not knowing what is happening in one room when they're in the other... The images of *Pathos* compose flashes of the artists' life that expand to question us, and there appears another of the tensions that stand out: the liminality between the individual and the collective.

The power of the *Pathos* experience also lies in the fact that, in the creative process and its staging, it is possible to notice an indistinction between the outside and the inside of the body of the artist as if, through different mecha-

nisms, he manages to show the (im)precise place where his experiences are made flesh, that which we do not know what form it has and which he manages to knead – literally and metaphorically – on stage. Such powerful images that they could remain reverberating in the spectators, even after this shared experience. It is then that the performative "remains" as an "echo" (Schneider, 2011, p. 232, 237)¹, the reverberation of a knowledge transmitted "from body to body" (p. 236), as testimony; *other* proximity, a *continuum* between experience and its documentation in the body. We risk that the passage of the spectators between/through the rooms, without "stopping" or "gripping"² that political continuity proposed by the performance, redefines the distances between bodies, that *between* that would function as spaces for its testimony and for the creation to continue happening (Tantanian, 2010, p. 6)³.

1 Schneider, Rebecca. 2011. "El performance permanece" Taylor, D. and Fuentes, M. (eds.) *Estudios avanzados de performance*. Mexico: FCE.

2 Following the reading of the theologian Sebastián Luna, this biblical passage (Jn 20:17) can be translated: "do not try to stop me, hold on to me and do not let go to let me continue, do not delay me" (Rivas in Luna, 2020).

3 Tantanian recognizes creation in the in-between, referring to that "empty space" between Adam and God's fingers in Michelangelo's *The Creation of Adam*. (Tantanian, Alejandro. 2010. "Alejandro Tantanian y el nombre de las cosas" interview by Fobbio, L, in *telondefondo*. *Revista de Teoría y Crítica Teatral*, year 6, 11, July, Buenos Aires: UBA. Retrieved from: <http://www.telondefondo.org/numerosanteriores/numero11/articulo/254/alejandro-tantanian-y-el-nombre-de-las-cosas.html>)

Mazlum Nergiz

DRIFT



COLLABORATORS

Scenography Larissa Kramarek
Performance Maria Koz³owska,
Pía Laborde-Noguez
Music Maria Magdalena
Koz³owska, Jan Tomza-Osiecki
Book, Illustrations Leonie Ott,
Christophe Armand
Light design Grischa Runge
Objects Oscar Olivo

TUTOR

Lara Staal

EXTERNAL ADVISORS

Zarah Bracht,
Jasper Delbecke
Maaike Gouwenberg

DRIFT is a sensorial scenography of listening and writing. In a wave-like environment, a cosmos of cruising stories is being unfolded through words and live music.

A nameless narrator takes us on a lucid journey of wandering after smashing the architecture of control he constructed his life on. We follow him into ruins, abandoned buildings, night clubs – all spaces in which people meet to fuck, to look, to touch, to be with one another. Slowly but steadily, we are drawn into his inner depths and anonymous encounters revealing loneliness, self-hatred, and emotional homelessness.

How much risk can a life, a body, bear?

To which extent are queer relationships damaged by forces of shame, erosion, repression, and invisibility? Why does intimacy so quickly turn into violence? Which bodies are rendered invisible? Do words move us and how do they do it? Can a space become a text? Can a story be told through a space? *DRIFT* is a vulnerable terrain that performs disappearance as an experience – a sonic body of stories on belonging and non-belonging, isolation and community, pain and lust, gardens and wastelands. An invitation to float.

Mazlum Nergiz is a writer, theatre maker and curator. His work sits at the intersection of performance, radio and theatre. He has a genuine interest in experiments that try to unlock new visual languages of transdisciplinary collaboration. In 2021, he won the Hans-Gratzer-Fellowship by Schauspielhaus Wien (Vienna, Austria) for his piece *COMA*. In May 2021, the walk-in video installation *Ein faszinierender Plan* will be opening this year's Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen (Germany) which has been developed in collaboration with Marius Goldhorn, Enis Maci, Tanita Olbrich and Pascal Richmann. In June 2021, his piece *1000 Eyes* will premiere under the direction of Juan Miranda at Théâtre 13 (Paris, France).

Precarious Amusement

Jasper Delbecke

In the early morning of the 6th of March 2021, the body of David P, a 42-year-old gay man, was found in Beveren, a provincial town in the South-West of Antwerp. One day later, three juveniles turned themselves in to the police, confessing that they lured David P. to a park via the dating app Grindr. In the aftermath of their arrest, investigation surfaced how similar events in that area in the weeks before were also linked to the trio. Men were lured to the park where they were molested later on by the trio. Due to their young age, the local authorities responsible for the investigation are rather cautious on giving comments on the motives of the perpetrators. Was it just an easy way for them to mug people? Or was this a clear case of gay bashing, as claimed by the LGBTQ+ community in Belgium the day after the body of David P. was found? It is hard to ascertain the exact motives of the teenagers because the investigation is still ongoing while writing this text.

But what this unfortunate event surfaces and illustrates again is the ongoing physical, psychological and emotional violence in various degrees that members of the LGBTQ+ community still have to endure while entering the public space. The death of David P. engendered in the following

days a wave of testimonies on social media and on public television describing similar experiences and incidents. Stories of violence, discrimination and humiliation in various social contexts. What the event in Beveren illustrates is how the exploration and expression of their sexual identity for many gay men can only happen in spaces at the margin of society. Spaces wherein anonymity and safety are (hopefully) ensured.

In his personal and sociological essay *Retour à Reims*, French philosopher and sociologist Didier Eribon reflects on his childhood in Reims, the city he had left behind thirty years ago. Revisiting the city and his family after the death of his father, Eribon reflects on his life as a teenager in a working-class family and the way his working-class background influenced his sexual identity. In his book, he describes the absence of places in provincial cities like Reims to explore and develop their identity. As opposed to a metropolis such as Paris, in more rural areas, parks, public toilets or car parks serve as spaces for encounter. But nonetheless, these covert places connote secrecy, risk, darkness, violence, aversion, shame, and stress. Eribon's only alternative were bars and nightclubs. Despite the fact that he wouldn't be allowed to

enter due to his age, he considered at that time in his life bars as places of 'mere amusement'. As Eribon notes, it was the confrontation, as a teenager searching for his identity, with these places that made the acceptance of his gay identity even more difficult.

The feelings of shame and distress that come with a confrontation as those of Eribon are echoed in Mazlum Nergiz's performance *DRIFT*. The narrator in the voiceover guides us to spaces where the main character wants, can, or must unfold and experience his identity. Intimate spaces that evoke fear and excessive violence, with bodies in pain and bodies in denial. As for the young Eribon or David P. these places convey a feeling of safety. But what is thought of as a shelter, is often found too fixed, too restricted, too demanding, too imposing and too dangerous for a drifting body with an identity in motion. Despite the dark undertone of *DRIFT*, what stands out is a craving for existence. An existence that the narrator hopes to find in bars and in squatted buildings but that remains unfulfilled in the end. An existence that Didier Eribon found in Paris. A craving for existence that David P. hoped to find in secluded spaces and sadly enough had to pay for with his own life.

One could coin *DRIFT* as an autoethnographic endeavour. The term comprises three components: "auto", "ethno" and "graphy". Within the method of autoethnography selfhood, subjectivity, and personal experience ("auto") are used to describe, interpret, and represent ("graphy") the practices and identities of a group or a culture. Not the

perspective of an outsider but personal experiences are the focal point to start an exploration of social norms and to interrogate the intersection between the self and various aspects of a culture. The (self)reflexivity deriving from such a position acknowledges the intersubjective dynamic between the subject and others within the culture in which the subject is located. From such an autoethnographic perspective – and recalling the recent incident in Belgium and Eribon's story – Nergiz's enterprise in *DRIFT* cannot be reduced or dismissed as a mere example of gay nihilism. Guided by the female voiceover, we are directed to cultural, political and social issues through the lens of the personal experiences of an absent body. An absent body that uses personal experience and the reflection on its personal experiences as a jumping off point to name and to interrogate the intersections between the self and society, the particular and the general, the personal and the political. And to share with others a process of thinking, in figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of its struggles. An absent body that could be male or female. An absent body that could be Nergiz's body. An absent body that could be the body of David P. An absent body that could be the body of everyone entering a public space dominated by heteronormativity.

Andrej Nosov

A Short History of Burgers and Other Things



COLLABORATORS

Actor Simon Versnel
Set and video design Una Jankov
Dramaturgy Djordje Kosić
Music Irena Popović
Costume Selena Orb

TUTOR

Edit Kaldor

EXTERNAL ADVISOR

Geraldjan Rijnders

A Short History of Burgers and Other Things is a play composed of stories about growing up in the period of the breakup of former Yugoslavia, at a time when my father was not there, my mother was lonely, and my loves were all hidden under the duvet. This is the story of a boy who just wanted to breathe, a story of grief that was a forbidden commodity, of violence and theatre. These are memories arranged from one perspective, as a guide for possible collective re-examinations of the past.

"I walked the streets, tried to eat, couldn't eat, I was nauseous, I wanted to go home, just go home, go home as soon as I could. Nobody can see me, nobody can know I was there, nobody can ever find out about this. I can't, what would I tell the man under the duvet, what would I tell anyone else, what will happen, what will happen."

"I admit I live with guilt. I'm guilty. I am guilty of all the sins of my parents, of all their attempts to survive, of all their silences and accusations, of all my neighbours, friends, peers, those who were before and who are today. I'm guilty because they didn't know how, they knew, they couldn't."

Andrej Nosov is a theatre director and activist. In the last years he has directed plays, co-created performances, and curated programmes in collaboration with major Western Balkan theatres and art institutions. He runs Heartefact based in Belgrade, and is the Obama Leader Europe of the Obama Foundation. In his work he is dedicated to questions of transitional justice, social change and sadness. At this moment, he is curating the Belgrade Euro Pride Theater Festival as well as the NEW drama platform.

How to tell after the catastrophe?

Carolina Bianchi

“It is necessary to recover intimacy against the mass grave, it is necessary to represent private anguish on a public stage”, writes Angélica Liddell evoking Steiner. And what is, after all, the role of theatre here? Andrej Nosov screams in front of the open graves, in front of the hole in History, in front of the perfect bullet hole in the head of a man, a woman, a child, a city? It screams before the lack – the immense lack that produces a memory that is impossible to dissociate at every step, because each step of the foot on the ground is a hammering that brings with it the trace of absolute terror, the muscles of the memory of the war.

Andrej was born in Serbia and his childhood/pre-adolescence takes place amidst the context of the war and fall of former Yugoslavia. He deals with the consequences of that war in his surroundings, in his community. It is later, starting his history with theatre that Andrej begins to try to give form to this memory that is not only his, but the collective memory of loss, of injustice, of a terror that is beyond names, therefore beyond words, therefore beyond language. And if the terror of the war is beyond language, how to say it? How to announce it? How to evoke it? Is it possible to stage it?

Under what symbols? What to do with feelings? What happens after it's the end?

In his work, memory speaks through all spaces, all matter: objects, songs, people. Private anguish on the public stage is completely political. And if we speak of politics we speak of emotion – because here the heart weighs the same tons as a ship, of a missile, the heart weighs the tons of bones in a mass grave. Andrej's theatre is its own exposed structure, trying to articulate the memory of pain, of shame, of guilt – talking about what has remained, about the materiality of the remains of what is irreversible. This investigation of raw memory is also about reading perspectives, getting in touch with different sides of the same story, and that can also mean “Talking to the devil”, as Andrej often says. And what is the role of theatre here? Would theatre in this case be an opportunity for more trials for the guilty? Or the chance to erase certain memories and build others? How do we want to remember? Or how do we want to (can we?) forget?

The vocabulary that contains the remnants of horror here is associated with the sweetness of the intimacy of sharing memories that constitute

everyday life: the food, the kiss, the bath, the bureaucracy, the music, the party, the cigarette, the small stealing at the department shop, the doll, the handful of beans, the boyfriend – shared with words in shambles, and without any effort to reach us, because this memory of the catastrophe demands no effort at all, it is already all over the body, through language, through space, everywhere, like a bomb.

Andrej Nosov organises the architecture of the memory of death through life, the theatre life – inconstant, passionate and full of possible mistakes. And words are his main tool: He writes their

words with the acceleration of one who needs to remember as the primordial action of speech, because to remember is to light a warm and perpetual light on the geography of the past, so that the past does not remain distant and frozen by impotence in the face of injustice, nor so that it has the face of citation, of pretext, nor is the past here a ghost that comes back to haunt the present – the words as emotional politics, a constant search on how to live now, and that is also meant to deal with the complexities that carry these very words. And here “to tell it” is like taking a leap of faith.

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Since 2019, the Dutch Performing Arts supports the DAS Theatre master presentations, with an International Visitors' Programme inviting programmers to attend the presentations and engage in conversations with the graduating artists and curators -or disseminating the documentation of their works. Dutch Performing Arts promotes Dutch music, theatre and dance on the international stage. The visitors' programme is made possible by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands.

