

Zooming on Schams

Interdisciplinary project

Concept, Creation: Dovrat ana Meron

Concept, direction, production, choreography, performance: Dovrat ana Meron

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Performance: Alice Masprone, Dovrat ana Meron, Kevin Booker, Irina Novarese

Music/Design: Knut Honsell, Dovrat ana Meron, Kevin Booker

Graphic design: Knut Honsell

Light, technique: Raul Combe'

Text: The Poetry of Mavlana Rumi

Project background

This project is inspired by the Arab/Israeli conflict, the Gulf War, my gas mask, my army service and army uniforms.

It is also inspired by all the people that I met on the way in nature and mega cities while traveling and living in Australia, India, the USA, England, Austria, Germany. and by their reaction to my Israeli nationality and to the fact that I do not practice any religion.

This work does not pretend to present a concrete statements on terms such as "spiritual," "mystical," "faith," "belief," "holy," on any specific religion, culture or nation but It does however emphasize misinterpretation of religion.

I try to find the cultural gaps that lead to miscommunication, fear, prejudice, xenophobia, racism and violence.

I avoid using coherent narrative to avoid journalistic report and use structure of fragmentary abstract episodes instead.

Based on the assumption that human beings share universal collective memory, I construct movement and present images, symbols and pictures, presenting them within different or unexpected contexts to discharge them from their original meaning, enabling them to function apart from their primary use.

In this project, I use universal symbols, gestures, games and ritual movement such as the transcendental movement of the head, crucifix crossing and bowing down to the earth, seeking to disconnect them from their religious meaning and context, using them to emphasize poetic, rather than political, critical or moralistic implications.

The performers

Performers as figures covered in Burkas, (veiled black dresses used by Muslim women). The performers do not present other characters; they are disguised in costumes as army uniforms, Carnival masks, gas masks, or a Kaffiyeh (black and white, or red and white Arab headdress) and perform "borrowed" movements . The contexts in which they are set, and their disguise dictate their appearances and emphasize the gap between the individual and the idea that they are representing as performers.

The text of Mavlana Rumi is delivered by a performer and connects between different visions and "units of action", it is spoken as poetry or sung as melody. Because of it's inherent naivety it stands in contrast to the absurd and grotesque scenes and figures.

RUMI, Jalal Ud-Din, 1207-1273, 13 A.D. Sufi mystic master and poet was born in ancient Persia (presently Afghanistan) After his death, his disciples were organized as the Sufi Mevlevi order, or as they are called in the west, "The Whirling Dervishes". His poetry reflects universal themes such as the search for the highest truth and the longing to overcome ego imprisonment. It captures the power of silence and the spirit of love and playfulness. He is said to have lived for almost thirty years in a state of "The radiance of enlightenment."

Audience/Performer Relationship

The use of the space and lighting design establish a flexible border between performers and audience. This will be achieved, for example, by deconstructing the area of performer action and the so-called "audience area" by lighting the area of the audience and activating audience members during parts of the performance.

I am inviting viewers to confront their own sets of expectations by creating a coherent structure and deliberately distracting from it. In doing so, I am challenging the tendency of people to translate unfulfilled expectations into confusion or frustration by offering them game playing and humor as an alternative.

Short film and Video in a closed circle

First Image- "Spanish dancer" a type of a snail fish; a filmed undersea vision that evokes deep primal feelings (such as embryo and womb)

Second Image, The Dome of "El - Aktsa Mosque, the Temple mountain" which represents the silhouette of Jerusalem, and one of the main symbols of the Arab/Israeli conflict. Jerusalem here represents a spiritual core; holy to three major religions (documentary film from my last visit to Israel during the U.S.A. Iraq war Dec. 2003) the film includes the background sounds of playing children while the camera focuses on the dome of the mosque. The sound of a school bell attract me, and I "search" for the source of the sound; "finding" children leaving a school yard back to their classes.

Short film, location: Friedrich's Hain park - Berlin. The same elements and performers appearing "on stage" appear in this film segment, within a different context, environment and time.

The Poet with the headphones connects via the headphones cable to the trees and stones, the Performer with the gas mask, sits on a tree as a bird and the figure in veiled Burka appears as a ghost.

Third Image: Latin, Arabic and Hebrew alphabet letters falls like rain from above.

Video in a closed circle: In the last part of the performance, the camera woman whirls with the performers; the image of the room as it seen by the spinning performers is projected.

As the performers stop their whirling, the camera continues to spin, transmitting to the audience a sensation of momentum. Gradually, it slows down and the unstable movement of the camera will reflect a sense of dizziness, until it stabilizes and focuses on the performers and the faces or parts in the faces of people in the audience.