Hagar Ophir

Selection of works (2020)
Recalling History; Sitting I; Conjuring a Looted Wooden Box

Performance and method development (first in a series)

Recalling History; Sitting I; Conjuring a Looted Wooden Box

a performative experiment in producing a nonlinear, “rounded-bundle” type of history, using the séance practice of communicating with the dead.

Imagine a table in a dark room; a theatre, or a secret prayer room. Sitting together around the table are experts who come to recreate a non-historical story of a past. They are rewriting and releasing to it through their body and shared thoughts. The historian - the medium, is in a duet with her subject of research: the dead guest or the ghost that is being called from the occult to the room. The medium conjures the entities to speak and become materialised through the questions and presence in the participants of the séance, and the believing mind and bodies of the audience standing around.

In the first edition of the sitting of Séance: Recalling History I, The medium (Juna Suleiman) and experts conjured the unknown owners of a wooden box looted from Palestine, presented as part of Ariella Aïsha Azoulay exhibition Errata at Fundació Antoni Tàpies. It is in the context of the exhibition and during accompanying conference that this Séance sitting performed for the first time. The Entity was invited to tell through the body and voices of the participants about his past, his life and death, the box’s artisan, and it’s looters. Together they were telling a new history of/for the object and lives that were uprooted from their places.
Research as Performance: Berlin, January 2019
Toward an Academic evaluation committee of Department III directed by Dagmar Schäfer at the Max-Plank Institution for the History of Science, I created a play in collaboration with and performed by 10 members of the department - senior researchers and Postdoc fellows, titled: Artifacts, Action, Knowledge. The work consists of a conceptual play based on their academic report and researchers presentations, using their practical research actions and the artefacts histories. The performance took place at the Harnack-house Berlin, January 2019.
It Is Only Through Your Thoughts That I Can Remember Who I Am
An Exhibition in Three Acts
Theatre of Operations: Hakim Bishara & Hagar Ophir

*It Is Only Through Your Thoughts that I Can Remember Who I Am*, reimagines the story of L’Art moderne au Liban exhibition at the Jewish National Museum Jerusalem 1943, into a theatrical exhibition in three acts. Madame M.S, a mysterious Lebanese painter who was one of the participating artists in the 1943 exhibition, is conjured up from the archive to recount the tale of her time through reimagined and staged environments that combine text, image, light and sound.

Bergen, Octobre-December 2017

The exhibition was curated by Sissel Lillebostad and Trond Hugo Haugen in collaboration with Malin Barth. The exhibition was part of Vågestykke — a series of time-limited artworks 2016-2018 at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences (HVL) by KORO - Public Art Norway.

Sound-artist: Miriam Schickler, light and programming: Rachid Moro, set design: Studio Martha Schwindling, researcher in France: Ellie Armon Azoulay researcher in Beirut: Stephanie d’Arc Taylor
Public Movement, together with the Veterans Honor Guard of R.O.C. hold a new weekly ceremonial performance of patriotic pride taking place at the entrance to the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall, Taipei. Throughout the duration of the Asian Art Biennial, Public Movement joined the Veteran Honor Guard in presenting a new State Choreography, inviting spectators to pay respect to Taiwan's past, present and future and to the beauty of order.

The Elaborate choreographies of the Honor Guard at the Chiang Kai-Shek Memorial Hall attract tourists from China and international visitors. The action Honor Guard celebrates this unique liminal moment of a State without a nation or a nation without a State, proposing to regard it as a source of hope. Taiwan, free of international recognition, can thus dance its unspoken trauma, myth and heritage, examine the notion of independence, and acknowledge its violence and unity.

The new Public Movement choreography salutes the divided national identity of Taiwan and upholds the glory of ambivalent historical narratives.

Honor Guard

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Honor Guard Taiwanis TV Show
publicmovement.org/new/honor-guard/

The gloomy light in the cave somehow mitigated the blistering sun outside. Esther stepped silently into the well, where she encounters a woman who strikes her as the young Rachel. The woman’s eyes were attracted to her reflection in the water, as if she hoped to grasp something of the hellish nightmare that haunted her last night.

Esther was unsettled by the icons posed on the cave’s walls. She sat nearby her, asking for her name and offering some dates and a lukewarm tea.

They tasted the dates and drank the tea.

Esther broke the silence and asked: “are you here to contemplate?”

Her question awakened a ghost from the bottom of the well. Through his voice they knew that without knowing each other, they were hit by the same vision.

The voice wanes off, but the well remains seeped with horror. The women’s bewilderment and shock were interrupted by the entrance of a tall European man with a camera on his back.

The young woman whispered to Esther: “I know this guy. I have guided him to this place, looking for the event of photography to take place.”

“Shall we start?” the photographer asked sternly.

The young woman nodded in compliance.

Without saying a word, Esther held tightly the woman’s hand, and walked out.

When the sound of the flash puffed, she was already on her way, on the back of a donkey praying that the flashing light will magically exorcise the horrific vision from the young women’s eyes.

Years after Esther’s death, and the death of her daughter Malka, her grandson, Joshua, my grandfather, sat on November 16th in his armchair not far away from the city of Yaffa and read in the newspaper, with some pride mixed with compassion, though not without repulsion, about a man with quite ordinary ideas, who entered Jacob’s Well and, smashed with an axe the skull of a Hegumen. In the name of god.

—Hagar Ophir
Debriefing Session II

Debriefing Session II a one-on-one meeting in which, a public movement agent delivers an account of our research about modern art made in Palestine before 1948. The private session draws out the performative relationship between nation-states and their cultural institutions.

Debriefing Session II created by Alhena Katsof and Dana Yahalomi based on a research led by Hagar Ophir, and was presented as part of the exhibition National Collection at Tel Aviv Museum of Art in 2015.
First performed: July 2015 at Artport, Tel Aviv. As part of Non Finito, Artport’s third year residency exhibition.
October 2015: Spielart Festival, Munich Location: Villa Stuck Museum Head of research and performing as Public Movement Agent: October - December 2015: Tel Aviv Museum of Art. As part of Public Movement durational exhibition, National Collection. Training local agents (performers) and performing as Public Movement Agent at the opening Session: June - October 2016: Guggenheim Museum, New York As part of the exhibition But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise: Contemporary Art of the Middle East and North Africa. Curator: Sara Raza
Debriefing Session II Italy:
Performing as Public Movement Agent October, November:2018 Debriefing Session Performing as Public Movement Agent October, November:2018 Head of research Training Italian speakers agents (performers) and performing as Public Movement Agent Santarcangelo Festival, Santarcangelo July 2019

External link: publicmovement
Mouvement Magazine
Mousse magazine
Hyperallergic
Taanit; Civil Fast 2012

A 24 hours performance centred around a contentious ceremony that can be repeated over and over again in city squares and public spaces worldwide.

Civil Fast was taken place as an independent 24 hours action on: Davidka square, West Jerusalem, December 2012.

Action Director and Concept Development together with: Saar Szekely as part of Public Movement, Coordinator: Ma’ayan Choresh Public Movement members creative performers: Ma’ayan Choresh, Jad Jamal Kaadan, Meshi Olinky, Hagar Ophir, Saar Szekely, Public Movement Artistic director: Dana Yahalomi

Taanit video Documentation by: Zeev Shalev

Links to Accademic assay :

- The Performative Return: Israeli and Palestinian Site-Specific Re-enactments
  Daphna Ben-Shaul New Theatre Quarterly / Volume 32 / Issue 01 / February 2016, pp 31 - 48
- The City Square in the Performance of Taanit: From Rabbinic Space to Contemporary Jerusalem*
  Yair Lipshitz Tel Aviv University Journal of Levantine Studies Vol. 5, No. 1, Summer 2015, pp. 59-81
External Refugees

An outdoor dance performance, installation.
At a time of a post-disaster, several surviving creatures are moving in the place used to serve as their home. The traumatised bodies are searching for temporary comfort.

Director and co-creators: Hagar Ophir, Know Hope (Adam Yekutiel), Eyal Vexler.
Performers: Hagar Ophir, Bitania Mekonen. Original Music: Ellie Armon Azoulay and Itai Tzfira
Costume Designer: Orin Linder
Location: Nissuy Kelim festival#6, Bikurei Ha'Itim, Tel Aviv