CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Kawalis Zoukak – Behind the Curtains is a one-week intensive immersion into Zoukak’s work. It is an invitation to discover the company’s tools of artistic creation and social involvement through theatre, in addition to cultural management insights, springing from its wide-ranging experience as a theatre company and a cultural organisation.

Participants will take part in masterclasses designed and delivered by Zoukak members, attend performances, and engage in discussions around selected topics.

The week is also a chance to meet with artists and exchange around their various ways of working and approaches to theatre making and social practices through art. It is equally an opportunity for practitioners to reflect on their own work.

Kawalis Zoukak – Behind the Curtains targets performing arts practitioners, academics, researchers, anthropologists, cultural and socio-political actors—and all those interested in theatre practice in Lebanon, the region and beyond.

Dates: 24–30 November 2019
Location: Zoukak Studio, Beirut, Lebanon.
Working Language: English
Apply by filling out the Application Form and sending it to: kawaliszoukak@zoukak.org by the 15th of October
www.zoukak.org
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DIRECTING: HOW NOT TO BE A DIRECTOR
By Omar Abi Azar

This masterclass will tackle theatre directing as first and foremost an observation of the various components of a creation process. Participants will explore how an actor interacts organically with a text, with props, and with another actor and how the collision of these elements generates meaning, aesthetics and dialectics. They will be familiarized with ways to underline those various confrontations, rather than hide them, in order to experience how a theatrical reflection is born from effortless observation.

DEVISING: HOW PERSONAL IS THE POLITICAL?
By Maya Zbib

This session will focus on Zoukak’s processes of collectively devising theatre that springs from a personal connection to a concept, theme or issue, and gravitates towards a more global socio-political concern and reflection. Participants will be introduced to tools of creating content, building narratives, and instigating actions, through a layering of personal stories, political events, history and mythology.
The session will also explore the use of archetype, iconography and cliché in building characters and theatrical imagery, introducing one of Zoukak's methods of writing from the stage, that links directing and dramaturgy.

**DRAMATURGY: ‘DE–DRAMATIZING’ DRAMA.**

*By Junaid Sarieddeen*

Daily life continuously generates dramatic situations that theatre then chooses to deal with. How can theatre preserve the essence of personal and collective dramas without over dramatizing them? How could dramatic situations go through a process of de-dramatization while keeping their narratives and histories alive? Focusing on the company's cycle of work on “History & Memory”, this session will delve into Zoukak's practice of postdramatic theatre, in which dramaturgy plays a main role in leading a hybrid form of narrative, and where fiction and reality collide through space and time.

**CULTURAL MANAGEMENT:**
**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, BETWEEN CREATIVITY AND SUSTAINABILITY.**

*By Mohamad Hamdan*

This session will introduce the participants to sustainability, based on Zoukak's experience in going beyond the financial limitations its context. While the financial aspect is the visible part of the iceberg, there are several underlying dimensions at the core of sustainability. Participants will be invited to reflect on their own experiences in terms of management and production, while exploring how to leverage one of the most precious resources that exists – human relationships.

**THEATRE IN PSYCHOSOCIAL CONTEXTS**

*By Lamia Abi Azar*

Participants will be introduced to Zoukak's methodology of using theatre as a tool for personal and collective development in a given context. Here theatre is imagined as a meeting point and a shared space where a common reflection on relevant issues is possible through practice. Participants will explore how this approach aims for social cohesion by fostering the balance between individuals and their community within a safe space; and how the fictive space of theatre can lead to changes in the real world.
We created Zoukak in 2006 as a non-hierarchical structure, dedicated to theatre practice as a social and political involvement, with a belief in theatre as a space for common reflection and in collectivity as a position against marginalizing systems. We tested and developed theatrical interventions in emergency situations and beyond, working with incarcerated youths, children with multiple disabilities, women subjected to domestic violence, migrant domestic workers and other marginalized fractions of our society, while continuing to work with people affected directly and indirectly by war.

Since Zoukak’s inception and with each new project we strive to find new ways of collective creation, springing from our understanding of theatre as collective work done by diverse individuals. Our methodology of work emphasizes processes rather than outcomes. For us collaboration lifts the creative operation to a higher level, allowing for unexpected approaches to theater making and a multiplicity of expression. Through our artistic creations, we tackle topics that question the ambient status-quo’s in our context and beyond. We structure our research and creation processes around cycles of work, producing an array of projects around specific themes; such as gender and sexuality, history, power and religion, death and immortality, childhood and violence, re-enactment, among others.

Moreover, we are committed to applying theatre in various fields: through social engagement, therapy, and education. We developed a specific approach to psychosocial interventions of drama therapy and socially engaged theatre, providing workshops and training programs to diverse groups, and devising performances in different Lebanese regions and in various contexts, finding ways to connect social interventions with artistic investigations.

Zoukak received the Ibsen Scholarship award (2012), the Anna Lindh Foundation’s Euromed Dialogue Award for social resilience and creativity (2014), the Honorary Citizenship of the City of Palermo (2017), the Premiun Imperiale Grant for Young Artists from the Japan Arts Association (2017) and the Culture for Peace Award from the Chirac Foundation (2017) and the Ellen Stewart International Award (2018).
THE JOKERS
Performed on the 24th of November, 8:30pm at Zoukak Studio

There is a child. Omnipresently absent.
There is a musician. Pulling the strings.
The setting is a shelter, which is a brothel, which is a theater: a stage and dressing room.
Or perhaps it is simply the projection of the intimacy between three performers backstage.
Their roles are constantly changing; we get glimpses of the unpolished reality behind their performances. We bare witnesses to the very transfigurations that their “audience” do not wish to see.

Background
This work revisits the Jokers of society; those characters that manifest themselves as distinctive from others, transformed by society into easy allegories, and made into proxies for all means of filth and deception or purity and wisdom. They are figures inevitably alienated by their own otherness, whether inherent or assigned. They become a screen onto which to project any narrative, escaping the anxiety of self-identification within a community or society. These appointed scapegoats could then be cursed, marginalized, denied existence, tortured, burned, and killed, or conversely sanctified, canonized, and worshiped. They are the products of a culture nourished by binaries of good and bad, the mirror of collective intelligence, the transfigurations that diverge and transcend the individual

Creative Insights
This performance is the outcome of a collaborative artistic process joining theater and music. The work was driven through a process of improvisations and collective writing by the company around the theme of the Jokers and involved the input of a musician and a make-up artist.

Presentation dates and locations
The play premiered internationally in October 2017, in Bordeaux within the Festival International des Arts de Bordeaux Métropole (FAB). It was further developed and later performed in Beirut on the 16th, 17th and 18th of December 2017 at Zoukak Studio.
I HATE THEATRE I LOVE PORNOGRAPHY
Performed on the 28th of November, 8:30pm at Zoukak Studio

Based on Pillars of the Community and Enemy of the People, by Henrik Ibsen

“I Hate Theater I Love Pornography” is an investigation on current forms of corruption plaguing today’s world. It uses theatricality as a tool to question how we position ourselves as artists and as individuals with regards to the multiple representations of this corruption. While the majority of citizens of countries in the northern hemisphere are becoming more and more afraid of cultural difference, electing extreme right-wing leaders and voting for exclusionist policies, for the prospect of being safe from “The Other”, and while most of the South is being torn by wars, destroying infrastructures and wiping out whole cultures, with real-estate businessmen waiting like scavengers for the right moment to sell and re-build, and as the death of children is being bartered for profit, we ask ourselves how can we expose the obscenity of this political opportunism.

Today these same power-thirsty policy makers, war lords and businessmen, are setting the new paradigms of the world’s system of values... exclusion, marginalization, segregation, displacement, murder... specifying the worth of human bodies, through commodities, wars, and the media. As people are massacred and decapitated daily on the news, and as heroes in Hollywood zombie movies are systematically obliterating masses of the undead; we will attempt to shed the light on this corruption through the value we assign to our bodies, creating a parallelism between the performative body, the pornographic body and the corpse.

Presentation dates and locations
The work on this piece started in 2014 during a residency at the Ibsen Center in Skien, Norway and was based on themes from Ibsen’s Enemy of the People and Pillars of the Society. It was later performed as a work in progress in Norway as part of the IBSEN conference in 2014, in India as part of ITFOK - International Theater Festival of Kerala in 2015, and in Lebanon.

This project was partly developed at the Sundance Theatre Lab in Utah, USA in July 2017.
PERFORM-AUTOPSY
Video extracts, within the Master class “Dramaturgy: ‘De-Dramatizing” Drama”

“Perform-autopsy” is the english title of “Mashrah Watani”.
“Mashrah” is the morgue in which the Autopsy of bodies, machines, old writings... and maybe thoughts, takes place.
“Watani” is what pretends to belong to or is produced in a specific country, like Lebanon for instance.
“Perform-Autopsy” is a theater performance that puts history on the table of autopsy, questioning the individual and common responsibility towards past events that didn't pass unnoticed.
This performance gives the audience a chance to participate in a process of writing the unwritten history of Lebanon, relying on the popular memory of Lebanese people through the details, a memory which might be the only narrator of history.

Presentation dates and locations
Since October 2012, “Perform Autopsy” has toured in more than 20 different locations across Lebanon.
Heavens closes the chapter of historical research we started in 2012 with Perform-Autopsy. Through this research, we gained insight into the private-public relationship with history. It revealed our incomplete historical empire: the curse of repetition and echoes, our fragile reality and selves, the breath-constricting anxiety when we attempt to bury the rubble of the past in denial and reconstruction, the fear, hatred and self-loathing at the thought of our murderers and reality silencers – and our victims, anxiousness over our struggles, actions and betrayals, nostalgia that sinks us in past events somehow linked to us.

In this work, we come to a self realization as individuals. We have become what we lost and we have lost what we have become. Our history has reduced us to numbers that fuel a destructive controversy. We challenge that which paralyses us and denies us a future. Between the here and the there, the now and the then, recollecting our memories and our losses. On stage, we stand up so we can see, we speak out so that we may hear, we tell our stories so we can realize ourselves.

Co-produced by Zoukak in partnership with War Child - Holland since 2013, in partnership with the Sustainable Democracy Center (SDC) and the Citizenship and Peace Youth Clubs, with funding from the Liberty Foundation.

Presentation dates and locations
Performed in February 2014 and in December 2015 at Zoukak Studio and in February 21016 at the International Theater Festival of Kerala, India.
TRainers

Lamia Abi Azar

Lamia is Performer, drama-therapist and a founding member of Zoukak Theatre Company.

Born in 1978, Lamia Abi Azar acquired a degree in Clinical Psychology from St. Joseph University in Beirut (USJ) in 1999, and a degree in History & Practice of Arts, Music and Performance, with an emphasis on theatre from the Universita Degli Studi Dell’Aquila in Italy in 2004.

Since 2001 Lamia developed a personal approach to drama therapy through continuous experimentation and practice, based on two separate schools: experimental theatre and clinical psychology, applying theatre and art as tools of alternative expression, personal investigation and self-affirmation.

Since 2005, Lamia has been conducting a drama therapy laboratory with children with multiple psycho-physical handicaps at “Ghassan Kanafani rehabilitation pre-school”, Mar-Elias Palestinian camp, Beirut, she has also led different workshops and training sessions in theatre and drama therapy with children, adults and persons with special needs in diverse contexts.

From 2008 and until 2012 she led a laboratory of drama therapy with incarcerated youths at Roumieh jail, Lebanon. She was a drama instructor of Corporal Expression at the Institute of Psychomotricity, Saint Joseph University Beirut from 2008 till 2011.

From 2008 till 2009 she worked as a technical advisor for Handicap International on a psychosocial project in Palestinian camps in Lebanon.

Omar Abi Azar

Omar Abi Azar is a theatre director and founding member of Zoukak Theatre Company.

He was the dramaturge and director of several of Zoukak’s performances that toured in various cities in the Middle East, Europe, the United States, South America, South Asia and Africa.

He was commissioned by international festivals, theatres and universities to create original work: NYUAD’s Performing Arts Center, Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center, University of Houston, Texas, Theaterfestival Schwindelfrei Mannheim, Williams College, Massachusetts, among others. He was artist in residence with Zoukak at the Lift Festival, London, Sundance Theatre Lab, Utah among others.

Since 2008, Omar leads psychosocial interventions with Zoukak, targeting various communities in different regions of Lebanon and abroad (in Serbia and in Calais’ Migrants’ Camp, France); giving drama-therapy workshops and creating collective performances with various groups.

Since 2013 he co-curates “Zoukak Sidewalks” an international performance festival, and “Focus Liban” a platform showcasing and supporting the work of artists residing in Lebanon.

Omar holds a BA in Theatre from the Lebanese University, Institute of Fine Arts (2006).
Junaid Sarrieddeen

Junaid is a theatre actor, director, dramaturge and founding member of Zoukak Theatre Company (2006). He performed in more than 15 performances in the past ten years, directed several major plays devised by Zoukak such as “Ish lbk smu sod jod...” (2007), “Lucena / Obedience Training” (2013), and co-directed “Heavens” (2014) and “The Jokers” (2017). He also directed “36 Abbas street, Haifa” (2017), a collaboration with writer and actress Raeda Taha. As a dramaturge, Junaid worked on several theatre and dance performances including Ali Chahrour’s trilogy “Fatmeh” (2014), “Leila’s Death” (2015) and “May he rise” (2017) in addition to “NIGHT” (2019). He participated in various Theatre Labs of the Sundance institute both as a director and Dramaturge in the US and the MENA region.

With Zoukak, Junaid leads psychosocial interventions in different regions across Lebanon that target various communities and age groups; including drama-therapy workshops in different mediation techniques, in addition to the facilitation and creation of collective theatre performances. He has conducted theatre classes in a number of schools, with children of different educational levels; and in centers for children with special needs. He trains teachers, educators and activity leaders on the use of theatre in different educational, social, and psychosocial contexts.

Junaid holds a BA in Theatre from the Lebanese University, Institute of Fine Arts. He also acquired a BA in Philosophy from the Faculty of Human Sciences at the Lebanese University and is currently following his Master Studies at the Saint Joseph University in Beirut.

Maya Zbib

Maya Zbib is a theatre director, performer, writer and founding member of Zoukak Theatre Company.

She studied theatre at the Institute of Fine Arts, the Lebanese University (2003) and pursued her MA in Performance Making at Goldsmiths, University of London (2007). In 2011 she obtained a postgraduate degree in International Cultural Cooperation and Management from IL3, the University of Barcelona. Her works were shown at international festivals and venues in the Middle East, Europe, the United States, South America, Africa and South Asia.

Commissioned by the city theatres of Krefeld and Monchengladbach in Germany, she co-adapted and directed Mahmoud Darwish’s A Memory for Forgetfulness with the theatres’ ensemble (2013). She was artist in residence with Zoukak at the Sundance theatre Lab, in Utah (2017), at the BAC in London, as part of LIFT festival (2014), at NYU Abu Dhabi (2015), at Schwindelfrei Festival in Mannheim (2014-2016) and at Houston University’s Mitchell Center (2015-2016) as part of CounterCurrent Festival. A staged reading of her play Ghalia’s Miles was read at the Royal Court in London (2016) and at the Edinburgh International Theatre Festival (2017). Her installation Limbo of the White Sea was presented as part of On The Move within LIFT 2016 at the Royal Court.

Since 2008, Maya leads psychosocial interventions with Zoukak in marginalized contexts in different Lebanese regions. She has given talks and workshops and taught at universities and in non-academic contexts, in the Middle East, Europe, the United States and Africa.

Zbib is a Chevening/KRSF Alumni (2007), a Cultural Leadership International Alumni (2010), a fellowship recipient of ISPA, New York (2010), was selected as the protégé of Peter Sellars, American theatre, opera and festival director, as part of the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative (2011), and she’s a finalist nominee in the Gilder/Coignier International Theatre Award, New York (2014).

She was selected by the International Theatre Institute as one of the 5 message authors for world theatre day 2018, her message was translated into 20 languages and read for tens of thousands of spectators before performances in theatres throughout the world.
Mohamad Hamdan

Mohamad Hamdan is a trainer, strategy advisor, and a board member of Zoukak Theatre Company and Cultural association. He co-manages Zoukak, leads key production projects and participates in the creative devising process.

Mohamad’s focus evolves around people development and collective work sustainability. He has been practicing this focus in various contexts within the business and association worlds, and within social movements and communities.

Mohamad studied Mathematical engineering at the Institut National Des Sciences Appliquées in France (2001). He then joined Murex, a worldwide leader in financial software between 2001 and 2013, in France, UAE and Lebanon, managing projects and clients’ relationships. In 2013, Mohamad completed a course on ‘Leadership, Organizing and Action’ delivered by Harvard University followed by ‘Train the Trainer’, delivered by CIPD, in the UK. He then started designing and delivering training programs and consultancy services in communication, client care, leadership, social organizing and cultural management. Since 2016, he followed trainings in Non Violent Communication (including a 10-day intensive retreat) adding to his skills a new set of techniques.
Fee: 1700 USD (includes the full program, tickets for the performances, lunch and dinner during the entire week and the day out).

Early bird fee:
15% discount for applicants who apply by 15th of September: 1445 USD 
(includes the full program, tickets for the performances, lunch and dinner during the entire week and the day out).

Financial aid: there are limited financial aids opportunities, if you believe that your situation requires a financial aid, please send a special request with a motivation letter detailing your request by the 31st of August 2019.

The accommodation and plane tickets – if needed – should be covered by the participants.
The participants are expected to arrive on the 23rd and leave on the 30th of November. For participants travelling from abroad, a travel insurance is advised.

We are providing 2 options for the accommodation:
Places are limited, early reservation is recommended to avoid higher prices
- Grand Mechmoch Hotel: 300$ for 7 nights
- Alexander Hotel: 500$ for 7 nights

To apply, please fill this Application Form and send it to: kawaliszoukak@zoukak.org before the 15th of October 2019.