

Magazin #16



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**Aloali'i Tapu
Enad Marouf
Eng Kai Er
Daniella Preap**

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Dear reader,

with this magazine we invite you to take a trip down memory lane with us. As for this edition we asked our current choreographers in residence, Eng Kai Er, Aloali'i Tapu, Enad Marouf and Daniella Preap to share glimpses into their current research. As it turns out, they somehow all take us not only on a trip around the world, but also share historical accounts and some of their remembrances with us.

So buckle up: The Cambodian-Ukrainian choreographer Daniella Preap introduces us to the history of Khmer dance and how there lies much of her inspiration working in contemporary dance.

In Eng Kai Er's excursion, she is concerned with notions of work. She approaches the topic in different styles: Amongst others, a lab report, reminiscing her former work in a scientific lab as well as a video-based study of a working cat.

Aloali'i Tapu covers, with three different contributions, even more miles by bridging the distance between Hamburg and Samoa: While linking Samoan history to Hamburg's colonial past, he shows how the Samoan understanding of remembrance is not only about going back in time in linear means but at the same time also includes moving towards the future.

Enad Marouf's contributions and contributors are taking us on a journey dealing with memory and a forgotten figure in Western queer history. Enad Marouf's poem is dealing with identity and the role of memory therein, he talks with Farah Barqawi about the topic of exile memory, while Raphael Khouri is investigating the historical role of 李兆堂 Li Shui Tong, former assistant to Magnus Hirschfeld.

With this edition we hope to provide you with a thorough insight into what is every so often obscured: the research processes taking place long before they come to life in new choreographies on stage: This time taking place at TanzHochDrei from 15-19 March 2023. Eng Kai Er, Aloali'i Tapu and Enad Marouf will each premiere a new piece as the culmination to their extensive research processes and of their residencies in Hamburg. Daniella Preap will create a video installation bringing her topic into a contemporary media situation.

Your K3-Team

BEYOND ETENA

PART I: ENTRIES TO REIMAGINING FUTURES OUTSIDE OF THE *FANUA*

'Ka mua, ka muri' a Maori whakatauki (proverb) 'to walk backwards into your future', expresses a fundamental understanding of time and remembrance lived by Samoan people like myself. Although walking, especially walking backwards might suggest linear paths of time, our perception of time is embedded deeply in our ancestors, a non-linear/sphere of experienced and coming time; ancestors being those who've come before us in the physical world simultaneously walking with us into the unknown. They've already been here, and are welcoming us...sailing alongside us further and deeper into the cosmos.

Being here continues a search for what connects me to land, water and people; to the memories carried by images and imagined worlds that are building and forming community for ancestors to inhabit. Being here continues a search for what strengthens shared space between us and its possibilities in exchanging with communities considered as 'other'. It highlights the necessity of decentering the western world's power of access and perception, while unearthing the faces and languages that usher us into the realms of coexistence. A realm regenerating the diseased dreams of those who've come before me, and walking backwards towards a future where they are with me, and I with them.

From 1900 - 1919, Germany was Samoa's protectorate, making it a state under German rule. After its defeat in World War I, Germany lost all its colonies, including Samoa. In 1910, Samoan 'fale' (houses), women and children were exhibited at Hamburg's Tierpark Hagenbeck as part of an expedition tour in Germany, where the Samoan people presented cultural songs, dances, and their way of life.¹ In the exhibition, they were shown as 'purely natural' populations following the then prominent Darwinian racial theory that acted as one of the main impetus of worldwide human zoos² at the time, likening the exhibited peoples as the closest evolutionary step to apes before humans.

My observation of these times, remain respective of my peoples need to survive in a time where westerners were fighting over whose government structure and systems they would assimilate. In the Samoan culture, our history was archived and shared by song, tattooing and story-telling but the emergence of images, photography and film documentaries of Samoa from the lens of westerners, has been much

¹ As shown in the picture here: <https://www.sz-photo.de/id/00132499>

² See: <https://www.discovery.org/a/52619/>

of what we must rely on for contemporary research. I am empowered by the resistance my people practiced while others had protectorate status over them, and now I must challenge my not-so-sturdy walk backwards into a future of images I must curate alongside my family and our stories of voyage and travel. Parallel to this thinking, my priority lies in the power and image we must reimagine and create in the assertion to exist as human in the eyes of the other.

Herein lies the opportunity to address the perception and conditioning effects these (and similar) images have had on my self-perception. And possibly the perception carried by my community. Where the crossroads are signposted in directions of; remembering to undo, undoing the memory or creating an entirely new image/ experience to remember or manifest – all of which, are roads that lead directly back to the crossroad again.

Remembering to undo: Hadleigh Pouesi, leader and trailblazer for Maori, Samoan and Pacific peoples in Aoteroa within the area of street dance and youth work said in a recent interview “...we need to decolonise the way of thinking about theatre. And I say colonise really consciously because, we didn’t have theatre in the Pacific.

We didn’t have theatre -- performance spaces before Europeans came here and designated our spaces as performance spaces. So, it’s almost a decolonising where [we must realize] we’re allowed to do this anywhere.”

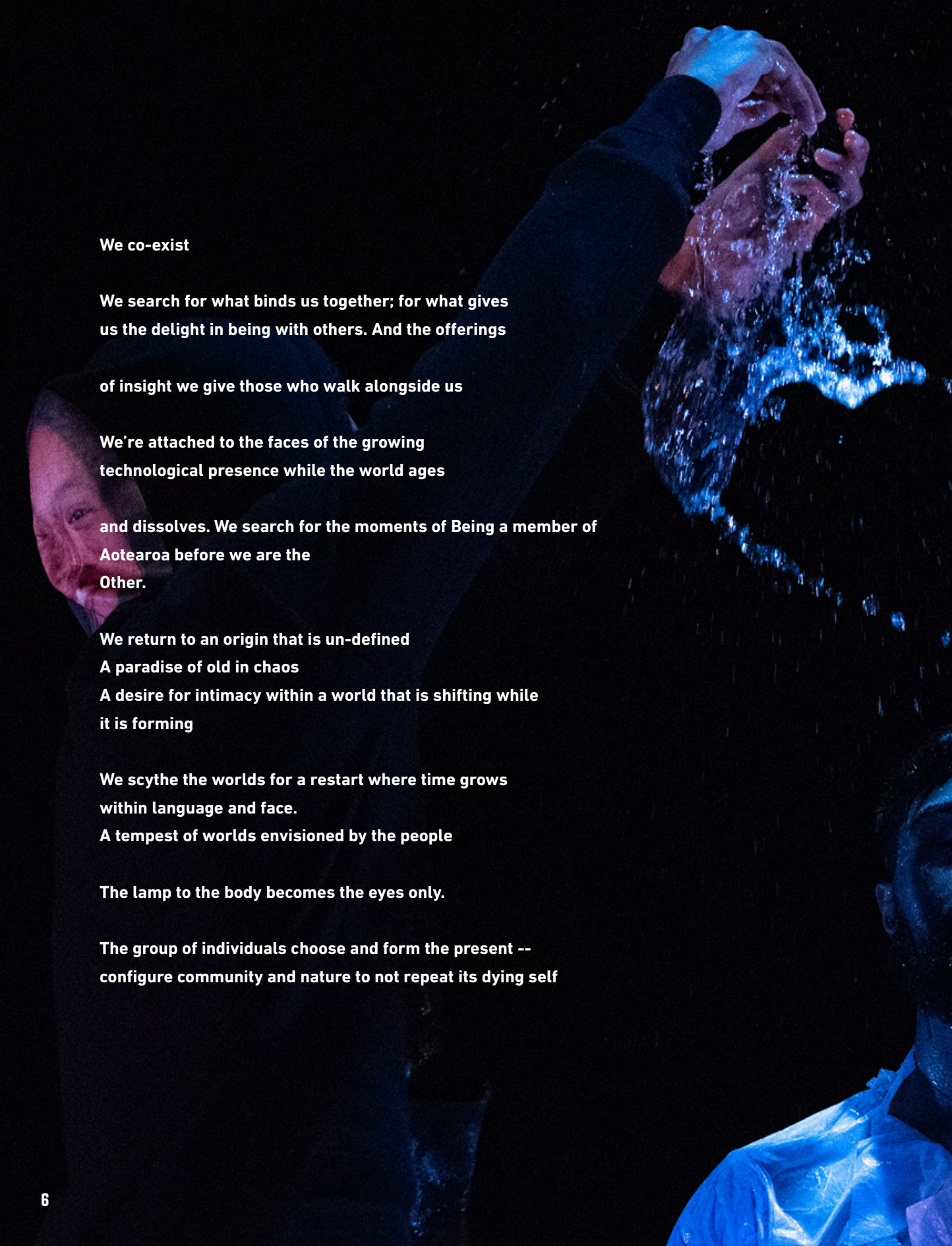
Undoing the memory: _____ erasure of memory is not possible.

“Creating new imagery/new worlds: There is no destroying, nor ignoring such tragedies and triumphs that our ancestors had experienced. But is there an offering that can bridge them all together to this very moment? imagination? what of imagination? what of the infinite weaponry that we were not told we knew how to wield? the weight of it? the wings on it? even when blinded, we have always had the other sight to see the new worlds, to rebirth them, and walk as them, hand in hand with our gods. to dismantle, is to sever the structure, to break the jaw and reassemble. to imagine and reimagine, is to begin to massage the oldest language of the ‘va’³ back into your tongue. from then on, speaking will be world-building.”⁴

– Jahra Wasasala

³ ‘Va’ is a concept used in the Pacific Islands which varies in meaning from island to island, referring to time, space and connection to land and people.

⁴ Cited from: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CCff1R9gZfA/>

A person wearing a dark suit is shown from the chest up, holding a glowing blue liquid in their hands. The liquid is dripping and splashing, creating a dynamic, ethereal effect. The background is solid black, which makes the blue light stand out. The person's face is partially visible on the left, looking towards the camera with a slight smile. The overall mood is mysterious and futuristic.

We co-exist

We search for what binds us together; for what gives
us the delight in being with others. And the offerings

of insight we give those who walk alongside us

We're attached to the faces of the growing
technological presence while the world ages

and dissolves. We search for the moments of Being a member of
Aotearoa before we are the
Other.

We return to an origin that is un-defined

A paradise of old in chaos

A desire for intimacy within a world that is shifting while
it is forming

We scythe the worlds for a restart where time grows
within language and face.

A tempest of worlds envisioned by the people

The lamp to the body becomes the eyes only.

The group of individuals choose and form the present --
configure community and nature to not repeat its dying self



The group removes

origin

to be alone together within the frailty and
instability of that beneath us

an aftermath settles

The joys of youth and elation of building worlds to stand on —
to lay beneath

Worlds shift again while forming removing
the home where they are no longer

villains nor heroes

We are the faces
of what is natural we strip the caregiver role
the desires for independence within village and city

And burn the disassembled constructs of supreme governance

We drown its hold
Where it can no longer define us.

PART II: ALONE TOGETHER

"The feats of early Pacific navigation were imbued with a psychology of affinity and survival, where the ocean, its fauna and flora, the birds, stars, clouds, moon and so on, were believed sacred. The spirit of adventure and responsibility that surrounded Pacific navigation placed mana in the water, in trees, in clouds, in birds and all that the navigators would use to travel the seas. The quest to go out on long voyages was a holy mission in that the navigators bonded and held sacred conversations with nature and the gods."¹ said Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi, head of state of Samoa in 2011.

In 2020, we created *ETENA*, the film and sculpture installation that sought alternative existences in a dystopian world of wax, soil, concrete, trees, water and paper alongside performances of dance artists all searching for their relationship to these elements whether it be in the physical or other world.

Elijah's spirit brings levity to deeper thoughts and memories. Pictures created as I listened to my parents reminisce on their youth. His voice carries an aura that threads photos of my parents in their teenage years, without a care in the world, but a whole life before and ahead of them. Elijah's performance in *Alone Together* begun during the development of our work *LEECHES* in 2019, which featured our good friend Taniora (Tanz) Motutere. Elijah reflects on the memory of

his friendship with Tanz and all that Tanz meant to us in the world of nature, internet, people and land beyond the stage:

Tanz: "yo yo, Elijah bust me a beat..."

Elijah beatboxes

"cut the beat! I don't need no beat, I'll go acapella with my...feet."

Tanz dances (audience and supporting cast applaud / Elijah is on his knees screaming and hyping-up his dear friend)

Tanz: "you know what me feet do?"

Elijah: "what, what?"

Tanz: "...they dance"

Tanz: "...you know what dance is in German?"

Elijah "I know you know, I know you know!"

Tanz: "it's Tanz! You know who Tanz is, Tanz is the man, I am the man, you know why I'm the man?!"

Elijah: "Tell us, tell us man, tell us!"

Tanz: "it's cause I'm Maori!"

Tanz becomes the land and a call for us to return to it. He doesn't become 'the man' he 'is' and always has been 'the man'. There is much to reflect on the ways of communicating and articulating the rhythm to which we walk through this world, especially one where despite having loved ones around us, we are alone, yet are reminded through the gentle whisper of our children, family, ancestors, friends and the growing memories of them all, that we're together regardless of the quiet

¹ http://www.head-of-state-samoa.ws/speeches_pdf/SPEECH%20FOR%20BYU%20UTAH%20FINAL.pdf

walk through the realms of dreams, imagining, regeneration, manifesting, loving and honouring. Where there is always a moving and returning, through the cosmos and to the ocean.

As the old Samoan proverb goes, 'e lele le toloa ae maau i le vai' meaning "the duck will fly away, but it will always return to the water".

<https://vimeo.com/793295189/0eef1d1a11>

★ LAB REPORT ★

What: October Lab: Modify Kai's Show ★👤🔬👤🔬🔬

When: 4-6 Oct 2022

Who: Eng Kai Er, Daniella Preap, Christopher Dippert (Kai, Dani, Chris)

Where: K31 studio, K3

Why: Kai is trying to make a show 🎪👤 + Kai wanted to work with people, experiment with how to work together.

This report is written from Kai's perspective.

👤📧 It all began with this invitation email:

The Lab will begin with me showing you a solo show (which I am making during the month of September). Then, we will modify my show in whatever ways we think best.

At the end of the Lab we will 'perform' (only for ourselves) the new version of the show.

...

The starting point for making my solo show is my autobiographical work history. (This is the research I am doing at K3 until March/April 2023: looking at the topic of 'work' by looking at my own work history.)

However, a pre-existing interest in the topic of work is not (even close to) a prerequisite for joining the Lab in October, because the Lab is much more concerned with the processes of modifying a show, than with the stated topic of the show. Prerequisites for the October Lab might be: a basic enjoyment of performance-making, willingness to improvise, and curiosity about how we could work together in a 'turbo collaboration' / mini collaboration.

My motivation for making the Lab is: I want to find a way to not work alone, even though my work tends to be personal and autobiographical. I want to find ways to share work, and to create artistic processes that are social in nature.

I will also say - I don't know yet how the October Lab will connect with the March 2023 production that I will do at K3. If anything tangible from the October Lab feeds into the March 2023 production, I will consult with you accordingly.

Let me know if you would have interest and time to join in October? I would be grateful to be accompanied and educated through your presence.

REPORT

I can't even begin to write this report. It feels like I'm doomed to fail, like the way I write would be too analytical-cognitive and the experience of the Lab would not be conveyed through the writing.

Ahem! 3 people met for 3 days.

☀️ Day 1: we played 'Director, Performer, Designer'. Each person role-played each role for 20 minutes.

The performances were:

1. *Slow Brain* (performers move slowly in / around / with a ball) 🧘♂️🧠
2. *When Dinosaurs Ruled the Earth* (dinosaur writes a list of rules on a computer, walks to microphone, announces the rules) 🖥️🗣️🦖🎤
3. *Coincidance* (a dance based on spelling the phrase "Aluminium Foil")

Lunch. 🍕🍔🥗🍌

Afternoon: Kai showed her pre-existing solo, *Standard Practice*.

Kai talked about the history of her working life.



☀️ Day 2: step-by-step going-through of *Standard Practice* somehow, mysteriously, ends with us hanging a dinosaur across a light pipe (rail? Railing? It was a metal pipe, from which lights were hanging.) The dinosaur wears a little pink flower as a hat, and has wrist-pads, made of felt and yarn. 🌸

Lunch. 🌸🍵🍲🍽️

Afternoon: Coin-si-dance - a workshop where we created 3 'work shops'. Work shop owners each own a shop where they sell work. Buyers come to buy work. We have a fake currency called Uhu and a symbol for the currency that looks like the euro sign inverted on its side. We play this game until Chris takes a break, writes on Chris's shop, "back in 5 mins" - Dani and I visit the shop - we rob the shop!! It ends in extreme uncontrollable giggling from me; I think Dani was also giggling. We write a reflection; Chris writes, "I learned I am not very good at playing improvised games." 😞😭😭👛💰💵💶💷

Dani directs a version of *Standard Practice* called *Pancakes are Unflippable*. Chris makes labels/ tags; Kai tests each object to see if it's flippable or not. If it's flippable, it's not a pancake; if it's unflippable, it's a pancake. Chris labels the objects accordingly. (Bizarre but true.) 🍷🍷



☀️ Day 3: by this time I am completely lost and I simply ask the others if they remember what we agreed to do today. Luckily Dani remembers and says "we will make a board!" and then I just let the others guide me. We make the board by taping sheets of paper to the wall. We write on the board, to conceptualise and discuss how to 'modify Kai's show'. We make decisions on the starting and ending positions of props; music; and actions of performers. zzz☀️🎯🗣️✅✅

Lunch. 🍱🍔🍷

Afternoon: we perform *Standard Deviation*, the modified version of *Standard Practice*. Thus, we succeed in achieving our goal! (The goal being that we should perform, for ourselves, this modified show.) 🍷🍷 It was a random, arbitrary goal, which did not seem to feel like a real goal for Chris; maybe also not for Dani. I will say that it was a good-enough goal for me.



🎬🔴🔴🙏🙏 (end of Lab)

Later, reflecting on everything that happened 🤔, trying to justify the frivolity of the Lab, I am surprised by strange words pouring out of my mouth as I speak with a fellow choreographer, "but what if you die before the premiere?" I proceed to (both childishly and seriously) argue for the importance of fun in the performance-making process, because there is always a chance one might die before the premiere.



That is not to say, that seriousness cannot also be fun.

And there is still the question of what to do, in situations where different people have different ideas of what constitutes fun.

I'm still thinking about what all this means 🤔.

We were artists role-playing artists, making a series of 'fake' shows, for real, doing it with no apparent reason, to no apparent consequence. Maybe we were playing with our work. The final result, *Standard Deviation*, was in my opinion not very good at all. But everything that happened during the process felt much more important to me than the result. 🤔🙏

I would like to do this Lab again, and I hope somehow 'better' - both wilder because of playfulness, and calmer because of insight.

Finally - I truly appreciate every moment shared in a studio. Thank you, Chris and Dani, for sharing time. ❤️❤️❤️🤔🙏💙

end of report 🙏🍷

I don't
wanna work,
I wanna stay
home and
eat cake.

Brain 1

Brain 2

Chin brain

Feet / paws



CAT WORK

Hello, I am a cat. I am good at jumping on balls, pushing balls, doing cartwheels while half-leaning on balls; I can meow, I can roll on the floor, and I can lie on a ball and squash it until it is flat. Sometimes after squashing a ball, I lie on it and go to sleep, and dream the most entertaining and funny dreams.

<https://vimeo.com/799881555/871873f077>

Once upon a time, I thought that I would build a career out of catching mice, pouncing on lasers, getting tangled in yarn, or taking naps. After my schooling, I realised that there are many types of cats in this world; there is no need to be a house cat.

<https://vimeo.com/799881716/36887d02f5>

When I grow up, I want to be a leopard or maybe a lion, but I am not sure whether I can be a lion because I think I didn't spend enough time practising my roaring. I am not proud of my weak roars, but perhaps my ability to eat cake can compensate for this?

<https://vimeo.com/799882524/cdaedb483d>

Now that we're on the topic of cake: my favourite cakes are chocolate cake, lemon cheesecake, and more chocolate cake. If I could start all over again, I would definitely not go to cat school, because cat school made me think that eating cake, and being able to slow down enough to really enjoy it, do not count as valid skills. For this reason, I am slightly sceptical of school.

<https://vimeo.com/799882596/3ec88cc82b>

Regarding how I obtain cake and other foods: when I am hungry and meow loudly, people feed me (often not cake, but I am happy nevertheless for any type of cat food). I have noticed that when a human child is hungry, people also feed the child. But when a human adult is hungry, I have heard people say, "go and get a job." Whenever I hear that, I feel immensely lucky that I am a cat.

FROM SHOOT TO FRUIT

A SHORT HISTORY OF KHMER RITUAL DANCE

This article is a result of my research during my residency at K3. It is focused on the topic of Khmer traditional dance, which I have a long-standing interest in since my father is Khmer. For me, dance is one of the means of self-discovery or tools for self-creation. It, and the state I am in when I dance, gives me a sense of myself as a whole unique person who no longer has to belong to any identifications: be it a certain dance style or a certain identity. My main quest is to discover what lies within, to go deeper into my roots and maybe decode my mixed cultural genome.

The origin of Khmer dance

It is difficult to say exactly when Khmer traditional dance first appeared, but from the second half of the sixth century, the first Khmer kings traced their

dynastic origins to a mythical event where the origin of the kings of Cambodia goes back to the union of the hermit Kambu Swayambhuva with the celestial nymph Mera. In this reference, Mera was an apsara or celestial dancer gifted to him by Shiva, one of the principal deities of Hinduism. According to Hindu legend, the celestial dancers were born from the churning of the ocean in pursuit of ambrosia, the nectar





of immortality. In Cambodia, the word *apsara* began to refer to human dancers who belonged to the temple and performed ritual dances in the worship of the gods. They were also a symbol of purity. Countless bas-reliefs engraved on the walls of the majestic Angkor Wat temple give us an idea of their appearance and dance poses, and show that they were an integral part of the religious life of that time.

Khmer traditional dance at first had mostly a ritual function. In it, the cult of ancestors ('*neak ta*') and the cult of fertility were combined in a movement prayer. With the help of an *apsara*, spirits were attracted to the temples, the same spirits that were believed to control the element of water and therefore influence the fertility of the earth. At a time when the survival of an entire population - especially during the dry season - depended on rains, honouring the spirits of ancestors who could influence their well-being was the go-to of the Khmer people of that time.

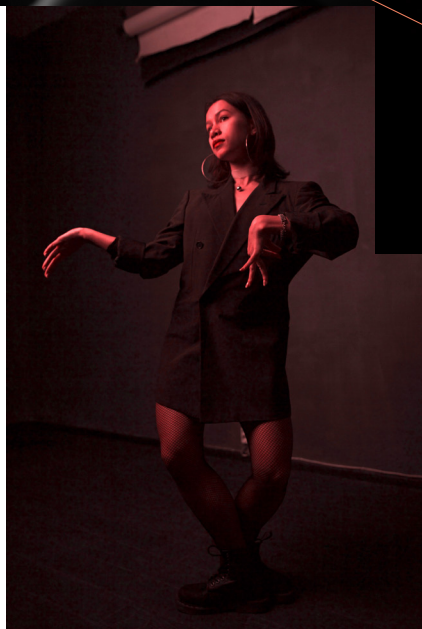
Symbolism and hand gestures

Khmer dance is deeply symbolic. In it, all positions, hand gestures, half-tilts of the head, and half-smiles have meaning. Gesture language is one of the most distinctive features of Khmer traditional dance. Some scientists describing them use the term *mudra*, which means a seal that captures the magic of a ritual and in tantric practice is identified, in particular, with the divine, feminine energy. That immediately hints at a relationship with Indian dance, where *mudras* are used, and in many cases, forming the actual language of denotative signs. It is quite clear that Khmer hand gestures retain this original function, but unlike Indian dance, where each finger is used to express speech, the whole hand and the body are used to express an emotion, a state, or an idea. The entire body is in perpetual motion.

To express the movements, the dancers perform - starting in their childhood - flexibility exercises and pay extra attention to the hands, since with only hand gestures they can depict life from its beginning to its end. The four main gestures, in which the dancer's hands constantly appear, are a sprout, a leaf, a flower, and the fruit of a plant. They show the cycle of birth, life and death of plants, and remind us that we, as part of nature, are also subject to this continuous cycle.



Khmer choreography is generally inspired by natural images: standing positions form the undulations of water, the dancer's arms look like the branches of a tree, and the whole body gracefully flows from curve to curve, as there are no straight lines in nature.



Another prominent symbol present in the language of apsara dance is the naga, which are the divine serpents, who combine the elements of earth and water. In their movements and hand positions, the dancers repeat the forms of the snake and show the head and tail or two heads of the divine snake.

Naga is a cultivated symbol in many Asian cultures. In Cambodia, it exists as a cult since thousands of years and has its origins in the stories of naga princess Soma who in 1 century CE married



Indian prince Kaudinaya I and together they founded the Kambujadesa kingdom, which is modern Cambodia today. Khmer people believe they are descendants of the nagas. Many people still believe that the divine serpents exist, and will one day reappear, coming back home and bringing prosperity to their people.

Entering the stage

Usually, before and after each performance, the dancers stand in rows, kneel and, with fluid grace, place their palms together in front of their foreheads, throats, and hearts. This gesture, 'sampeah', is addressed to the god or gods, the spirits, the 'kru' (teacher), the king, the Sampho drum, the audience, or all together, depending on the occasion and one's interpretation.

The main companion that led the dancers to the ritual is music, especially the Sampho drum.

The Sampho is a small, two-headed barrel drum indigenous to Cambodia. Comparable to all Cambodian instruments, drums are made with ritualistic care and are closely identified with the spirit world. It is believed that the drums summon or capture spirits. Due to its expressive rhythmicity, music introduces the dancers into a state of meditation, a certain trance.

The apsara, so often depicted and symbolized by the dancer, is a symbol of transcendence. Make-up helps to show this otherworldliness more clearly.

The face is whitened with white rice powder, the eyebrows and eyelashes are tinted with soot taken from a plate placed over the candle and applied with an oiled bamboo stick, and the lips are tinted with red Chinese paper. George Groslier noted in this context:

"According to the tradition, the actress is covered with white so that she will become more inhuman, more inscrutable, a little virginal wave on that Sea of Milk from which, legend has it, she was born. She is white because white is the symbol of the invisible, the divine, the spotless, the immaterial, and the serene. It is the colour of the royal parasol, the robes of the Brahmins, the sacred lotus, the sampan of the astrologers, of the moon and the guardian elephant of the realm. She is white because, having become a Princess, she must no longer have any personality, any trace of that which she was before the dance"¹

Relevant in this regard is the fact that in Khmer the word for 'going on stage' is 'chen' also meaning 'to go out' whereas 'leaving the stage' is 'chol', also signifying 'to enter', as if implying that the dancer is going somewhere during the performance; and after she leaves the stage, she enters this world again.

Leaving this world

Since the seventh century, Khmer dance is especially often mentioned in connection to funeral ceremonies of Cambodian monarchs. That tradition was still practised in the 20th century, like for example when dancers attested the funeral processions for King Sisowath Monivong in 1941. Dancers were seen as transmitters of messages from earth to heaven. They were walking on a passage that stretched into the afterlife like the body of naga divine serpent. Even in modern religious ceremonies, dancers are still used as mediators of communication with the gods.

The dancers of the Khmer traditional dance are not and were not shamans in the sense of the spirits entering their bodies, but they have long-standing associations with mediation in contact between worlds. Dancers aim to preserve integrity, and harmony in the complex unity of spiritual and earthly existence, unity between light and darkness, woman and man, earth and sky. In their language of movements, they combine

¹ Paul Cravath *Earth in flower. The divine mystery of Cambodian dance drama*, p.424.

these opposites, showing an unchanging balance and harmony; dancers embody the appearance of spirits and give the audience a sense of the presence of otherworldly forces. Trance slowness; mysterious smile; frequent gestures of flight; hypnotic, mobile immobility of hands; and the silent, gliding, shining appearance, like a precious stone in a dream - all this needs no higher reference to be called spiritual. As Cheng Fong said, "when they are dancing they seem not to be like other men".²

In the rituals of the past, dance was a bridge between the world of people and the realm of spirits. The question is if it is possible to go back on that bridge. Can the ritualism of Khmer traditional dance take us back in time, and connect us with our ancestors, for whom nature, the elements, and the fertility of the earth were objects of worship, reverence and preservation?

Returning to today, returning to myself

Khmer dance has overcome many difficulties. The dance tradition suffered a setback during the Khmer Rouge regime. Although 90 per cent of all Cambodian classical artists were executed between 1975 and 1979, those who survived after the fall of the Khmer Rouge came out of hiding, found each other and started to revive their sacred traditions. Sadly, as the tradition was passed down orally from teacher to student, much of the knowledge was lost along with the lives of the victims of the genocide.

The Royal Ballet of Cambodia works on preserving tradition, which is one way for this tradition to continue existence. Another way to give life to the old senses is to bring its elements into the light of the present day within the contemporary development of arts. For me, it is an urgent question as in my opinion tradition and preserved elements of culture live in the museums, where they become an object of contemplation. There they lose the power of making a change, they become inactive. I think Khmer dance has a lot

to offer to contemporary dance. As movement researchers found their inspiration in eastern practices such as yoga, qigong, martial arts, tai chi etc. I am finding mine in Khmer dance.

When I practice and move in the 'cycle of life' through hand gestures, I give more freedom to my whole body. Rising my spine as the sprout trying to reach sunlight, developing a leaf from my hand and a branch from my arm, dancing as whole my body thriving after the summer rain, but remaining grounded with my legs/roots. Giving something to this world, that was created from my movement, from my little dance. It appears as a fruit that I hold between my middle finger and thumb. I am not afraid to lose it, so it falls. As I let go, I am not afraid of the end, because I know that the cycle of life will continue, another sprout will grow, and another spring will come.

² Paul Cravath *Earth in flower: The divine mystery of Cambodian dance drama*, p.441.

<https://vimeo.com/794517873/26f85ccd77>

IN MY HAND A WORD

BY ENAD MAROUF

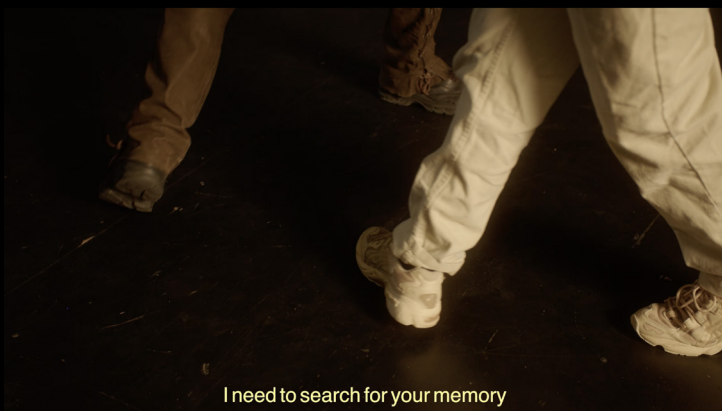
Standing by a window. They stretch out their arm, unfold their fingers under the sunlight. They turn their head and look into their hand. They observe a palm, fingers, veins. What they have lived with and already knew - the usual, the same. Slowly gazing into their own hand, overtired. Though they are just watching their hand: Strangely, it fatigues them - their hand gradually turns empty, washed out, without depth or meaning.

In my hand
In my hand a word
because
there is nothing
In my hand a word
because
there is nothing
left
but this hand
as I am

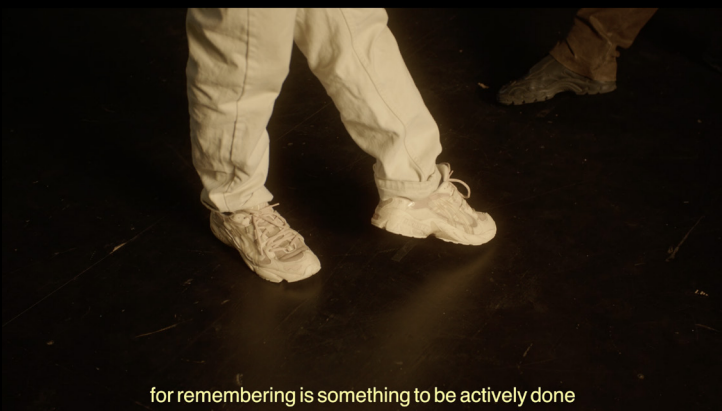
They stay in the same position, still watching their hand, minutes pass by, disclosing a loss that has forever been there - the knowledge that: what they have lived with and already knew has been lost - a certain knowledge of uncertainty.

As I am talking, a word
as I am talking,
a word
falling apart
as I am
as I am watching
as I am watching, a hand
approaches me
that is becoming
my world

The feeling of deep grief that once engulfed them, has soon after dovetailed with a sense of liberation and celebration. An overwhelming joy and a shattering sadness, all at the same time. An unexpected turn of event.



I need to search for your memory



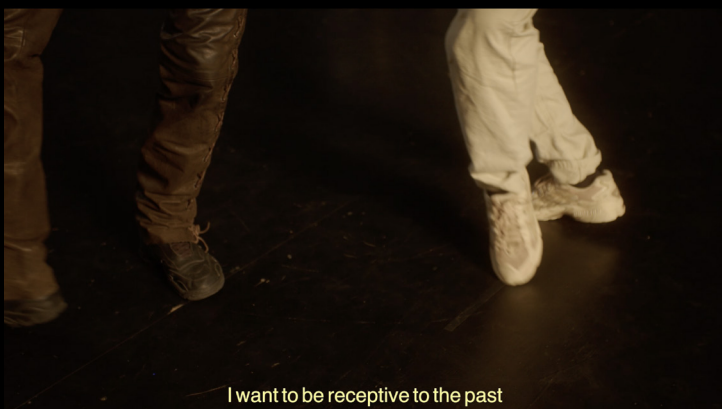
for remembering is something to be actively done



the same way I can't see air



even though I am in it



I want to be receptive to the past



as it is alive



and not entombed in some rigid written history

READING SAPPHO, READING LI 李

BY RAPHAEL KHOURI

Schwule sterben aus is what the graffiti reads on the dull memorial slabs for Magnus Hirschfeld and his Institut für Sexualwissenschaft.

The slabs themselves are grey and ugly. A few details about the gay activist and his library and how it was burned by the Nazis. Then there are even uglier giant lily flowers in 80s primary colours surrounding the slabs. The slabs aren't even in the actual location of the institute. It was somewhere right across the Spree on the corner Beethovenstraße 3/In den Zelten 10, two streets which no longer exist. I call my German friend to see what can be done about the graffiti because I am forever an *Ausländer* and wouldn't know how to fix this, and I also therefore always have the voice asking, 'Who would believe me anyway?' My friend says he will call the city.

The homophobic graffiti on the slabs makes sense to me. To me, the slabs themselves are homophobic, the slurs just confirm it. Two ugly, silly, mislocated cement slabs in exchange for the most groundbreaking queer support and cultural centre the modern world has ever known? A century ago, the institute provided a research library of over 20,000 volumes, a large archive and medical exam rooms. It offered queer/sex positive services to the public such as gay, marital, sex counselling services, low cost/free contraception, treatment for sexually transmitted infections, gynaecology, lectures and Q&As. Most importantly, however, it provided trans people with 'transvestite passes' to keep them from being arrested, sex reassignment surgery, hormones, counselling, facial feminisation/masculinisation surgery, hair removal as well as service jobs at the institute itself. No such centralised hub for trans healthcare people exists in Berlin today. We have to schlep around from clinic to clinic, wait years on waiting lists for impossible to get appointments, navigating byzantine bureaucratic labyrinths, transphobic healthcare practitioners, archaic laws and cisgender gatekeepers, pleading with each other for advice on Facebook and Telegram groups about safe places and the next steps to take.

Much has been written about Hirschfeld and his institute. How Hirschfeld only found out his institute had burned after going to a cinema in his Zurich exile, where he watched newsreels of Nazi students pillage his library and throw his precious lifework into a pyre at Bebelplatz. And then he watched as they threw a bust of his own head into the fire. Much has been said about the 'Begräbniswetter' that day (as Erich Kästner described after standing anonymously at Bebelplatz watching his own book burn). In contrast to the vast documentation of Hirschfeld's work, until very recently I did not find any writing

in history books of or about 李兆堂 Li Shui Tong, Hirschfeld's assistant. Nor was his name written on any of the slabs, memorial plaques, nor was it mentioned in documentary videos. West German history was cruel to white gay men, but even in 2022 in Berlin no one cares about the institute's actual location, let alone rebuilding it, so why would a traumatised and reclusive Asian gay man make it into Western queer history even if he played an integral role? Who was 李兆堂 Li Shui Tong exactly? Why don't we know about him? Laurie Marhoefer's monumental new book *Racism and the Making of Gay Rights: A Sexologist, His Student, and the Empire of Queer Love* fills in many gaps and does much of the work of undoing racist neglect of this important man.

In his final years, Hirschfeld left for Asia to continue his global sexology research. That's where fate smiles upon the ageing scientist - he meets the young, handsome and brilliant 李兆堂 Li Shui Tong from Hong Kong.

Li 李 is equally taken by Hirschfeld and decides to drop out of medical school to become a sexologist like him. His family even encourages this decision, impressed by the burgeoning new field of study. Hirschfeld promises them that Li 李 will have a scholarship and career in Berlin. And so, Li 李 becomes Hirschfeld's protegee and lover, guiding him and protecting him, translating for him, helping him book hotels, operating slides throughout his talks and travels in Asia and the Middle East. When the couple returns to Europe, Li 李 travels to Berlin and gathers some of Hirschfeld's books before the Nazi raid. He helps Hirschfeld re-establish the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft in Paris with the few items from the collection that they manage to recover. Li 李 co-authors a paper with Hirschfeld at the Congress of the World League for Sexual Reform. Theoretically, Li 李 was at the beginning of a long and promising career.

At this point, however, Hirschfeld's original assurance of a scholarship and career have crumbled because of the grim turns of history. Li 李 visits his family in Hong Kong and they beg him not to go back, but he returns to fascist, racist Europe to the ailing Hirschfeld. Li 李 later also stays in Europe, even after Hirschfeld reneges on his promise for them to move to the US, where it would be safer for them both.

In his testament, Hirschfeld tasks Li 李 with continuing his sexology work and leaves him money in his will to that end. That's where the line pretty much goes quiet for 50 years. According to German historian, Ralf Dose, Li 李 never got in touch with German post war restitution authorities to claim the inheritance. He is recorded as having left Zurich in 1960 at age 53. What became of Li 李? And did he ever accomplish the massive work Hirschfeld tasked him with?

Here is, where, in my opinion, the story of the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft takes its most tragic turn: In 1994, Adam Smith, a Canadian student living in Vancouver, takes on a small job in his building— carrying the apartment's garbage out to the side of the road every week. While carrying out the trash one week, Smith comes across antique looking leather suitcases containing papers, magazines, notebooks, post-cards and photographs. Also, a plaster mask of a face. He decides to keep some of it and to call Li Shin Lok, the phone number listed as the person who left the garbage. Li Shin Lok turns out to be the younger brother of Smith's elderly neighbour. The neighbour has died and the

brother has cleared out the flat. He tells Smith he can keep the stuff. Smith remembers the elderly neighbour with whom he would sometimes share a few brief words on elevator trips. Opening the suitcase and reading through the papers, he learns his neighbour's name for the first time: Li 李. And the mask is the death mask of Hirschfeld.

It is Li's 李's suitcases that Smith saves from the trash. Photographs of him, together with Hirschfeld in Java, in Berlin. On the cover of *Voila* magazine. A diary of Hirschfeld detailing their life together. Sixteen pages of a planned novel and notes are found in the suitcase. Among them, the following mind-numbing paragraph:

"1931 I left St John's University in Shanghai to follow Dr. Magnus Hirschfeld in his world lecture tour as his assistant for one year and continued to assist him in his research when I was a medical student at the University of Vienna and later at the University of Zurich, until he died in 1935 in France. I have continued his research as a full-time occupation until now, I travelled to almost every country in the world from Siberia to South Africa, Asia, North America, except Australia and South America. Study most people except the [Inuit] and Australian native."

In his notes, Li 李 also writes “Sexual research is a dangerous and difficult work. I had to know the countries, law, religion and moral [customs] and their languages. In fifty-three years, I had no difficulty. Travelling with Dr. Hirschfeld in his world lecture tour I learned the trade in four years.”

Marhoefer is so far the only historian to carve out the space for 李兆堂 Li Shui Tong he deserves in this history, and thereby does such important anti-racist work. And while they do mention the possibility that perhaps Adam Smith did not save all Li 李's belongings from the trash, they do not dwell on that prospect. It is mentioned in passing, without the accompanying grief we should feel if that were true, and therefore we don't really believe it. We don't even stop reading. But why don't we trust or believe Li 李 when he says he travelled the world and did this work for 53 years? Why aren't we devastated? Why don't we read the few rescued fragments of his writing with the grief with which we honour the lost work of our queer ancestor Sappho?

I feel that the few historians who have written on Li 李 have focused on the 16 somewhat cryptic pages found in the suitcase as evidence that he never succeeded in completing a manuscript, or of the dementia that possibly plagued him when he even tried. They see someone who was given a task and failed. But where they feel pity, I feel rage. They live the tragedy of the institute once, but I live it twice. Because what if Li 李 was not demented or a failure, but simply a brilliant and modest (and by all measures traumatised) man keeping decades of work quietly tucked away in his study for a kinder moment in history?

When I look at the photograph that Adam Smith took of Li 李's eerily empty suitcase pulled from the dump, I see the 53 years of work missing, and the 16 pages that miraculously survived to tell an explosive story: the work of the institute lived on for decades and then in a cataclysmic plot twist it was again lost. I see a man betrayed by the world he gave everything for and betrayed by a younger, bourgeois brother petrified of scandal. I see a Canadian garbage landfill, which, like a Nazi book burning, is on fire.



you said "there is dignity in decaying"

and maybe i'm searching for some dignity in that

while you're smiling back at the past

and the present is crumbling down

there is something revolutionary in destroying the present

while re-invoking the past

in remembering it

and rewriting it

THE POLITICAL IS EXTREMELY PERSONAL

NAVIGATING THE SELF, CONNECTIONS AND SOLIDARITY IN EXILE

TALK OF ENAD MAROUF WITH FARAH BARQAWI

During the video installation *Time of The Angel* at Tanztage Berlin 2022, Enad Marouf invited queer feminist artists from the Middle East for public talks. The talks dealt with topics like: history, archive, personal memory, intersectionality and loss. For the artist talk with Farah Barqawi, Marouf had a zoom call with Barqawi who was in New York at that time. Together they discussed and recited fragments of Barqawi's text: *Two Guests at the Camp: The Story of An Involuntary Journey* / *يوارطضاً رورم ةري س: مريخمرل اى لع ناتفيض* both in Arabic and English languages.

<https://soundcloud.com/aishaassaikaaa/the-political-is-extremely-personal-navigating-the-self-connections-and-solidarity-in-exile>

The discussion taps into Barqawi's choice in interviewing her mother Zainab in order to be able to write a piece about their life in Damascus, Syria during Barqawi's early childhood and the choices her mother made to create a sense of belonging in exile, and later the choice she made to leave Syria with her only child Farah and go back to Palestine after the signing of the Oslo Accords. Marouf and Barqawi discussed how she wrote about solidarity between women in exile, and how she tackled some different characters who come from different backgrounds and beliefs yet share special connections and exchange alternative knowledge. They also discussed the ending of the piece where Barqawi addresses her chronic trouble with her identity documents as Palestinian Jordanian born in Syria, and how this complexity is not easily understood in most European countries or at different western borders.

You can read the full text in [Arabic](#), [English](#) and [German](#).

CONTRIBUTORS

Daniella Preap is a Ukrainian-Cambodian dancer and choreographer, with a background in ballroom dancing. In Kyiv, she studied choreography at the National University of Culture and Arts (Bachelor) and Borys Grinchenko University (Master). Between 2017-2021, living and working in Cambodia, Daniella learned traditional Khmer dance and collaborated with SilverBelle dance company in Phnom Penh, one of the few contemporary dance companies in Cambodia. After returning to Kyiv, she became a freelance dancer, finding her own voice in a space between contemporary and Khmer dance. After the outbreak of the war, she arrived in Hamburg, where she now lives and works. Additionally to her work for K3, she gives dance classes i.a. for refugee children in the project *Tanz wo du bist* and collaborates with Thalia Theater.

Aloali'i Tapu is a Samoan stage, design and dance artist from New Zealand. As a mentor and youth worker, he was involved in the street dance community and did community work. He studied contemporary dance at UNITEC (NZ). Tapu's collaboration with Berlin-based choreographer Christoph Winkler led to the win in the category of "Best dancer" at the Faust-award for their bio-pic solo *Urban Soul Café*. He is a co-founder of Ta'alili arts group, which has had a profound impact on the perception of contemporary dance in New Zealand. Within his own productions he collaborates with Pacific artists with street and Island dance expertise.

Eng Kai Er is a choreographer and performer from Singapore. In Singapore, she received support from The Substation's Directors' Lab, and was Associate Artist at TheatreWorks. She was also the founder and main responsible person for the experimental performance studio Make It Share It. In Giessen she studied MA Choreography and Performance at the Institute for

Applied Theatre Studies. She is interested in sports, intimacy, and touch.

Endad Marouf is a Syrian/ German performance and video artist based in Berlin. He has a MA in choreography and performance from the institute for Applied Theatre Studies Giessen/ Frankfurt. His solo works and collaborations have been presented in Athens Biennale, Kunstenfestivaldesarts Brussels, Sophien-saele Berlin, Centre culturel Francais de Damas, Tate Modern London, Art institute of Chicago, Shedhalle Zurich a.o.

Raphael Khouri is a queer transgender Arab documentary playwright and theatre maker living between Berlin and Egypt. They is the author of several plays, including the first ever trans Arab play, *She He Me* (Kosmos Theatre, Vienna 2019), which was also recently performed online as part of NYC's Criminal Queerness Festival. Khouri was, among other fellowships and grants, a selected playwright at the Arcola Global Queer Plays (London 2018). Khouri's work will also appear in the upcoming *International Queer Drama* anthology published by Neofelis Verlag in 2020 and the *Methuen Anthology of Trans Plays*.

Farah Barqawi is a Palestinian writer, performer, podcaster, editor and translator. She writes poetry and prose, and her work has been published by a.o. Mada Masr, Al-Jumhuriya, Jeem, Romman, and Saqi Books. In 2019, she produced, directed and hosted the 4th season of the Arabic podcast *Eib* (Shame) with SOWT, tackling contemporary stories and issues related to love and relationships in the Arabic speaking region. In 2018 – 2019, she toured with her first solo performance *Baba, Come to Me*. She is the co-founder of two feminist projects: Wiki Gender and The Uprising of Women in the Arab World.

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