

Handbook for the israeli theater director in Europe

By HANNAN ISHAY & IDO SHAKED

MAJAZ

THÉÂTRE

ON TOUR 2024/25

in Europe > Switzerland, Germany & Austria
in France > Théâtre Paris Villette

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Handbook for the israeli theatre director in Europe

by Ido Shaked & Hannan Ishay

Dramaturgy and Sound Design: Idan Rabinovici

A play in English (with optional Subtitles)

Duration 1,10 H

Suitable for adults: 14 years and older.

Production **Majâz Theater**

Co-production: **Wortwiege Festival, Vienna**

With the support of the **French Institute of Paris** as part of the **IF Export 2025 system**

The Majâz Theater is approved by the DRAC Île-de-France

Created 02 mars 2024 in Kasematten Wiener Neustadt - Wortwiege festival, Vienna

On tour 2024/2025

12-13 SEPT 2024

Festival SPOT
Théâtre Paris Villette,
Paris, FRANCE

28-29 NOV 2024

Neues Theater
Dornach, SWITZERLAND

30 NOV + 1 DEC 2024

Theaterhaus Stuttgart
Stuttgart, GERMANY

28 FEB + 1, 2 MARCH 2025

>19h

Heimathafen Neukölln
Berlin, GERMANY

20 to 26 MARCH 2025

>20H jeudi 20, samedi 22, mardi 25 & mercredi 26

>19h vendredi 21 & lundi 24

Théâtre Paris Villette
Paris, FRANCE

28-29.3.2025

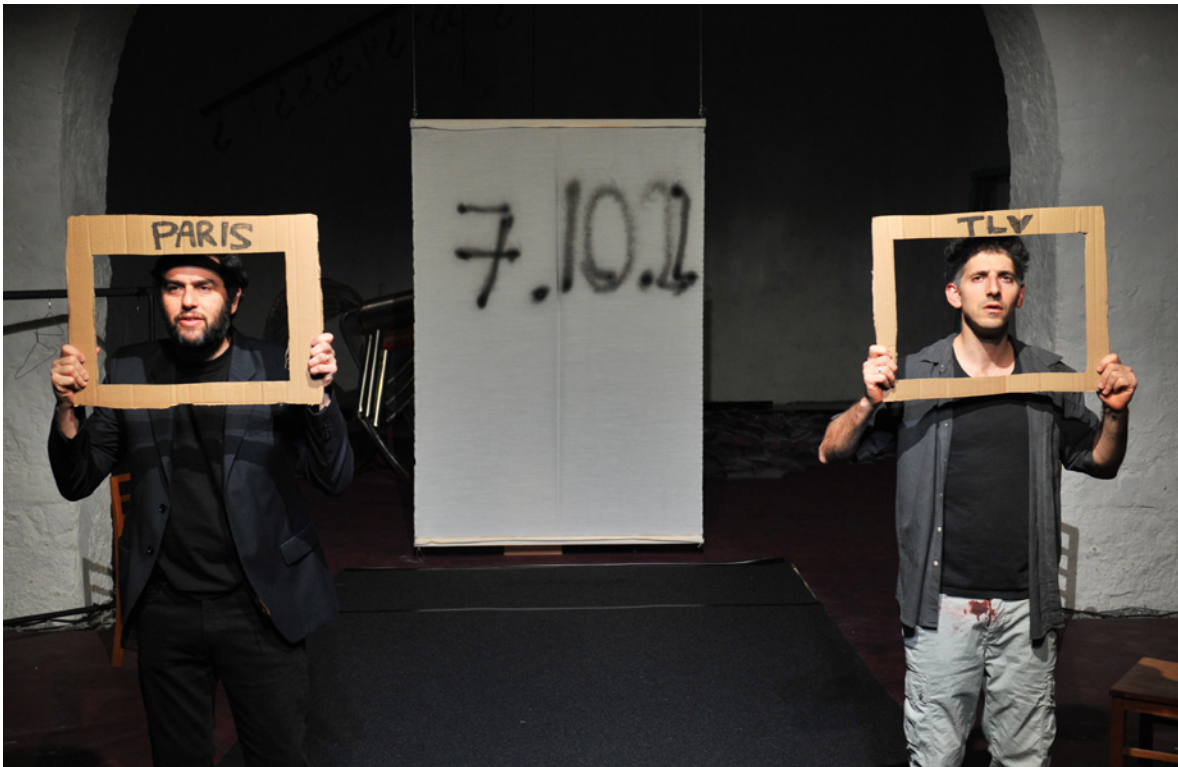
Wortwiege Festival
Wiener Neustadt, AUSTRIA

Production and diffusion: collectif&compagnie

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Handbook for the Israeli theater director in Europe

Ido Shaked and Hannan Ishay are both Israeli theater directors. Both left their home country at a young age to study and develop theatre in Europe: the former in France, and the latter in Austria. Both of them met different versions of the same story along the way: wherever they went, they were always looked upon through the lens of them being Israelis, expected to confront the complex story of their unchosen homeland. Between politics, morality, history, and reality, what is an Israeli story, and can they stand by it?

While Ido remains in Paris and Hannan is back in Tel Aviv, they receive an invitation to present a new creation at an acclaimed Festival. After years of struggle as young artists, this proposal of a well-financed and visible stage could not be refused. However behind this blinding opportunity awaits them a terrifying mission: They are expected to present a play about their neurotic, half-crazy, going-to-be totalitarian, but nevertheless, kind of beloved, motherland. This surreal quest is then suddenly topped by reality when in the mid of preparations on the 7.10 an open war breaks in the middle east and reshuffles all we know, or think we know about the life in Israel/Palestine.

How do you pack war and Macchiato, self-involvement and cynical distance, hope and despair, and one or two international conflicts into a compact entertaining format?! How can they engage with the identity they bare but struggle to cope with? Navigating between guilt and condemnation; Holocaust and occupation; what can never be said and what must be heard. Shaked and Ishay represent themselves on stage as they recreate the journey toward a theatrical performance that runs from their lives onto the stage and back again. This is a humorous, ironic, fictitious story of a very current reality.

Notes:

We are aiming for a simple, direct, and naked performance, inviting the audience to participate and follow our creative process with its contradictions, little compromises, and old-time intrigues. The stage should resemble a rehearsal room, the empty stage of the theatre in fact, equipped with laptops, a piano or a keyboard, a couple of chairs, and a clothes rack. As we continually play with the sense of truth and time frame, we gently manipulate our own life stories, languages, and attitude, until the seems-to-be improvised aspect of the show slowly disappears in favour of a more and more precise, less distant, and deeply intimate theatre.

The narrative is constructed of a chain of ideas, proposals and contra-proposals, stories, and images tied by the meta-conversation about the applicability of the different elements, in the attempt to create the dramaturgy of the piece. The narrative “infrastructure” of a series of likely-to-be-failed propositions allows us to explore our own limits, and reveal the fundamental incoherence of our situation. It will, we hope, open a space of reflection over the expectations foreign artists deal with and the temptation to capitalize on emotions, identities, and origins in order to become visible as a non-European artist.

The lightning will set a simple rehearsal atmosphere and keep it throughout the play except for the final scene, which features a more theatrical scenery. Sound and lights will be controlled from the stage.

- it's not exactly censorship. The Israeli government simply prefers not to support plays that present the... the...
- The truth?
- Yes. Uh... no. Plays that do not match the... our version.
- Our version?
- Yes, our version of the story. And the main thing in this story is that there is a nation, a people. Call it whatever you want... Israeli - Jewish...
- Ok... and they live alone?
- No. I'm getting there... These people have all kinds of other peoples with them.
- Other peoples?
- Ok, one more peoples... Which... is not Jewish.
- Right.
- And these two peoples have a very ancient conflict.
- Not ancient.
- Not ancient... but balanced.
- Unbalanced.
- Unbalanced. True, but there are two nations. And it cannot be denied. That...
- Yes?
- That there was a holocaust!
- What does the holocaust have to do with anything?
- I don't know! It comes out automatically ... I wanted to say that there are opinions that the government obviously prefers...
- To silence.
- No! But not to finance because of...
- Censorship.



- "...When I stand before you, Judges of Israel, to lead the prosecution of Adolf Eichmann - I do not stand alone; with me are six million accusers. But they cannot rise to their feet and point a blaming finger towards this man sitting in the glass cell and cry: "I accuse". Because their ashes were piled up between the hills of Auschwitz and the fields of Treblinka, washed in the rivers of Poland, their graves are scattered across the length and breadth of Europe. Their blood cries out, but their voice will not be heard. Therefore I will be their spokesman and tell the terrible indictment in their name..."
- That's good!
- What's good?
- The text, it's very powerful
- Yes, of course.
- But something's missing
- Missing? It is a historical document... From the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem.
- Maybe music? I know - what do you say, we try it in Arabic?

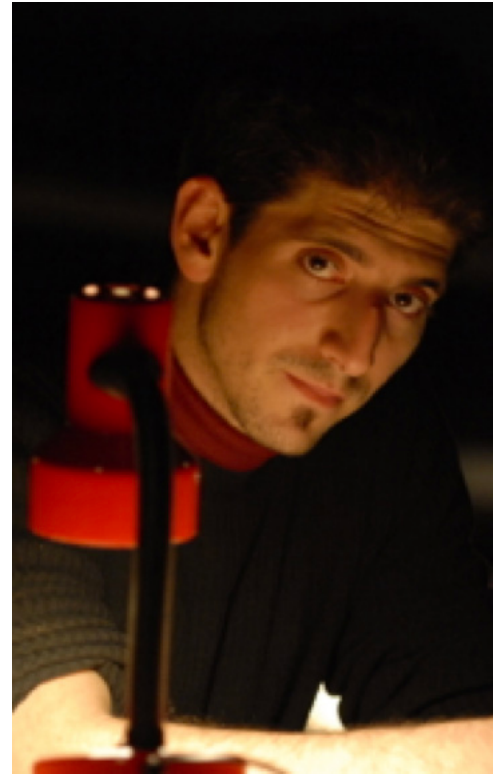




- We need a different story. Don't you have a different story? Anything? Some Palestinian child, or something?
- Yes, but... I am not going to stand in Europe and tell the story of the Palestinian child.
- Why not?
- Because in Europe no one will understand why a Palestinian child is... It's banal.
- Are you sure you want to say 'banal'?
- No, no not banal... well... towards the end of my military service... Israel just started building the separation wall and our orders were to prevent the Palestinian families from reaching their olive groves to protest against the annexation. Five of us would arrive and try to prevent fifty people from climbing some hill. No one really knew how we were supposed to do that - we had no chance really, but once a week we went down there, for about two hours, to try and prevent the families from reaching their olive trees, and then return to the base and I would go home for the weekend. It would take no more than one hour and half from the end of the demonstration before I found myself on the couch in my father's living room. And one Friday evening I read the newspaper and saw a picture of a soldier, fully armed, helmet, standing in front of a boy, maybe five years old. this soldier stood so huge and frightening over this little boy who, like a mini Nelson Mandela, placed an olive branch on the soldier's rifle... And I thought "what a piece of shit this soldier is", and then I realized that the soldier with the rifle - was me. It's fucked up, it actually took me a few seconds to recognize myself. Now, during the protests, I wasn't that angry at all and I thought that, you know, I'm quite pro-Palestinian...

Hannan Ishay

Hannan Ishay is an Israeli director and dramaturg. He graduated from the Max Reinhardt Seminar in Vienna in 2011 and has since directed numerous plays and performances for theatres and festivals in Europe and Israel. Some of his notable works include *"The Comeback of Cirque du Sorbet"* (2022), *"Je suis Œdipe"* (2019), *"Moving the Sun"* (2019), *"A Bombshell in the Heart"* (2018), *"Qui West"* (2017), *"God Waits at the Station"* (2015), *"Der Pfad der Orangenschalen"* (2015), and *"BETON"* (2014). In addition to his directing endeavours, Hannan is also a playwright, with plays such as *"Knife"* (2021), *"No Bears"* (2019), and *"Je suis Charlie"* (2017). Currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Dramaturgy and Philosophy at Tel Aviv University, Hannan is actively engaged in research within his field. To learn more about his productions and projects, visit www.hannan-ishay.com.



Ido Shaked

An Israeli director, actor and translator, studies at the Thelma Yelin School of Arts and moved to Paris to complete his training at the Jacques Lecoq International School of Theatre in 2006. He co-founded the Majâz Theatre Company in 2009, directing *"Crusades"* (2009), *"The Optimists"* (2012), *"Eichmann in Jerusalem"* (2016), *"Uncivilised"* (2018), *"The tragedy of Hamlet"* (2020) *"Subjectif story of the Middle East but nevertheless quit valide...I think"* (2021) and *"Adam sleeps"* (2022) all of which were performed to critical acclaim throughout France. His version of *"Romeo and Juliet"* was twice awarded the Independent Theatre Award in Israel. He is currently working on an adaptation to David Grossman's novel *"Falling out of time"* and on his eight play *"A family constellation"*.

www.theatre-majaz.com



The Majâz Theatre Company was founded in 2009 in Paris by the Franco-Lebanese author Lauren Houda Hussein and the Israeli director Ido Shaked after they met at the Jacques Lecoq International Theatre School.

The company's first production, "Crusades" by Michel Azama, brought together actors from France and the Middle East. It was performed in Hebrew, Arabic, and French in various cities in Israel and Palestine before being staged in Paris at the Théâtre du Soleil in 2011. This marked the beginning of a collaboration with the Théâtre du Soleil that spanned several years.

The company's first original text, "The Optimists," was created in 2012 after an extended residency in Jaffa, Israel. The production toured from 2012 to 2016, produced in partnership with the Théâtre Gérard Philipe CDN in Saint-Denis.

Following these initial productions, which were oriented towards the Middle East and performed in multiple languages, the company continued its politically and socially engaged theatrical exploration by examining the intersection of personal and historical narratives. Through exploring significant societal issues or historical events, the team aimed to interrogate the complexities of real or imagined borders, placing the struggles and uncertainties of their characters at the heart of their stories. The creative process involved a continuous dialogue between writing, documentary research, and work on the stage.

In 2016, the company produced "Eichmann in Jerusalem, or the Banality of Evil" in co-production with the Théâtre Gérard Philipe CDN in Saint-Denis, in collaboration with the National Archives. In 2019, "The Uncivil" was created in co-production with the National Scene of Châteauevallon and the Théâtre Joliette in Marseille, premiering in Toulon and subsequently touring.

In 2021, Ido Shaked and Lauren Houda Hussein became associate artists at the Théâtre Jean Vilar in Vitry-sur-Seine and the National Scene of Aubusson for three seasons. This collaboration with the Théâtre Jean Vilar began with the creation of a traveling performance intended for both non-conventional and traditional venues. Titled "A Subjective History of the Middle East but Nevertheless Valid... I Think," the performance consists of three 55-minute episodes featuring a actress and an oud player. The first episode, "Beirut, or Good Morning to You!" was created during the COVID crisis in May 2021 at the Théâtre des Quartiers d'Ivry and toured in May and June in Vitry-sur-Seine, followed by the creation of the second episode, "Jerusalem, or Good Morning to You," also performed on tour in Vitry-sur-Seine in 2022. In October 2023, the trilogy was completed with the writing and staging of the third installment, "Paris, Eye for an Eye, Tooth for a Tooth," which premiered on October 6 at the Théâtre de Châtillon before touring at the Théâtre Jean Vilar in Vitry-sur-Seine, the Jean Houdremont Cultural Center in La Courneuve, and the National Scene of Aubusson.