



I see my ghost coming from afar

ABOUT THE SHOW

Taking its name from the poem by Palestinian writer Mahmoud Darwish, *I see my ghost coming from afar* is a journey into a parallel world. A world populated by a group of ghosts, invisible to the human eye. In the real world, we are losing ourselves. But the world of ghosts is a comforting space; it's a world of dance, movement, and play. There are dreams of the sea and a sea of dreams. We attempt a revolution against the dead, the living and ourselves.

This physical theatre production was devised and written by an ensemble of young Lebanese and Palestinian actors, who were brought together by Seenaryo, an organisation specialising in theatre and play-based learning working in Lebanon and Jordan. The project was delivered in partnership with Yaabad Scout Troupe and Dar Al Aytam with support from Goethe-Institut Libanon, Beirut Art Center and Institut français du Liban.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

The devising process began in November 2019, shortly after anti-government protests and Lebanon's economic crisis began. In March 2020, Seenaryo were set to premiere the show in Beirut before taking it on tour around Germany. With the help of Goethe-Institut Libanon visas and tickets were secured, which was a notable feat for the group of Palestinian and Lebanese youth. For many of the actors it would have been their first time leaving the country; but unfortunately, Covid-19 hit and the group were unable to travel.

Rehearsals moved to Zoom, and the ensemble was able to perform to a small invited audience at Hammana Artist House in Summer 2020. After Beirut Explosion, they went back into the rehearsal room. Each crisis that rocked Lebanon shaped their words and movement. The most recent live showcase of the performance was at the Sunflower Theatre Beirut in November 2020. A filmed version of the performance was shared with audiences worldwide in 2021, reaching 1000+ YouTube views. As part of the 2021 Theaterwelten Festival, the cast participated in a publicly livestreamed Zoom conversation with youth in Germany, talking about making the show, and how it explores the themes of gender and sexuality.

PLANS FOR 2022

After two years of being unable to travel to Germany, Seenaryo are delighted to be invited by Bund Deutscher Amateurtheater (BDAT) to perform *I see my ghost coming from afar* at Theaterwelten Festival 2022. The festival will take place between 13-16 October 2022 in Esslingen, near Stuttgart in the south of Germany. Seenaryo have additionally been asked to deliver a 3-day workshop to a diverse group of beneficiaries which will include theatre practitioners, students and other interested parties. The same beneficiaries will attend all three days and the workshop will explore the theme of: *Theatre and safe spaces: Is theatre a safe space?*

Seenaryo proposes to re-engage the beneficiaries in the following activities:

Rehearsals & Workshop preparation

- 7 rehearsals to re-rehearse the show
- 3 sessions to plan and devise the workshop

Lebanon Tour

- 1 performance for a public audience in Beirut, at the Sunflower Theatre
- 1 performance for a school audience in Beirut, most likely at Dar Al Aytam or Beirut Art Center
- 1 performance in Saida, at the Ishbilia Theatre
- 1 performance in Tripoli, venue TBC
- 3-day workshop delivered to a group of beneficiaries in Beirut to pilot the workshop

German Tour

- 1 performance at Theaterwelten Festival
- 3-day workshop delivered to festival beneficiaries
- 1 performance at Bellevue Di Monaco (TBC)

REACH

Alongside the 8 participants who are able to commit to re-engaging in the project, we anticipate audiences of 600 in Lebanon plus 25 youth and adults participating in the workshops led by the participants. An additional 600 audience members are anticipated to watch the show in Germany, along with an additional 25 youth and adults participating in the workshop there.

METHODOLOGY

Ensemble storytelling through physical expression will be at the heart of our artistic approach to re-imagining this project. The techniques of Lecoq and Laban, as well as Tai Chi will be drawn upon. Participants will be trained to: ground the body; fill movement with emotion and intention; move through Laban's efforts and the Four Elements to examine characters and understand their relationships within the world of the play. Participants will deepen their ability to listen to their own body's impulses and to the ensemble's. They will explore connection and isolation, desire and power, control and surrender through contact improvisation, pulling, pushing, body manipulation, weight, lifting, rolling and leaping.

Director Lama Amine (Seenaryo's Head of Arts) who has a Masters in Movement Directing and Teaching from The Royal Central School of Speech & Drama, UK) will lead the process, with support from an Assistant Facilitator (TBC). Seenaryo also hopes to re-engage Ines Fabiunke, who worked closely on the original project via Goethe-Institut Libanon. Ines currently lives in Germany and will be able to support on coordination of the German Tour as well as pastoral care for the beneficiaries.

OBJECTIVE

The overall aim of this participatory programme is to ensure that youth from marginalised communities – who do not have opportunities to explore their talents and passions – are able to reach their full potential. The opportunity for them to showcase this powerful, high-quality production both in Lebanon and Germany will demonstrate to them that there are platforms available for their voices to be heard both inside and beyond their communities. Being able to perform in Germany in particular will show them that they are not limited by borders and the world wants to know who they are and what they have to offer.

ABOUT SEENARYO

Working in Lebanon and Jordan, Seenaryo is a leading regional specialist in performing arts interventions and participatory education with marginalised communities. Seenaryo's mission is to provide all people in the Arab region with the tools to think critically, collaborate, and become resilient as individuals and in their communities. Founded in 2015, Seenaryo's focus is on participatory theatre, arts leadership training, and play-based training and resources for teachers.