

# ESZTER SALAMON

## MONUMENT 0.8: Manifestations

**KAAI**  
**THEATER**

PREMIÈRE | 17 > 18/01 20:30 | KAAITHEATER  
DANCE / PERFORMANCE | 70 MIN



**EUROPALIA**  
**ARTS FESTIVAL**  
**ROMANIA**

**NL** *MONUMENT 0.8: Manifestations* is een performatieve collage van beelden en klanken, die herinneringen en stemmen van de geschiedenis van feminisme in Roemenië verweeft met vrouwelijke visies en artistieke perspectieven in schilderkunst en traditionele muziek. Deze performance in koor ontwricht hegemonische visies op geschiedenis en heft de grenzen op tussen artistieke expressie, cultuur, natie en identiteit. Er ontstaat een nieuw historisch en poëtisch matrix, waarin politieke en choreografische bewegingen met elkaar resoneren.

Performance art heeft altijd gezocht naar manieren om kunst en leven te verbinden. Hoe kan dat vandaag gebeuren? Waarom is het belangrijk om de gemarginaliseerde geschiedenis van feminisme in Roemenië en Oost-Europa – een plek in de periferie van ons collectieve, historische bewustzijn – voor het voetlicht te brengen?

- Eszter Salamon is kunstenaar en performer en werkt tussen Parijs, Berlijn en Brussel. Ze is een vaste gast in het Kaaitheater met voorstellingen als *TALES OF THE BODILESS*, *MONUMENT 0: Haunted by wars (1913-2013)* en *MONUMENT 0.5: The Valeska Gert Monument*.

**FR** *MONUMENT 0.8: Manifestations* est un collage performatif, visuel et sonore, qui entrelace des mémoires et des paroles de l'histoire du féminisme en Roumanie, ainsi que des visions et des perspectives artistiques féminines dans la peinture et la musique traditionnelle. Cette œuvre chorale déstabilise les conceptions hégémoniques de l'Histoire et les frontières dressées entre les expressions artistiques, les cultures, les nations et les identités. À mesure que la pièce révèle un espace mémoriel multiple apparaît une nouvelle écologie de la relation faite de mouvements politiques et chorégraphiques créant une matrice poétique hybride.

La performance a toujours cherché à relier l'art et la vie. Pourquoi est-il important de s'intéresser

à l'histoire du féminisme en Roumanie et dans les pays d'Europe de l'Est – ces espaces à la périphérie de notre conscience historique collective ?

- Eszter Salamon est artiste et performeuse. Elle vit et travaille entre Paris, Berlin et Bruxelles. Elle est régulièrement au programme du Kaaitheater où elle a présenté des spectacles comme *TALES OF THE BODILESS*, *MONUMENT 0: Haunted by wars (1913-2013)* et *MONUMENT 0.5: The Valeska Gert Monument*.

**EN** *MONUMENT 0.8: Manifestations* is a performative, visual and sound collage that animates an emancipatory space by interweaving traces of the Romanian history of feminism, artistic gestures and female perspectives in the history of painting and traditional music. This choral performance destabilizes not only dominant views on history, but also borders that were built to separate artistic expressions, cultures, nations and identities. As the piece carves out a trans-historical and trans-disciplinary space of memory, a new ecology of relationality appears through a hybrid fabric of political and choreographic movements, creating a new poetic matrix.

Performance art has always sought to unite art and life. How and why is it important to address the marginalized history of feminism in the Romanian and Eastern European context – on the periphery of collective historical consciousness?

- Eszter Salamon is an artist and performer, and works between Paris, Berlin and Brussels. She is a regular guest at Kaaitheater with productions such as *TALES OF THE BODILESS*, *MONUMENT 0: Haunted by wars (1913-2013)* and *MONUMENT 0.5: The Valeska Gert Monument*.

## MANIFESTATIONS: HOW TO TELL STORIES THAT HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD YET

A conversation with Eszter Salamon, by Elodie Perrin.

**Q: This piece was commissioned by Europalia Romania and Andreea Capitanescu. How did it all start and how did you initiate the project?**

I was invited to create a piece and to collaborate with Romanian dancers, and the proposal was that I should reflect on the notions of History, tradition, and periphery. I decided to link them and to weave them together. I was also interested in addressing the concept of the periphery in relation to the past and contemporary social phenomena in Romania instead of considering Romania as being at the periphery of the supposed centre, Western Europe. With the help of scholars and activists, I discovered that the history of feminism and women's movements was extremely marginalized in Romania – even the word feminism was banned during communism and Ceausescu's regime. I wanted to link female subjectivities of the past and of today by connecting Romanian art history, the history of traditions, and the history of feminist movements and struggles.

**Q: Where did you find the songs that the performers sing on stage?**

I contacted the group of dancers with which I had started working and they proposed several songs. I also searched for old traditional music from different regions and different languages.

**Q: The piece is also a collaboration with the painter Marilena Preda Sanc. How did you work together on the set design of the performance?**

I met Marilena Preda Sanc when I started the project, in Bucharest. She is a painter who also does video works, performances, and she calls herself an eco-feminist. We discussed her own relationship to the history of feminism in Romania and the question of being a feminist artist. This perspective didn't exist for a long time; the statement itself was forbidden.

I wanted to reflect on this absence of protests, gaps in history, and marginalization. There is a paradox: there

is a praxis of activism, LGBTQI demonstrations exist in Bucharest but it is becoming increasingly difficult to organize them today, since public gatherings have been forbidden again and you have to pay a fine if you do organize one. This doesn't signify an absence of the practice of activism against systemic discrimination, violence and for equal rights.

My idea was to make a manifesto with the fragments of these different histories and to create a visual, vocal and choreographic work. I felt that the work needed a visual environment, a sort of landscape that the performers could inhabit, a physical and fictional space to occupy. This intuition also refers to the exclusion of female bodies from the public space, the way females struggle freely to occupy the public space in Romania and elsewhere.

With Marilena, we discussed colors, figuration, energy, and the practice around eco-feminism. We decided to use one photographic work of her own sculptures. It's a black and white image that she extended by changing the dimensions in order to create the horizontal and vertical parts of the landscape. It has been digitally transformed and printed on canvas. I find this process of transformation very interesting because it creates many layers and strata of meaning and narration.

**Q: The piece is called *Monument 0.8: Manifestations*, so it's part of the "Monuments" series you started some years ago. This is the eighth installment. Could you tell us more about this title and how it relates to the other Monuments?**

The monument series focuses on non-canonical histories, marginal life stories, disappeared artistic works – the untold, the forgotten. In this work, I was thinking about how to connect 'movements' in the sense of political movements – meaning how people engage, collaborate and forge collective efforts toward change – and how it can be linked to choreographic practice. That's why I chose *Manifestations* as a title. I was interested in how manifestations could affect choreographic practice. The meaning of the word in French and in Romanian is "demonstration", unlike in English, but it nevertheless resonates with feminist public demonstrations and women's movements.

## CREDITS

**CONCEPT & ARTISTIC DIRECTION** Eszter Salamon | **DEVELOPED WITH AND PERFORMED BY** Salka Ardal Rosengren, Madalina Dan, Flavia Giurgiu, Ayse Orhon, Judith State | **ARTISTIC ASSISTANT** Liza Baliasnaja, Christine de Smedt | **STAGE DESIGN** Marilena Preda Sanc | **DIGITAL PROCESSING** Mateias Bogdan | **LIGHTS** Sylvie Garot | **TECHNICAL DIRECTION** Sylvie Garot, Rima Ben Brahim | **COSTUME DESIGN** Cristina Barbu | **VOCAL COACH** Elena Gheorghe | **PRODUCTION** Studio E.S. / Elodie Perrin, WASP Studios | **COMMISSIONED BY** EUROPALIA ROMANIA (Brussels), Andreea Capitanescu (curator) | **CO-PRODUCED BY** Kaaitheater, EUROPALIA ROMANIA, Romanian Cultural Institute | **SUPPORTED BY** Life Long Burning/Creative Europe Programme of The European Union | **CULTURAL PROJECT** co-financed by The Administration of the National Cultural Fund | **SPECIAL THANKS TO** Lia Perjovschi for her drawing and research «Romanian feminism», Olivia Nitiș, Oana Baluta, Valentina Iancu, Maria Balabas, The Balassi Institut Bucharest | Studio E.S. **IS SUPPORTED BY** the Drac Ile-de-France

I am interested in the question of trans-individuation: How the individual and the collective can intertwine and what one can create as a force, a living experience, a new knowledge.

I want to speculate on a form that could be a manifesto, not necessarily against but rather for something, a manifesto on its own, a poetic montage. This journey of collective rituals happens in the theatre, and hopefully, it can activate something there. Its function is not to replace public protests.

There is research on new modes of narrating and what it implies: How can we narrate with the body and the voice? With what language? Questions that many feminist artists asked and are still asking, be they writers, visual artists, filmmakers. What kind of language can convey a call for empathy instead of creating distance? And how can we tell stories that haven't been told yet?

**Q. In the piece you address violence against women. How did you approach this issue?**

There is one text that addresses the contemporary reality of the massive disappearance of female bodies and the ways in which this reality is obscured. There is a slow shift in the collective consciousness about how females are subjected to specific systemic violence. This consciousness is not enough to make a real change. What generations of women fought for during many decades can be lost at any time. Today's fights need to be inclusive and collective.

In my work, I constantly question which bodies and experiences are valued and made visible in our society, and this piece is part of that reflection. How to make art today? How can collective engagement take place?

## BIOGRAPHIES

**Eszter Salamon** is an artist and performer who lives and works between Paris and Berlin. Since 2001, she has been creating solo and group works that have been presented in performing arts venues and festivals throughout the world including Centre Pompidou, Centre Pompidou Metz, Festival d'Automne, Avignon Festival, Ruhrtriennale, Holland Festival, The Kitchen New York, HAU Berlin, Berlin Documentary Forum, Kunstenfestivaldesarts, Kaaithheater Brussels, Tanzquartier Wien, Kampnagel Hamburg, steirischer herbst, Dance Triennale Tokyo, Manchester International Festival, Nanterre-Amandiers, FTA Montreal.

She is frequently invited to present her work in museums, including MoMa, Witte de With, Fondation Cartier, Serralves, Museum der Moderne Salzburg, Akademie der Künste Berlin, Museo Reina Sofia. Her exhibition *Eszter Salamon 1949* was presented in 2015 at Jeu de Paume as part of ›Satellite‹ curated by Nataša Petrešin-Bachelez.

Eszter Salamon's work revolves around choreography employed as a means of navigating between different media such as sound, text, voice, image, bodily movements, and actions. In 2014, she started a series of works exploring both the notion of the monument and the practice of speculative on history-making.

Eszter Salamon is artist-in-residence at Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers.

She is the laureate of the Evens Art Prize 2019.

**Marilena Preda Sanc** is an interdisciplinary artist, Professor at National University of Arts in Bucharest. From 1980 her work has been presented internationally at museums, festivals, conferences, symposiums, broadcast venues, and galleries.

Integrating the traditional forms of art and the new media arts, her artworks visualizes and investigate the body/mind/soul/ behavior in relation to nature and social/political and representational space. Her artwork explores the feminism problematic as gender/ageism and women as leaders in an eco-feminism key.

She exhibited her artwork in many national and international exhibitions, festivals and took part in residencies (Kulturkontakt Vienna, Franklin Furnace, N.Y.). Her videos, paintings, drawings, installations, interventions on photography are in museums or private collections such as The National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest MNAC; Arhitekturni Muzej Ljubljana; Kunsthalle, Nürnberg; Albertina Art Collections, Vienna.

# MORE #BIGNAMES ON STAGE?

## **ANNE TEREA DE KEERSMAEKER/ ROSAS**

Achterland

*Achterland* (1990) is a seminal choreography in Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker's oeuvre. The minimalism and prevalent femininity of Rosas' early pieces gave way to an ambiguous no-man's-land in which boundaries and symbols were blurred. Last season, the reprise of *Achterland* starring a new generation of Rosas dancers made a tremendous impression: don't miss this opportunity to see it again.

Kaaitheater | 29/01 > 9/02 | dance

## **FAUSTIN LINYEKULA/NTGENT**

Histoire du Théâtre II

1974, Zaire. In the Fight of the Century, Muhammad Ali defeated George Foreman. Mobutu Sese Seko founded the National Ballet of Zaire. Fast forward to 2019. Faustin Linyekula has created a production in which he reflects on key moments in the history of theatre. Along with three members of the Congolese National Ballet and actors Papy Maurice Mbwiti and Oscar van Rompay, he explores what the young Congolese state could have become.

Kaaitheater | 13, 14/03 | dance/theatre | surtitles in English and Dutch

## **BORIZ CHARMATZ**

infini

For centuries, dancers have been counting their steps to 4, 6 or 8. But what if dancers were to count to infinity? Boris Charmatz: 'I have always hated counting while dancing. In this piece, we count, speak and sing not only so that we can dance, but first and foremost, so that our minds can wander even more.' In a world that is being increasingly enslaved by algorithms, Charmatz offers a moment of infinity..

Kaaitheater | 25 > 28/03 | dance

## **MEG STUART /DAMAGED GOODS & JOMPET KUSWIDANANTO**

Celestial Sorrow

*Celestial Sorrow* is Meg Stuart's first collaboration with the Indonesian visual artist Jompét Kuswidananto. Based in collective memories and fictitious traumas, the duo create a world of light and movement that is inhabited by three performers and two musicians. The show premiered at the Kaai-studios in 2018 and is moving to the main stage of Kaaitheater for this reprise.

Kaaitheater | 24 > 27/06 | dance/performance

Kaaitheater is supported by

