ORIENT THE DAY
BEIRUT
IN THE WORK OF
IBSEN
Beirut: 3 – 13 January, 2013
Two Lebanese theatre companies coming from distinctly different theatre traditions were commissioned to start a dialogue with the Norwegian writer Henrik Ibsen. The question was, in what ways does Ibsen present us with a framework to address issues that are urgent in Lebanon today?

Those two theatrical commissions became an opportunity for inviting major theatre and academic practitioners from the region as well as from abroad to also participate in this debate as well as invite local professionals to participate in a workshop on dramaturgy.

The question is not so much if we in Lebanon need Ibsen. Rather we see this as an invitation to think theatre by revisiting one of its most important modern poets. We also see our work as a modest contribution to a practice that must grapple with an institutional structure that remains largely hostile to theatre and to cultural life in general. To think Ibsen is also to think how this exiled poet who quarrelled with Norway all his life had to live precariously, with financial trouble and unstable institutional backing.

To start a dialogue with Ibsen means to join a transnational debate about the art of living with Others in our world today. Not only because of Ibsen’s popularity in world theatres, but because Ibsen steers our gaze towards the ethics of society building and demands that we think up new ways of being together, in a larger community, a community much larger than the present narrowness of our identity formations.
Where are we today feminism’s achievements that Henrik Ibsen’s play Doll’s House contributed to realizing? How do youth living in societies that block the establishment of a more equal status for women deal with the issue of equality between the sexes?

This play intends to question these issues through a hyperlink that transmits the play “Doll’s House” on a social network site. The play instigates a serious conflict between the youth that meet daily in a café. Where will things lead?

*Lucena is a village in Cordoba, which was mostly populated by Jews, the Arab philosopher Averroes was exiled there after he was tried by the caliph al-Mansur who ordered that his books be burnt. The origin of the word in Hebrew is “Eli Hochana” which means “May God protect us”.

*Lucena, Obedience Training

By Zoukak Theater Company
Monnot theatre
Performances Jan. 10 – 13
8 pm every evening

This is a theatrical work that questions the authoritarian model that governs religion, society and theatre. The work summons Ibsen’s “Emperor and Galilean” from history, the text which called upon the Roman Emperor Julian, who in turn summoned the gods and philosophers of ancient Greece, declaring the freedom of belief and the plurality of deities. It is a journey of old power conflicts in the skies and on earth. It is a tale of a society whose members are on the steps of the ruling ladder linking heaven to earth. It’s the story of a theatre company exiled and isolated in a certain time and spaces as its members are trained on obedience, for they might subordinate.
ACT TWO
Academic Seminar

Regional and International network meeting/seminar

The Lebanese American University in Beirut
Jan. 11, 11–17 am
Open for public

Some regional and international theatre practitioners and academics have been invited to share their experiences on “Ibsen in use”, as well as to discuss possibilities and visions for how academia and theatre may benefit from moving together or separate in today’s Middle Eastern and Arab region.

ACT THREE
Dramaturgy Workshop

“Dramaturgy in the performing arts” by Kai Johnsen

The Lebanese American University in Beirut
Jan. 12, 11–17 am
Free—Reservation required

Renewed theatre director, writer and dramaturge Kai Johnsen will in a one day workshop open for regional theatre and performing arts practitioners, introduce and discuss methods of dramaturgy in the contemporary art practice for stage. Outlining and discussing tendencies in both historical and modern dramaturgy, the aim will be to stimulate the interest, understanding and challenges of a contemporary approach to the performing arts.
On our partners: This project received the Ibsen Scholarship Award in 2011. It is further funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beirut and the Royal Norwegian Foreign Ministry (UD/DTS). Supported by The Lebanese American University in Beirut and the University of Oslo.

For further info on project please follow the event on facebook page:
Orient the day, Beirut in the work of Ibsen

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