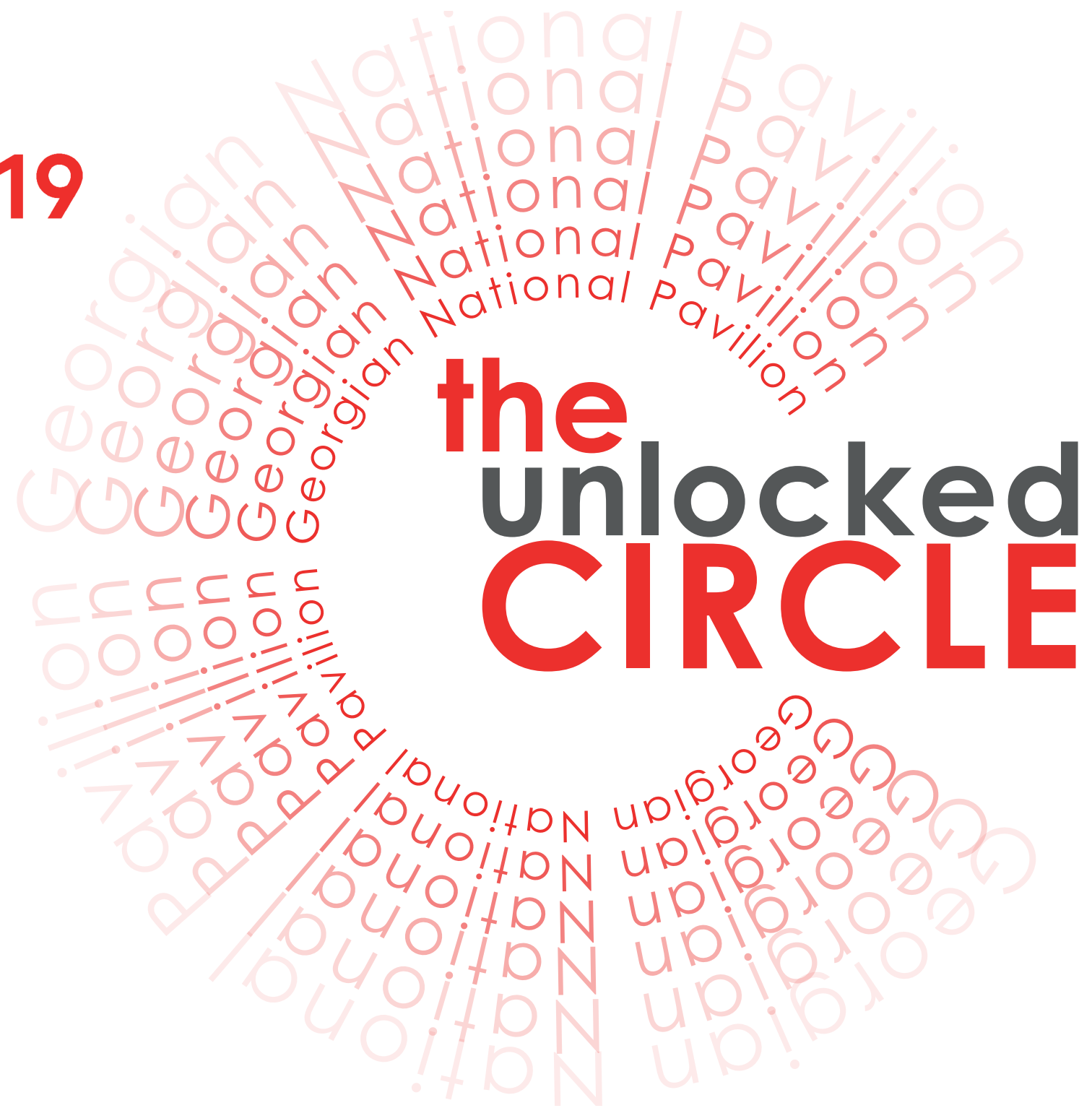


the unlocked CIRCLE



PO
2019



The Unlocked Circle

Georgia PQ19

TBILISI
2019



The project “The Unlocked Circle” is supported
by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport of Georgia

This year Prague is hosting the fourteenth Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Since 1967 this has been the place where every five years artists share their experiences with each other, discuss the problems of stage design and showcase cultures of their countries. Georgia, has been participating in the Prague Quadrennial as an independent country since 2007 and I am glad that we have the opportunity to present our National Pavilion on this outstanding international platform for the third time.

Our project at the PQ19 “The Unlocked Circle” represents a transitional, transactional stage of development of the Georgian theater, when a change of generations is followed by introduction of a new artistic epoch; the voices of famous masters of stage are joined by new visions of young artists who are of the same age as our independent state.

In the era of turbulent global politics, conflicts, forced resettlement of the masses the topics of post-traumatic syndrome,

adaptation, rethinking of the value of life, humanistic ethical and moral values, war, oppression, sacrifice, the importance of peaceful coexistence become important subjects for contemporary Georgian and international artists.

The project “The Unlocked Circle” focuses on presenting of reflections of Georgian artists about development of society in the post-traumatic period. It covers general ethical and philosophical issues as well as discussions on social problems and applies completely different artistic techniques that are characteristic to the styles of the middle and young generation of the Georgian theater.

I believe that taking part in the Prague Quadrennial 2019 will help Georgia to develop contemporary culture and stage design in the country.

Mikheil Giorgadze

*First Deputy Minister of Education, Science,
Culture and Sport of Georgia*

Editorial

Thanks to the concept of the Georgian National Pavilion “The Unlocked Circle” one of the themes of the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space 2019 “Transformation” has been developed in the most interesting way. Based on the recent historic events and the processes taking place in the realm of culture it demonstrates the current trends of new artistic ways of thinking in Georgian theatre and stage design.

Works of three generations of represented artists cover the period between the crucial 1989 and up until now. The group of participating artists unites directors and painters some of whom were themselves born in 1989.

The last 30 years have been very special for forming of new Georgian theatre, which tried to break through a closed circle of the former Soviet Union with the help of transformation of traditional forms and implementation of contemporary principles.

Breaking of the closed circle is an imminent outcome that widens the worldview and becomes a guarantor of stepping up to a new level of development and start of a new phase. It offers the artists an opportunity to initiate a process of selection and invites to the circle of acting those important and necessary issues that would apply theoretical base of Georgian theatre and traditional way of thinking for conducting of new experiments. If the experiment is understood through the modern language in the “unlocked circle” of action it will lead us to further development of a new creative way of thinking, expressive forms and new theatrical aesthetics.

Khatuna Kikvadze

*PhD Degree in Art History and Theory
Head of the Division for Supporting of Art and
Culture Ministry of Education, Science,
Culture and Sport of Georgia*

The Unlocked Circle

Concept

During the Prague Quadrennial 2019 the Georgian National Pavilion pursues the goal to document transformation of aesthetics of Georgian theatre and demonstrate political context, communication culture and interaction of artistic reflections.

Modern practice of Georgian theatre focuses on a wide range of dialogues, reflections on the essence and opportunities. The subjects of the dialogue unite local and global identities including wider paradigms and groups representing subcultures and gender. The dialogue consists of diverse elements and vectors giving the theatre a role of a universal medium that should foster a complex process, identify the problems and support the involved sides in renewal of their identities, “create” a common knowledge through communication.

Under the circumstance of the shift of paradigm the process of search of renewed identity, which unites confrontational and communicative aspects, becomes especially active. During the Prague Quadrennial 2019 exposition of the Georgian National Pavilion “The Unlocked Circle” will resonate with the newest theatrical trend. It is based on the dialogue and is especially visible in the works of the young directors who attempt to represent social, cultural and political contexts that give birth to the changes of a paradigm, start transformation of the language of Georgian theatre (among them

through formation of so called “new theatre of sensitivity”). It is important that the “new theatre of sensitivity” documents the recent history as part of a “dialogue”.

Topics of the works selected for the National Pavilion cover state of traumas in a war and post-war societies (local as well as general problems). In this context it is logical that Georgian National Pavilion presents its exposition in the same cluster as national pavilions of Ukraine and Armenia.

30-year history and culture of Georgian independence contains confrontational, conflicting narratives. National reflections of the 1990s were based on the topics permanent waiting, hope, frustration, disrupted borders and syndrome of a closed space. The themes partially maintained their urgency even until the beginning of the 21st century.

Thanks to the post-traumatic analysis of the society since 2010s Georgian theatre went through the period of transformation. The artists of new generation think through the categories of rapprochement and empathy and try to find their own identity in the global context.

In 2019 the Georgian National Pavilion will present theatre projects of different genres and aesthetics at the Prague Quadrennial. The video recordings of plays and performances as well as interviews will create visual panorama. Topics of the

interviews will concentrate on reflections of theatres on current political, social and cultural processes. This way the display will create an extended circle of communication with the spectators and give them an opportunity to get familiar with the sensitivity of modern theatre and present situation.

Georgian National Pavilion unites different generations of Georgian stage designers and directors who create stage design for their performances to demonstrate transformation of the goals and objectives of theatrical art and stage design. These are the representatives of three generations: David Doiashvili (born in 1971) whose university years coincided with the end of the Soviet Union and who started his professional career in the post-soviet period; Nikoloz Sabashvili (born in 1980) who was formed as an artist during the dramatic and turbulent years of collapse of the Soviet Union and three young theatre professionals (one stage designer and two directors/stage designers) Shota Bagalishvili, Guram Matskhonashvili and David Tavadze (all born in 1989) whose identity was formed during the period of independence and who are the same age as independent Georgia.

These artists are known for different theatrical culture, worldview and aesthetics. Their work gives birth to essential changes (sometimes revolutionary, sometimes more cautious but still clear) of the language of Georgian theatre and brings us to establishment of so-called “theatre of new sensitivity” by the generation of 1989s.

During the last decade Georgian scenography revealed distribution of specific fields of specialization based on gender.

Gender balance shifted more towards the women – trend that became obvious at the Georgian National Pavilion of the Prague Quadrennial 2015 (concept “Voice of the Women”). In parallel scenography became more popular among the male directors. Scenographic images, which are created by the directors remain quite reserved, even minimalistic and are sometimes based on the aesthetics of kitsch or documentalizm...

Modern Georgian theatre experiences growth of importance of documentary narrative as an artistic tool for presenting the urgent problems to the public. Georgian National Pavilion is based on this principle.

It is a territory where varieties of spatial interpretations are demonstrated through metamorphoses and movement following an inner aspiration to unlock the circles and to overcome the boundaries. The artistic space of the Pavilion typifies this active theatrical process comprised of passions, desires, thoughts, values, aspirations and hopes. It is a territory where new visions appear again and again and where personalities are renewed. It offers a fascinating story of art and liberation of life, a way to a new “ego” through reinterpretation of the past and reflection of the present.

Nino Gunia-Kuznetsova

Curator, Author of the theme,

Tamar Bokuchava (1963-2019)

Co-curator, Co-author

INSTEAD OF INTRODUCTION

About “The Theatre of New Sensitivity”

(Citations from the article “Violence and the Mythological Paradigms of Suffering in “The Trojan Women” and “Prometheus”)

During the recent years the Georgian theatre developed a trend, which is connected to presentation of physical and mental suffering and demonstration of pain. And here we mean not only the narrative and contextual side of the plays but application of new ways of expression, language, work of actors and forms of performance. Suffering becomes a sign of a transformation, pain that the body and mind go through and turns into the main indicator of perception of existence. The shared pain equips the spectators and participants with new knowledge. Among other things this happens through experiencing and understanding of their own existences.

New theatre continues crashing of myths of the ancient world. However differently than the paradigms of the modern times that suggested us different “recipes” for transformation and renewal of the world and had an ambition to possess the truth, post modernistic sensitivity brings only the truth of pain and feelings with it. Solidarity towards the suffering people, tolerance and new humanism demonstrate aesthetics of this direction and a new theatrical paradigm means broadening of the role of an actor as a narrator. This is new way of becoming like-minded persons, certain type of compassion.

There are multiple factors that determine the “new sensitivity and way of thinking”. They are primarily connected to self-consciousness and perception of the world by the new generation and are based on the reactions and reflections on the recent history of Georgia.

“Theatre of new sensitivity” opposes logo-centric rationalism and radical national narrative of the Georgian theatre of the 20th century. It selects to follow the mythological paradigm of Prometheus and puts the discourse of the oppressed into the limelight. At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s the Soviet Union seized its existence equally unexpectedly for its supporters as well as opposition making collapse of huge narratives part of an everyday life. Post-apocalyptic reality turned out to be much harder than imagined and was followed by an endless row of lost role models, hopes and disappointments. During the state of paradigm changes each and every mistake, ideological cliché and at the first glance funny harmless phobia of the society and a common man became a weapon of hate and conflicts. People became hostages of their own mistakes. “The old gods fell down” (phrase from Tavadze-Gabunia’s “Prometheus”) and a young country appeared to be absolutely unprotected and helpless towards rage of the natural elements.

Natural striving to the happiness found itself confronted by hate and destruction revived the bloodiest myths and revenging Erineys. The pain, suffering, violence and revenge became part of an everyday life. The state fall apart into pieces, people abandoned each other expressing their rage and internal disharmony into horrible acts of violence. 1990s were followed by not less polarized 2000s when formal progress was marked by internal fire of disobedience. Beginning of a new millennium was finished by one more absurd war (Russia-Georgia five day August War of 2008).

This period produced a new generation, which was born in the independent Georgia and was given a task to change the existing reality through its understanding, assessment and return into the realm of modern thinking.

The Royal District Theatre is a location where self-consciousness and reflection of the generation from the independent Georgia takes place, problems that accumulated during the recent years, decades and centennials are verbalized, clichés and tabooed topics are touched upon... Data Tavadze's staging of Dato Gabunia's "Prometheus" summarizes these 25 years of independence in a memory of the suffering and pain, crushing of myths and creation of new knowledge. "I don't want to be a victim!" – says one of Dato Gabunia's characters. "We don't want to exercise violence," – says the new generation. "This is kind of a civil manifest of a young theatre collective, which produces an assessment of the experience of 25 year old country. At the same time this is a reflection on life, nature of theatre and its essence, culture, humans, youth, chain of discoveries and disappointments that accompany a process of getting older."

In the "theatre of new sensitivity" physicality, pain, suffering, thinking, moral, perception and assessment, body and psyche come together as one and become equal to the theatre. It is only here and now that the main essence of myths gets revealed and inter-texts of human literature open up in parallel and unfold at their full extent. Theatre is a place for observing yourself from outside, discovery and realization of freedom.

Logo-centrism is disrupted, expatiation becomes outdated, and the life enters our routine with new experiences. This experience develops with stubbornness of a life without strict composition and introduction of analytical distancing. It all happens in a spontaneous, merciless manner and reaches highest register of a tragedy. A theatre of new feelings transforming it to a lyrical, narrative phenomenon replaces theatre of a feast and judgment...

Today the focus is on the sacral feeling of life that is expressed through its enhanced experiencing..."

"We are all actors," – said Augusto Boal. "Being a citizen means not just being in a society, but changing it." This is the position of the Royal District Theatre that chooses the mythological image of the oldest citizen, fighter for progress and suffering rebel against any type of tyranny Prometheus to present its credo. Being Prometheus is not a fate, it is an existential choice.

Tamar Bokuchava

*PhD in Art History and Theory, Theatre Critic,
Professor at the Shota Rustaveli Theatre and
Film Georgia State University*

**Participating Artists
and
Short Overview of the Plays**

DAVID DOIASHVILI

Director, scenographer

Born: 1971

Education:

1994 - Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University, Faculty of Drama.

1992 - Internship at the Piccolo Teatro in Milan under the tutelage of Giorgio Strehler.

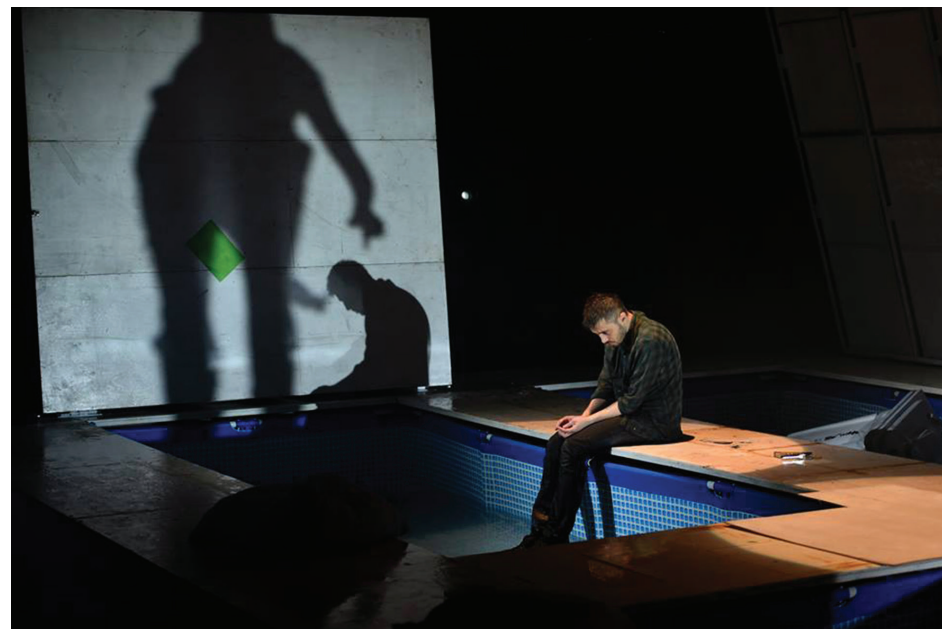
Work:

Since 1998 – Director at the Kote Marjanishvili Drama Theatre.

Since 2004 – Managing and Artistic Director at the Tbilisi Music and Drama State Theatre, where he began experimenting as a scenographer. He has collaborated with diverse theatres abroad (West Yorkshire Playhouse, Mariinsky Theatre, Croatia National Theatre, National Theatre of Bucharest).

David Doiashvili is an innovative and revolutionary Georgian theatre director whose performances have been subject to great interest, appreciation and recognition by not only various audiences and generations, but also the critics and producers across the globe. He is holder of many Georgian and international theatrical awards, medals and prizes such as:

- 1995 - Kote Marjanishvili Premium;
- 1999 - Sandro Akhmeteli Premium;
- 2003 - Medal of Honour of Georgia;
- 2010 - Duruji Award (Georgia's highest theatrical award) for Shakespeare's "Macbeth";
- 2010 - Best Performance and Director at the Croatia's International Theatre Festival of Small Scale Performances for Shakespeare's "Macbeth";
- 2012 - Best Performance at the Colombia's Festival Iberoamericano de Teatro de Bogota for Shakespeare's "Macbeth";
- 2012 - Order of Excellence;
- 2013 - Duruji Award for Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream";
- 2013 - Shota Rustaveli Premium;
- 2013 - Grand Prix award by the Theatre Critics Association of Georgia for Gorky's "The Lower Depths";
- 2016 - Grand Prix award by the Theatre Critics Association of Georgia for McDonagh's "The Pillowman";
- 2017 - Duruji Award for McDonagh's "The Pillowman".



Martin McDonagh: *The Pillowman*, Tbilisi Music and Drama State Theatre, 2016. Director and Set Designer David Doiashvili, Costume Designer Anano Mosidze, Photo by Giorgi Induashvili

Martin McDonagh's "Pillowman"

- How can we protect our internal kid from transforming into a monster?
- What is the primary notion – work or reality?
- Who is responsible for universal violence and where does it take its beginning?
- Who are we? Do we bear responsibility for the existing sufferings and pain?

Play of the Theatre of Music and Drama "Pillowman" presents a quest for the most urgent questions that humans and society are facing. David Doiashvili's work as a director and its morbid lyricism and frankness, merger of love and cruelty has a mesmerizing effect on the spectators who gets disarmed in order to participate in a joint "session" of reflecting or therapy, which was created based on Martin McDonagh's "detective thriller" and "psychological fairy tale". Journey of the director and the actors in psyche reaches deeper collective layers, opens the doors of the darkest "water tanks" of unconscious and makes it possible to encounter one's own shadows. Water

is the dominant symbol of the play, which demonstrates purification from unconscious psyche and affects at the same time.

The play goes beyond discussing the problem of creative free self-expression in a totalitarian state and brings us face to face to the basic controversies of cultural and otherwise existence. At the same time it is intensely emotional, intellectual and tragically grotesque piece which is marked by black humor. Exupéry said: "We all originate from the childhood". However, children's fairy tale can also house the monsters.

According to the director Doiashvili analysis of our past traumas, should bring us to a better future because "a modern man is only the one, who has a full understanding of reality and courage to face it" (Carl Gustav Jung, „Modern Man in Search of a Soul“).

Tamar Bokuchava

*PhD in Art History and Theory, Theatre Critic,
Professor at the Shota Rustaveli Theatre and
Film Georgia State University*



Martin McDonagh: *The Pillowman*, Tbilisi Music and Drama State Theatre, 2016.
Director and Set Designer David Doiashvili, Costume Designer Anano Mosidze,
Photo by Giorgi Induashvili





Martin McDonagh: *The Pillowman*, Tbilisi Music and Drama State Theatre, 2016. Director and Set Designer David Doiashvili, Costume Designer Anano Mosidze, Photo by Giorgi Induashvili





Jean Baptiste Molière: *Tartuffe*, Tbilisi Music and Drama State Theatre, 2018.
 Director and Set Designer David Doiashvili, Costume Designer Anano Mosidze,
 Photo by Nata Sofromadze

„Revolting Price of Silence“

(Citations from the review)

David Doiashvili's "Tartuffe" as a Modern Time Reflection of Pasolini's "Theorem"

Most probably you remember Pier Paolo Pasolini's movie "Theorem" about a strange young man who becomes part

of a respected family and one by one establishes sexual relationships with each of its members... As a result ordinary life of the family and bourgeois rituals suffer exemplary collapse.

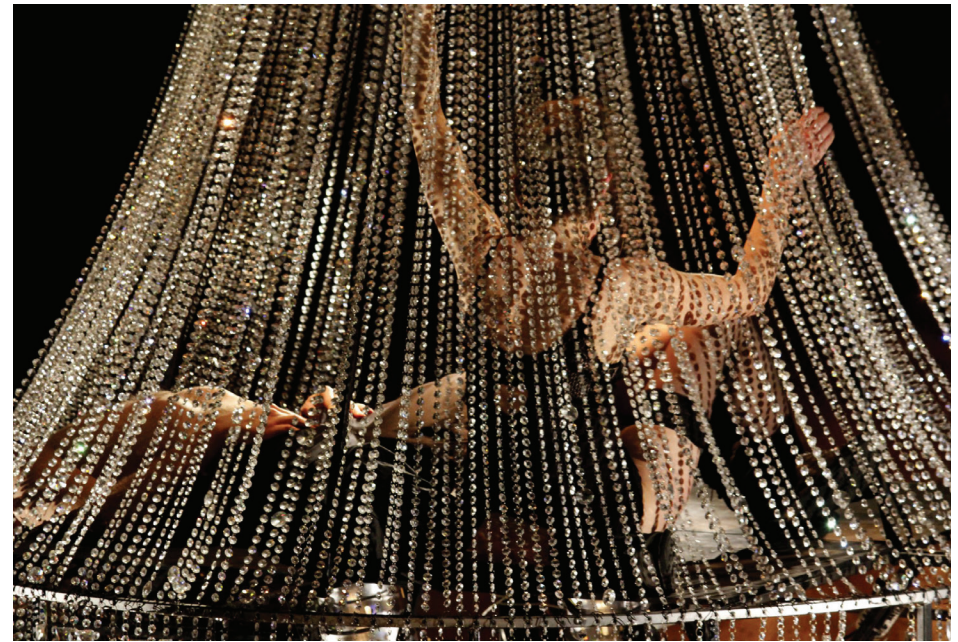
„When Doiashvili turns to classical dramaturgy he is always very precise at taking into account where, why and for whom he creates this piece. Accordingly, he makes significant amendments to the context and content.

The same happened in the case of Molière as well when classical text went through the unlimited fantasy of the director and after its processing in the "meat grinder" transformed into a cruelly satirical, sexual and social drama.

Rusted iron walls, iron table and chairs appear on the stage along with their scenographic anti-rhythm – a huge lamp, which similar to Chekhov's gun, "fires shots" in the second act only. The fact that the director is also responsible for the stage design on the one hand underlines the notion about overlapping of common features of two professions, but on the other hand emphasizes obligatory need and often absolute necessity to separate them from each other. In the case of "Tartuffe" unity of scenographic and directorial concept is very clear and precise rather than distant from each other.

A merry surgical intervention in the text makes an impression that the scenes from Orgon's family life unfold somewhere next to us. The whole first act develops at an amazing speed and is marked by unexpected artistic somersaults and metamorphosis of the characters. "Entire ironic, colorful, free play of the first act which is accompanied by Mendelssohn's symphonic overture from "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in the second act will be replaced by the black and white, graphic tones and costumes (costume design Nino Mosidze). Unexpected transformation is also reflected on the way of acting as well. The actors newly discover well-forgotten "psychological theatre" and through the change of the tone, introduction of new elements and unexpected dramatic weight determine new rhythm that helps us to see disgusting reality of Orgon's family.

"...The most important and dramatic scene of the play focuses on the famous "trap". This 40 minute long, exhausting but at the same time amazingly presented episode and involved three actors mirror the above mentioned topic of Pasolini's movie: impossible social rage and numerous sexual complexes, a feast of hypocrisy and inability of Orgon's family to counteract violence makes it possible for Tartuffe to take over possession of the whole family and all its belongings".



Jean Baptiste Moliere: Tartuffe, Tbilisi Music and Drama State Theatre, 2018.
Director and Set Designer David Doiashvili, Costume Designer Anano Mosidze,
Photo by Nata Sofromadze

"In the reality the most revolting element is silence of the Orgon's that enables Tartuffe's every hypocritical "game" to end successfully. Those who don't say "no" are responsible for their silence and the consequences!"

David Bukhrikidze



Jean Baptiste Moliere: Tartuffe, Tbilisi Music and Drama State Theatre, 2018. Director and Set Designer David Doiashvili, Costume Designer Anano Mosidze, Photo by Nata Sofromadze



Jean Baptiste Moliere: Tartuffe, Tbilisi Music and Drama State Theatre, 2018. Director and Set Designer David Doiashvili, Costume Designer Anano Mosidze, Photo by Nata Sofromadze



Nikoloz Sabashvili : Georgia, Tbilisi State Professional Puppet Theatre, 2015.
Director and Set Designer Nikoloz Sabashvili.
Photo by Vladimer Benashvili

NIKOLAZ SABASHVILI

Director, actor, scenographer

Born: 1980

Education:

2002 - Ekvtime Takaishvili Tbilisi State University of Culture and Art, Faculty of Cinema and Theatre;

Work:

Since 2017 – Art Director at the Giorgi Mikeladze Tbilisi State Professional Puppet Theatre, where he began experimenting as a scenographer. In the set designs of his performances he develops a new visual language of puppet theater using nonstandard play forms. Sabashvili collaborates with many theatres in Georgia and abroad (Broadway Symphonic Space NY, USA; Millennium Theatre NY, USA). He is a winner of numerous Georgian and international awards such as:

- 2001 – Festival “Debut” - award for the Best Actor in the play “Who is Guilty”;
- 2003 – Theatre Festival “Duruji” - nominated for the best performance in the play “Letters Of The Crazy”;
- 2011 – Theatre Festival “Duruji” - award for the best young director of the Year for the play “Paper Rain”;
- 2014 – “Unima” International Puppet Festival – award for the best performance in the play “Lullaby” (“iavnanam ra hqmna”);
- 2015 – Theatre Festival “Duruji” - award for the best young director of the year in the play “1945”;
- 2015 – Georgian Theatre Research Centre - the best director for the performance “1945”;
- 2016 – Georgian Theatrical Union - the best stage director for the performance “1945”;

- 2016 – Georgian Theatre Research Centre – the best performance for youth play “Mowgli (The Jungle Book)”;
- 2016 – Georgian Theatre Research Centre - the best puppet performance “The Roe-Deer Fawn’s Tale”.

“Georgia” at the Puppet Theatre

Nikoloz Sabashvili’s independent theatre piece “Georgia” is not based on a specific literary work. It is a product of director’s vision and unites under one umbrella tragic and comic stories from the Georgian history. Artistic and musical score of the play contains a rich mixture of elements from Georgian folklore. Original puppets, the best examples of national folklore, choreography are all part of a very diverse show that appeals to the audiences of all ages thanks to its music and entertainment features. The play focuses on a story of a donkey and a crow while their friendship and travels are used as a background for making the spectators familiar with important parts of Georgian culture and history.

The director suggests unusual artistic form of presenting, which implies minimal use of the text and shifts entire focus towards action and visual elements. Change of the scenes follows important phases of Georgian history. The whole stage design is produced by the director in an experimental artistic form. The majority of the characters are the puppets, however the play also engages real “living” personas. Parallel



Nikoloz Sabashvili : Georgia, Tbilisi State Professional Puppet Theatre, 2015.
 Director and Set Designer Nikoloz Sabashvili.
 Photo by Vladimer Benashvili

use of the puppets and the other decorative objects create a conditional artistic space where classical decorations are replaced through creative design and disruption of traditional style in order to conduct a bold dramatic experiment.

Neron Abuladze



Nikoloz Sabashvili : Georgia, Tbilisi State Professional Puppet Theatre, 2015. Director and Set Designer Nikoloz Sabashvili.
Photo by Vladimer Benashvili



Nikoloz Sabashvili : Georgia, Tbilisi State Professional Puppet Theatre, 2015. Director and Set Designer Nikoloz Sabashvili.

Photo by Vladimer Benashvili



Tamta Melashvili: *Counting Out*. Tbilisi State Professional Puppet Theatre, 2017.
 Director, Set and Costume Designer Guram Matskhonashvili;
 Photo by Dina Oganova;

GURAM MATSKHONASHVILI

Director, scenographer

Born: 1989

Education:

2011 – Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University, Art Sciences, Faculty of Media and Management.

Work:

Matskhonashvili is a freelancer. He has worked as a cultural reviewer and a journalist. His short documentary about a transgender woman won the prizes of UNDP and Open Society Georgia Foundation (2013, 2014). He wrote and directed several plays on human rights and urbanization, based on his interest in the social and spatial order of cities. The performances he directed are focused on acute social problems. The majority of his performances are “site-specific” in their format.

Staging of Tamta Melashvili’s “Counting Out” at the Puppet Theatre

Nurturer, Vixen or Victim

Tamta Melashvili’s “Counting Out”, Tbilisi State Puppet theatre, 2017, director and stage designer: Guram Matskhonashvili

„This play is a certain female manifesto about the war seen through the eyes of the women”.

„What do the women do when the men fight the wars? What happens to them? – Answers to these questions will be the main narrative of the play.”

Director Guram Matskhonashvili and his play “Counting Out” counteract from the perspective of female identity and freedom against any kind of violence and limitation.

13-year-old friends Tsknapha and Nintso live in a village next to the occupation line. One cannot see the soldiers but the village never forgets about their presence keeping permanent watch out for danger. The war has become an everyday part of their lives almost turning into a routine. No one fights it anymore; no one tries to overcome it in his own soul, to cross into the prohibited zone.

Only two 13-year-old girls have the courage to do so under the observation of their neighbors and invisible soldiers who hide in the woods and watch them. Two friends soon become grow-up women Nintso being more coquette and Tskhnapha remaining a shy person.

The girls disobey invisible rules on a daily basis. They bury a body of a dead soldier, go into the forest to directly encounter the danger. Disrupted reality appears to be put face to face with their fresh female boldness and natural human generosity.

Tragic mood of the play is even more enhanced by recitative of a female choir, which consists of the women of different ages who wear the wedding dresses. Kitsch elements of popular culture in the dilapidated interior of damaged



Tamta Melashvili: *Counting Out*. Tbilisi State Professional Puppet Theatre, 2017.
Director, Set and Costume Designer Guram Matskhonashvili;
Photo by Dina Oganova;

premises of the puppet theatre create a grotesque contrast with the morbid reality.

In the final scene of the play Tskhnapha’s conscious death becomes an existential act, a protest towards life. It elevates the 13-year-old girl from an unknown village in the occupation zone and transforms her into a person of heroic strength.

Tamar Bokuchava

*PhD in Art History and Theory, Theatre Critic,
Professor at the Shota Rustaveli Theatre and
Film Georgia State University*



Tamta Melashvili: *Counting Out*. Tbilisi State Professional Puppet Theatre, 2017. Director, Set and Costume Designer Guram Matskhonashvili;
Photo by Dina Oganova



Lasha Bughadze: *ANTImedea*. Poti International Festival of Regional Theatre, the Malthakva beach, 2018.

Director, Set and Costume Designer Guram Matskhonashvili;
Photo by Jo Black

ANTImedea

(Citations from the review)

Lasha Bughadze's play „Antimedea“, which was staged by Guram Matskhonashvili one month ago (2018) in the frames of the “New Drama” at the film studio is now presented at one of the unfinished buildings of the Malthakva beach.

Lasha Bughadze practically created an anti-myth that follows traditions of a classical myth and at the same time distances itself from historic and theatrical archetypes of “Medea”. However Bughadze's play can also be compared to deconstructive Medea of the famous dramatist and reformer of the 20th century Heiner Müller.

Guram Matskhonashvili's work focuses on the 1990s, hardly found freedom and series of wars that resulted in a wave of emigration. New, unusual form of the play and its ironic and dramatic rethinking once again proves that contemporary theatre is linked to permanent renewal, reflection and close connection to the time.

David Bukhrikidze



Lasha Bughadze: ANTImedea. Poti International Festival of Regional Theatre, the Malthakva beach, 2018.
 Director, Set and Costume Designer Guram Matskhonashvili; Photo by Jo Black



Lasha Bughadze: ANTImedea. Poti International Festival of Regional Theatre, the Malthakva beach, 2018.
Director, Set and Costume Designer Guram Matskhonashvili; Photo by Jo Black



Data Phirtskhalava: *A Long Break*. Royal District Theatre, 2015.

Director, Giorgi Katamadze, Set and Costume Designer Shota Bagalishvili.

Photo by Bobo Mkhitar

SHOTA BAGALISHVILI

Stage and Costume Designer

Born: 1989

Education:

2017 – Gogi Alexi-Meskhishvili Modern Theatrical Art School at the Rustaveli Theatre;

2014 – Tbilisi State Academy of Arts, Faculty of Visual Art;

2009 – Tbilisi Ecclesiastical Academy and Seminary, Faculty of Ecclesiastical Architecture, Icon-Painting, Restoration of Machinery and Monumental Icon-Painting.

Work:

Bagalishvili collaborates with many theatres (Shota Rustaveli State Drama Theatre, Royal District Theatre, Free Theatre, Iliuani Theatre and the others). He has worked as a film set designer and has teaching experience. He is a finalist of the WSD2017 Exhibition in Taipei. Bagalishvili participated in the Georgian Exhibition at the Tbilisi Biennale of Stage Design 2018.

Award: 2015 – “Best Scenography” award by the Theatre Critics Association of Georgia for “They shoot exhausted horses, don’t they?!”

Data Phirtskhalava’s play “A Long Break” at the Royal District Theatre

(Citations from the review)

„Action unfolds at the classroom where already grown-up classmates meet each other after 15 years of separation.

The stage is packed with the desks and chairs. Suffocating atmosphere. Damaged parquet, desks with the doodles on them, dim light of the classroom (stage design by Shota Bagalishvili) reminds us more of a depressive atmosphere of the 1990s than a well-equipped classroom in a reformed school. Obvious cruelty and social barriers are so clear that they cannot change anything in the cooled off relationships of the classmates.

The childhood traumas and memories nourish the characters for almost one hour. It is obvious from the very beginning that the main conflict is focused on Guga's and Vova's fight that once took place in the toilet. It has been imprinted in their memories as an unforgettable horror story. But the major tragedy is connected to the fact that Vova was beaten in the filthy school toilet not only by Guga but the others as well.

The key element of the final scene refers to strange psychological duel of the main characters, almost physically tangible logical tension, funny eroticism or competition.

An in-depth analysis will reveal that we all keep in our memories a specially closed "toilet" that not only stinks with the nice memories of the school urine, but in reality is a



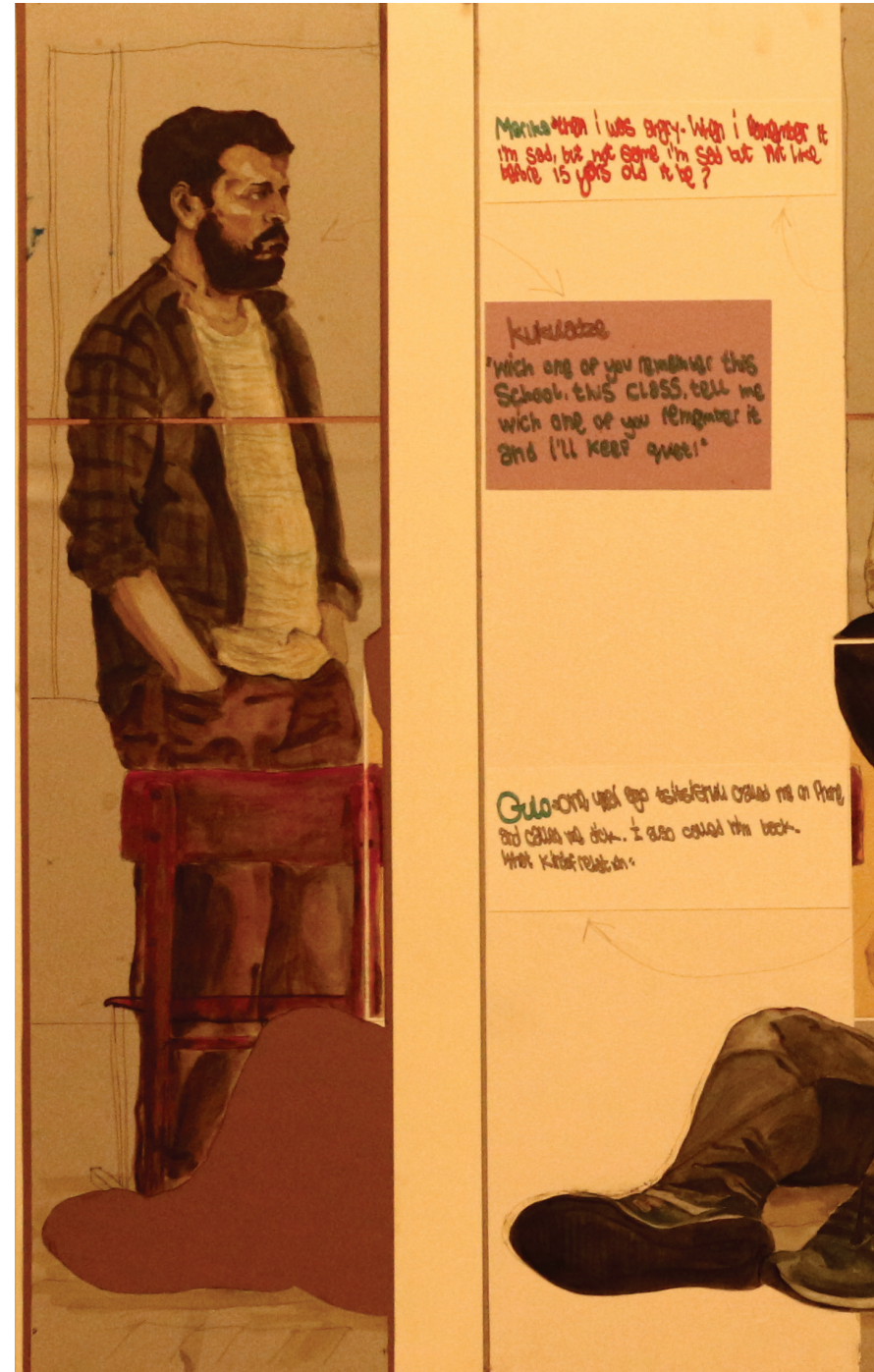
Data Phirtskhalava: A long Break. Royal District Theatre, 2015.
Director, Giorgi Katamadze, Set and Costume Designer Shota Bagalishvili.
Photo by Bobo Mkhitar

space full of visible or invisible violence, million types of fear, perversions, masturbation, smoke of the first cigarette and diverse fantasies – a universe that can not be understood and defeated even during the long break.

David Bukhrikidze



Data Phirtskhalava: A long Break. Royal District Theatre, 2015.
Director, Giorgi Katamadze, Set and Costume Designer Shota Bagalishvili.
Photo by Valery Odikadze







D. Tavadze, D. Gabunia: *Women of Troy*, Royal District Theatre, Tbilisi, 2013. Director, scenographer David Tavadze. Photo by Pawel Sosnowski

DAVID TAVADZE

Director, author, actor, scenographer

Born: 1989

Education:

2010 – Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University, Faculty of Drama.

Work:

Currently Tavadze serves as the Associate Director at the Royal District Theatre. His milestone performance was *The Trojan Women*, where he presented himself as a scenographer as well. The performance was shown in eight countries and earned him international fame (authors: David Tavadze, Davit Gabunia). The piece is based on the interviews with the Caucasian female war survivors and the play by Euripides.). Tavadze collaborates with Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, Maxim Gorki Theater Berlin, Staatsschauspiel Dresden. He is a winner of many Georgian and international awards, such as:

- 2009 – Tumanishvili Foundation Award for the play “*The Crows*”
- 2009 – Georgian Theatre Union Award the Best Debut for the play “*The Children of the Others*”. 2010 – Georgian Theatre Union Award for the performance by young director for the play “*The Ugly One*”;
- 2013 – Highest Georgian Theatre Award Duruju for “*The Trojan Women*”;
- 2014 – Tsinandali Award as the Best Young Director for “*The Pain is Youth*”;

- 2014 – 1st place on International Playwrights Competition Talking About Borders for the play “Warmother”;
- 2015 – International Young Critics Award for “The Trojan Women”;
- 2016 – Theatre Union of Georgia, Sandro Akhmeteli Award;
- 2016 – Fast Forward, Festival for Young Directors, award for “The Trojan Women”.

Mythological Paradigms of Violence and Suffering in “The Trojan Women” and “Prometheus”

(Citations from the review)

David Gabunia and Data Tavadze, “The Trojan Women”.

(Documentary theatre piece, which is based on the real stories of female war survivors, legendary tragedy of Euripides and the other literary sources).

In the situations of the epochal cataclysms and changes of paradigms archetypes and myths become more active and transform into the life experiences of people. In the Trojan Women David Gabunia, Data Tavadze and the actors of the



D. Tvadaze, D. Gabunia: Women of Troy, Royal District Theatre, Tbilisi, 2013.

Director, scenographer David Tavadze.

Photo by Bobo Mkhitari

Royal District Theatre have felt this connection, gave the documentary stories a scale of mythology and transformed them into the part of contemporary life. This type of theatre that is created by the Royal District Theatre and some other directors from the younger generation can be called the theatre of new sensitivity (analogue to the postmodern sensitivities).

The Trojan Women, which was staged, in the Royal District Theatre in 2013 was one of the first significant and well-thought examples of new development. One can say that



D. Tvadaze, D. Gabunia: *Women of Troy*, Royal District Theatre, Tbilisi, 2013. Director, scenographer David Tavadze. Photo by Bobo Mkhitar

the actors established a new type of the “theatre of new sensitivity” which had its well-formed worldview, professional credo, concept of staging, acting and civil position. The play was named after the tragedy of Euripides. However, in addition to the 2,500 old literary work the main inspiration came from the oral stories of female war survivors. According to Dato Gabunia this is a feministic work that brings their stories to the spectators. The directors solved many more important and principal objectives for the theatre this way

landing among the most important trends of contemporary theatre. First of all this concerns selection of a topic from the context of postmodernist thinking. Here we have to deal with an attempt to create female discourse that will counter-fight traditional patriarchal discourse and its logocentrism. “As it happens... our perception of the war is masculine”, - writes Svetlana Alexievich in her book “War’s Unwomanly face”. And in reality our ideas, vocabulary, symbols that are connected to war are masculine. They show heroism of male actors leaving



D. Tvadaze, D. Gabunia: *Women of Troy*, Royal District Theatre, Tbilisi, 2013. Director, scenographer David Tavadze. Photo by Bobo Mkhitari



the female victims of the war and the kids in the shadow of statistics. The victim is always an object. His verbalization and giving him a voice is connected to combating of many obstacles. It is necessary to take a "painful" artistic way in order to get real results."

One can say that from a certain point of view "The Trojan Women" continues experience of the avant-garde of the 20th century. It is related to the Grotowski Theatre based on the

principle of acting (more liberal, less ascetic version). The text does not specify the characters; the actors do not turn into somebody but take an in-depth journey in themselves and get closer to archetype situations or female nature through "removal of the masks". Musical rhythm and archetypal environment of rituals play an important role this way also establishing the links with the avant-garde trends and quests for psychological techniques and experiences that are exercised through magic of primitive cultures. One of the

leading tones is expressed through mourning as a ritual and archetype situation. The first episode of the play is named "Mourning". The women find themselves face to face with death. They give life and protect it bearing this duty from ancient times.

Dato Gabunia's collage-like play, which is patched together from the stories of female war survivors, tragedy of Euripides, fragments of texts by Kawabata, Bond, Wilde demonstrates an amazing unity. The literary piece and the play are glued together thanks to the unanimity and like-mindedness. Pain of the women is perceived as our current pain. It doesn't matter that some of them tell the stories of the recent wars we were also part of and some recall the stories that happened thousands of years ago. Five women present the tragic narrative in the simplest sparing way. Each of them speaks for herself but at the same time for everybody. They take turns to get loose from a pulsating human female "body" and tell us their title less stories with a smile or pain on their faces. They recall their experiences in simple words without underlining their efforts. Nika Pasuri's musical score, natural rhythm and movements, fragile symbolism of glass dishes and the flowers that are dispersed all over the stage

create a strange symbiosis of mourning and beauty that penetrates souls of the audiences. The spectators who sit on the stage in close vicinity of actors become at the same time the witnesses and participants of a collective ritual, which is dedicated to generation of new wisdom and pain.

Tamar Bokuchava

*PhD in Art History and Theory, Theatre Critic,
Professor at the Shota Rustaveli Theatre and
Film Georgia State University*

D. Tvadaze, D. Gabunia: Women of Troy, Royal District Theatre, Tbilisi, 2013.

Director, scenographer David Tavadze.

Photo by Bobo Mkhitari





VALERIAN GUNIA UNION OF YOUNG THEATER ARTISTS (YTA UNION) – OISTAT NATIONAL CENTER OF GEORGIA

Organization Profile

V. Gunia Union of Young Theatre Artists (YTA UNION) was established in 1998, by the professors and graduates of the Shota Rustaveli Theater and Film State University and Tbilisi State Academy of Fine Arts. The first honorary president of YTA UNION was Giorgi Gunia (1998-2001).

Since 2011 YTA UNION has represented the OISTAT National Center in Georgia; it has the scenography, education and research commissions.

In 2007 and 2011 YTA UNION was the presenter of the Georgian pavilion in the student section at the PQ07 and PQ11, the initiator of the project “The Modern Georgian Scenography at the Prague Quadrennial” in frames of the program “Georgian Seasons” of the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia.

In 2015 YTA UNION was the presenter of the Georgian National Pavilion at the PQ15.

YTA UNION organizational chart includes the Board, the Directorate, the Experts Council and professional and youth sections.

Mission

YTA UNION is a non-governmental nonprofit organization, a creative union, that carries out the creative and research activities in the theater and visual art, supports the development and promotion of the Georgian culture. YTA UNION, as a network aims to spread the knowledge in the theater and visual

art, to develop the opportunities of its experts and organizers. YTA UNION unites the representatives of different professions – artists, designers, actors, directors, theatre and art critics, curators.

The aims of YTA UNION:

- To develop the contemporary theater art;
- To protect the creative, professional and social interests of young theater artists;
- To promote the democratization of the society through involvement in the cultural policy;
- To develop culture as the guarantor of the sociopolitical stability of the society.

The objectives of YTA UNION:

- To encourage new creative ideas in the theater art;
- To involve actively young Georgian artists in the world theater processes and to promote them;
- To create the union of young costume and set designers and to protect their professional interests;
- To carry the research and educational activity in the theater art;
- To develop new methodologies (including in the cultural policy);
- To study the cultural policy;
- To promote mutual cooperation of the nongovernmental organizations working in sphere of culture; to maintain the coalition cooperation in the cultural policy.

PRODUCTION TEAM:

Nino Gunia-Kuznetsova, Curator, Author of the theme

Tamar Bokuchava, (1963-2019) Co-curator, Co-author

Manana Gunia, Exhibition designer & graphic designer

Meri Matsaberidze, PR manager

Tamar Gurchiani, Project Manager, Coordinator of performance group

Avtandil Dolaberidze, IT & Technical manager

Nino Surguladze, Cluster Coordinator

Malkhaz Barbakadze, Director, Video editing

TEIETON Studio L.T.D, Post production

Khatuna Kikvadze, Editor, Consultant

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