

The EXPERIMENTAL 2007

The English-language daily of the nineteenth Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre No 2 - Sunday September 2, 2007

Thoughts and Clouds Egypt's Official Entries

For the first time in the history of the 19-year-old Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre (CIFET) two performances by the General Organization of Culture Palaces have been selected to represent Egypt in the official contest.

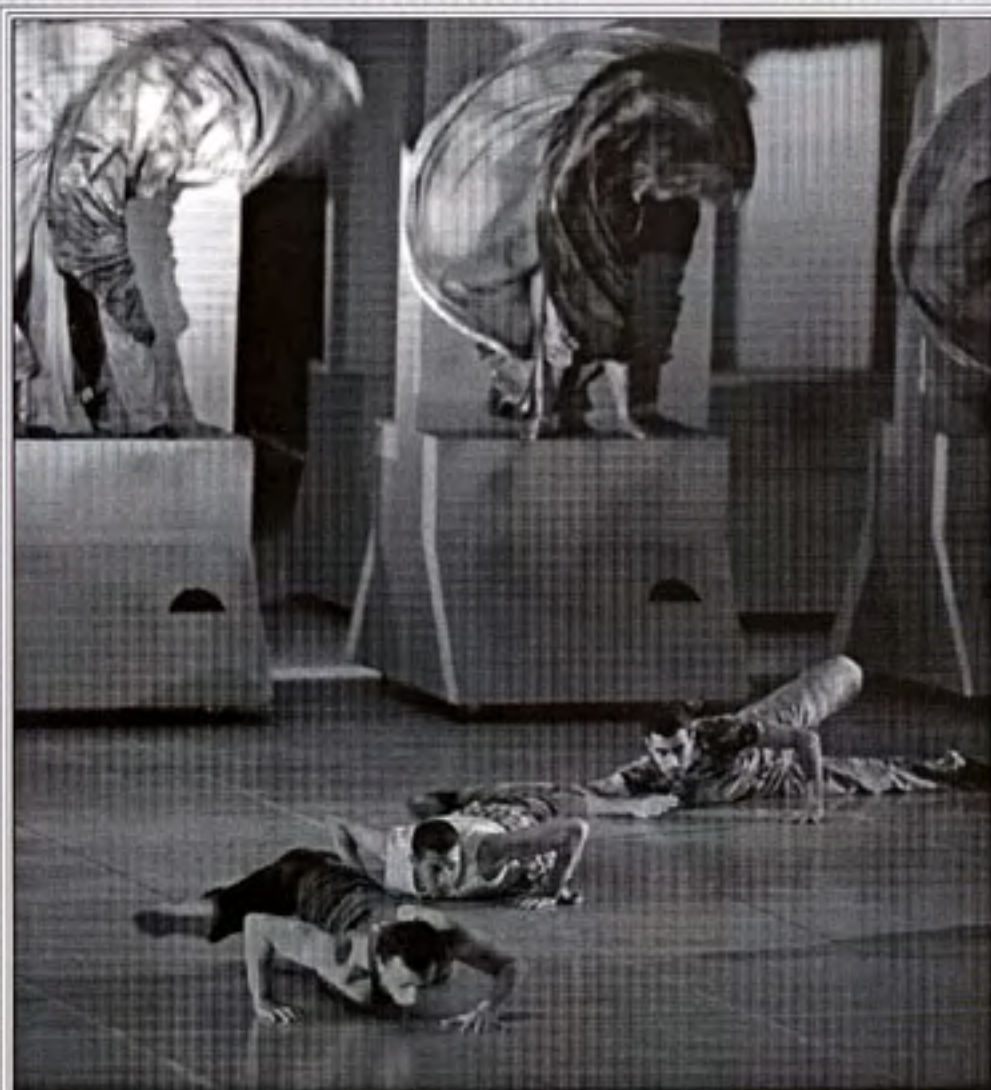
The choice is one of the rare instances where no performances from the State Drama Sector have been selected for the competition.

Al-Anfoushi Culture Palace's *Kalam fi Sirri* (*Thoughts in My Mind*), written by Izz al-Din Darwish and directed by Riham Abdul Razzaq, and Cairo Opera Dance Theatre's *Law Takallamat al-Ghuyoom* (*If Clouds Could Speak*) by Walid Aouni are both to compete in the festival's official contest.

Thoughts is an experimental vision of the contemporary human struggles in our society. It mainly focuses on what Arab woman suffers from in her relationship with man, the way she was brought up and how she is treated in a patriarchal society.

As he puts it in the official press material, Walid Aouni "has a strong belief in the clouds' memory. Although clouds have short memories, they have witnessed a heritage of music composed by talented human beings throughout ages. He also thinks that the clouds are the main source of inspiration for great composers and in particular "Wagner" as it is evident in his masterpiece "The Ring".

"He wishes that if the clouds had been able to speak, they would have told us a lot.



Law Takallamat al-Ghuyoom (If Clouds Could Speak) by Walid Aouni

Off-Competition not CIFET Fringe Egyptian Performances

At the time of *The Experimental* going to the press, it came to our notice that the fringe Egyptian performance have not been included in the festival's official schedule (which we run today on p. 3).

The English section apologizes to the Egyptian troupes for this mistake and promise to rectify the anomaly as of tomorrow's issue.

The four Egyptian performances running today and tomorrow are as follows: Mohamed Shafik's *Seven Colours of A Birthday* (The National Theatre at 9 p.m), Director Mohamed Abdel-Khalek's *The Demon* (Assalam Theatre at 7 p.m), *Love Story* (Al-Ghad Experimental Theatre at 8 p.m) and, last but not least, Lenin El-Ramly's *Forbidden Dreams* (Al-Gezira Arts Centre at 8 p.m)

A l'intérieur des
pages en Français



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**Daily of
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CIFET 2007 pays special attention to the topic of drama, performance, and digital multimedia. CIFET president **Fawzi Fahmy** lays out the debate (see roundtable schedule below)

Theatre and the Challenges of the Digital Turn



In his International -Theatre- Day message to the world in 2003 Gelman dramatist Tankred Dorst has described theatre as an "impure" art which does not hesitate to exploit anything that comes its way to serve its own interests - an art that will always betray its principles, that derives its images from other media and is definitely not immune to the novelties of the age.

On the other side, there are those who oppose this view and accuse its champions of propagating "Meta Theories" which claim material and epistemological completeness in order to consolidate a coercive, despotic attitude.. or of wanting to subject human interactions and exchanges to what is "variable" and "accidental" rather than what is Permanent and fixed. The trend has also been dismissed as a brand of "syncretism" or "eclecticism" which draws on several sources in a shallow way to construct forms and images that lack logical coherence or rational justification. To such charges, the champions of technology respond by stressing the collapse of all barriers and erosion of traditional norms and criteria and defiantly insist on opposing rigid formalism and repetitiveness.

As things stand now, we are faced with what amounts to two widely divergent cultures, representing two different worlds existing simultaneously in one age. Each of these two cultures projects its own views and images and seeks a different horizon which can accommodate its visions and thoughts.

In its 19th edition, the Cairo International Festival for Experimental Theatre has decided to make this conflict the topic of its 4-session central seminar which bears the title: "Theatrical Experimentation and Technology. We hope that the guest speakers, who come from different parts of the world and are all distinguished specialists in their fields, will help us to explore both the vast cultural potentials of using new technology in the theatre as a liberating force and also the counter arguments which oppose its use in scripting or directing performances.

The digital revolution has proved another challenging technological development which has drawn a lot of attention: through new means of communication, it has allowed geographically dispersed individuals to connect and interact, eventually bringing about what has come to be called "digital theatre". Though experiments in this field began in 1966, as Marek Holensky, the

Polish researcher, mentions in his book Art and the Computer, it was Charles Deemer who pioneered this kind of theatre when he presented the first digital play ever .on the internet in 1985. It was a groundbreaking kind of play that went beyond the traditional concept of theatre, allowing its receivers to become coauthors of the work and introduce their choices and suggestions as to the course of the action and construction of the events. It was also a very special kind of play in that it could only be accessed on the internet.

Hence, besides the central seminar, the CIFET has decided this year to hold a roundtable plus a workshop on digital theatre and has invited for this purpose a number of international specialists in this area. They will be assisted by a select group of young scholars from the Academy of Arts whom I had sent to Europe to specialize in this new field when I had the honour of presiding over this prestigious establishment. Together, they will attempt to further explore this new kind of theatre and assess its prospects and capacity to meet human needs.

The CIFET has also included in its publications this year a translation of Antonio Bitsou's book, Digital theatre, which he generously allowed the festival to render into Arabic, waiving his copyrights. The author himself will be also present to participate in both the roundtable and workshop on digital theatre.

Time	Topic/Event
10 :00 am 12 : 00 pm	- Introduction to Drama and Artificial Intelligence (Prof. Antonio Pizzo) - Theatre and Virtual Reality (Prof. Josephine Anstey) - New Dance and New Media (Dr. Emanuele Quinz)
12 : 00 pm 12 : 30 pm	Coffee Break
12 : 30 pm 02 : 30 pm	- The Jew of Malta - Interactive, Generated Stage and Dynamic Costume Design (Dr. Christna Finger) - Representation in Space and Time: Control Score and - Responsive Interface to Virtual Performance (Prof. Vincenzo Lombardo)
The Rountable will take place on Sept. 5 at the Main Hall of the Supreme Council of Culture (Cairo Opera Complex)	

Basic Colors (Bahrain)

The play revolves around the world of media or modern means of communication. Everybody talks or rather babbles. Everybody wants to own reality; however, nothing was really said as no one is listening but to himself. It is the world of chaos which is spread all over the world and in particular the Arab world. Such chaos is the real reason behind the emergence of new sects such as fundamentalism and extremism.

La Sursursal (Spain)

"La Sursursal" tackles the theme of the slavery disguised as mendicity. It is a metaphor of exploitation of human beings. This is represented through three characters who grew up on the margin of life, disinherited of any fortune and forgotten by history.

Show Cola (Syria)

After New Year's day, six friends gathered in a fashion show hall which is owned by one of them. It is three a.m and the fashion show starts as every model or in fact every character tells us his/her story. Although their stories seem to be trivial, they are serious and universal in essence as they deal with subjects like love, work, dreams, death etc. At the end we discover that all what we have seen is just a rehearsal of a the



Dead (Armenia)

The protagonist of this play wakes up one day to find himself in an open coffin instead of his bed while his picture is hanging on the wall. His coffin is surrounded by a mass of people in black in mourning. He tries his best to prove that he is still alive but all his efforts are in vain. He feels so desperate that he sits watching the proceedings of his own funeral.

Tomorrow's Schedule

PLACE OF PERFORMANCE	TIME	COUNTRY	TITLE OF PERFORMANCE	NAME OF COMPANY	DURATION OF PERFORMANCE
As - Salam "Main Hall"	10:00 pm	Syria	Show Cola	Natioanl Theatre	65 min
Al - Tali'a "Zaki Toleimat Hall"	9:00 pm	Kuwait	The Last Scene of the Tragedy	High Institute of Theatre Troupe	45 min
Al - Tali'a "Salah Abdel Sabour Hall"	7:00 pm	Morocco	Rocking Chair	Labo Becket	20 min
Al - Arayes	9:00 pm	Yemen	Travel.. Travel	The National Theatre	35 min
Miami Theatre	7:00 pm	Bahrain	Basic Colors	Owal Theatre	50 min
Al - Aye'm "Main Hall"	10:00 pm	Libya	Pause	The National Theatre in Bengazi	45 min
Al - Aye'm "Small Hall"	8:30 pm	Georgia	Through the Kids Eyes	Liberty Theatre	80 min
Al - Gomhourya	8:30 pm	Armenia	Dead	Joy Experimental Theatre	60 min
Opera House "Small Hall"	8:00 pm	Algeria	Fantazia	Al - TAG Leberg Theatre	70 min
Artistic Creativity Centre	8:00 pm	England	Hamlet Machine	Imploding Fictions	90 min
Youth Theatre at Agouza	8:00 pm	Spain	La Sursursal	La Machina Theatre	70 min
Metropol Theatre	8:00 pm	Bulgaria	Watch Your Back	Brain Store Project	60 min

The Experimental takes no responsibility for changes introduced to the above schedule without a 24-hour advance notice

Fantazia (Algeria)

The events of this play take place in a royal palace where the king rules his subjects or seems to rule them..His sons love him or pretend to do so..The subjects serve him or pretend to do so..people live or they pretend to live..In all these things...life seems to be a phenomenon of coexisting with death...Fantasia is a semi-theatrical phenomenon.. We live in the chaos of things and who knows if it is possible to live like that?

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