

Public Movement and the Ceremonial Crisis

The site-specific outdoor performances of Public Movement – established in 2006 by Omer Kriger and Dana Yahalomi – are defined by the group as actions of public choreography. Carried out in Israel and around Europe, these actions, consisting of open ceremonies and invisible interventions, offer a radical presentation of the ritualistic patterns embedded in national power structures.

In my paper I will examine the group's creative interaction with the public sphere as a strategy of subversive cooperation. The rituals it practices, combining movement, music, sound, screened images and text, are a simulative aestheticization of collective codes of emergency and trauma which are turned into restored behavior. While the modeling of ceremonial patterns is done from an explicit position of integration and identification with a Jewish-Israeli collective memory, the performing group is also characterized as having a generalized (utopian or totalitarian) autonomous national identity, as unidentified white-uniformed agents mark the performance space with an unidentified tri-color flag, infiltrate the public space and add the dissonance of sudden violence into a highly regulative action. Among the group's unique actions (which nevertheless have performative precedents) I will focus mainly on two. *Also Thus!* (2007), a ceremony simulating a military parade which includes a collision between a moving car and performers, presented repeatedly as a movement phrase. This performance was also a part of the series of actions *Performing Politics in Berlin* and took place at the Olympic stadium in Berlin. *Emergency* (2008) was presented in the Israeli Fringe Theatre in Acre for a limited audience, despite the cancellation of that year's festival following violent clashes between Jewish and Arab residents. Planned before the riots, the action simulates the site of a terrorist attack or other emergency states, complete with victim evacuation routines, television coverage and ambulances and fire trucks.

About the Author

Dr. Daphna Ben-Shaul is a lecturer at the Department of the Theatre Arts and at the Interdisciplinary Program in the Arts (Graduate Program), Tel Aviv University, and at the school of Visual Theatre, Jerusalem. She heads the Actor-Creator-Researcher Program in the Department of the Theatre Arts, Tel Aviv University. Her publications are related to conceptual, cultural and interdisciplinary thought about theatre and performance, focusing mainly on performative reflexivity, voiding as a performative phenomenon, performance analysis of contemporary theatre, and performance art. Among her publications: "Ideology of Form in Storytelling Theater: The Politics of Inter-medial Adaptation in *Discovering Elijah*,

A Play about War," *Journal of Theory and Criticism* 17 (2010); "Glocalized *Theatrum Mundi*: The Case of *Comédies des comédiens*," *Modern Drama* 51.2 (Summer 2008); and a book on the Israeli performance group, *Zik Group: Twenty Years of Work* (editing and opening article), Keter Publishers, 2005. She is the winner of the Gutwirt Foundation Scholarship for graduate studies and of the Post-Doctoral Fellowship of the Hebrew University (Lady Davis). Since 2005 she is a member of a research team funded by German-Israeli Foundation (GIF) for Scientific Research and Development. In 2010 she has won (with Prof. Freddie Rokem, Prof. Nurit Yaari and Prof. Ruth Kanner) the Yad Ha'Nadiv Humanities Fund for an innovative humanities teaching project – "The Practical/Theoretical Research Laboratory Program."