

TRANSIT

FESTIVAL

2019



HOPE IN ACTION

Theatre - Women - Will

12-23 June 2019

INFORMATION ON ARTISTS AND PERFORMANCES

Odin Teatret - Holstebro
Denmark



In 2006 I was invited to a festival in Lima by the actresses of the Yuyachkani theatre group. One day they took all the guests to the memorial monument *El ojo que llora* (The eye that cries) by Lika Mutal, a labyrinth leading to a stone sculpture at the centre. As I entered the labyrinth, I looked down: beside the track there were thousands of stones laid in order, one for each victim of the war that had lasted for twenty years between the Peruvian army and Sendero Luminoso. Some of the stones disclosed the name and date of birth and of disappearance or death of a person. Looking down and remembering all the other wars and massacres, I was seized by anguish and a sense of impotence. Searching for comfort, I looked for a long time at the sculpture washed by a continuous ripple of water representing the tears of the Pachamama (Mother Earth). Then I walked all the way back. The stones were in the opposite direction and I could no longer read the inscriptions. Automatically I raised my eyes and head, and my erect body regained energy. The simple obligation of placing one foot in front of the other changed my attitude. I understood then that what we can and must do is to keep on walking. The action of walking decides and where we look determines the direction and the spirit of where we are going.

Today, in a time when government leaders and the people who have elected them no longer seem to acknowledge the simple basic value of human rights, I desperately need to be accompanied by hope. Not the hope that sits back waiting for something to happen, nor the hope as a form of prayer to others, but the active determination to transmit a message of energy through the practice of my craft, theatre. A craft based on the know-how of creating relationships.

The last two Transit festivals were permeated by themes of violence against women and the possible ways of reacting. The choice of *Hope in Action - Theatre, Women, Will* as a theme for the 9th Transit comes from a need to move on. I use 'will' in the



double meaning of resolution and legacy. Without forgetting the necessity and responsibility of denouncing and reacting, I wish to regain confidence in a communication that refuses idle words and passes through body contact, self-assurance, love, spirit of adventure and belief in the future. The older I get, the more experience I have, the more AI, algorithms and robots take over the human capacity of having feelings and intelligence, the more I need beauty, poetry, song, music, children, movement and nature. Nature has a power of *being* that I would like to give to my actions in theatre. Nature transmits messages of energy and life, and is an inspiration for my work.

Every time I am confronted with despair and sickness, misery and rage, my advice has been to take time to breathe, go for a walk, be out in nature, by the sea or in the woods, where nothing is mechanic, orderly, symmetric, boring, and everything is changing all the time. The horizon can be cloudy, but the distance and space give a sense of proportion and longing. Preparing the image for the festival, Dorthe Kærgaard reminded me of a Danish saying, "you should not sit inside, when all hope is out". Many women have been invited to Transit 9 Festival to contribute with their experience regarding its theme through performances, work demonstrations, workshops and talks. The programme wants to take the women 'out' to be nourished, energised and inspired, enhancing a sense of hope for the future of our craft and of this world, and the belief that in a time of crisis, disillusionment, corruption, autocracy and war, the voice of women can contribute an alternative point of view. This requires engagement and responsibility. Of course, inside or outside, struggling in despair or singing with joy, screaming out loud or in a persistent silence, we have to do our work well. It is the only weapon at our disposal. Theatre is a shared space for reflection, and it can also be a time for hope in action.

Julia Varley

Transit 9 is dedicated to

Lika Mutal
(1939 - 2016)

Lika Mutal once gave me a small sculpture as a present while I was on tour in Peru. She wanted to thank me for a performance. It was a stone moulded by the water of a river. It seemed soft and had waves that marked the passing of time. I love to hold this stone. When I heard Lika had died, I decided to dedicate Transit 9 Festival to her, because she teaches me what hope in action means every time I have visit her monument *El ojo que llora* in Lima.

Julia Varley

Lika Mutal was born in The Netherlands in 1939. She moved to Colombia in 1964 and then to Perú in 1968. Her career as a sculptor began in 1971, after meeting a well-known stone smith, Don Juan Arias. Some of her work was inspired by the quipus, a pre-Colombian tool used for recording and mathematics which has never been deciphered. In 1983, Lika was invited to become part of the Nahra Haime Gallery in New York. She has exhibited extensively and her work is in impressive collections such as Centre Georges Pompidou - Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France; City of Lima, Peru; City of Utrecht, The Netherlands; Nike Building Terrace, Queen's Square, Yokohama, Japan; Organization of American States, Washington, D.C. (1990-1994); Grand Cypress Resort, Orlando, FL, among others. Lika has also been awarded the Royal Ueno Museum Prize in 1994, and an Excellent Maquette Prize, in 1992, from the Fujisankei Biennale founded in Japan, as well as the First Sculpture Prize from the Universidad Católica in 1970. Lika was awarded the Jose Maria Arguedas Prize for her work *El ojo que llora*, located on permanent display in Campo de Marte, in Lima, Peru. She had been commissioned to make a piece of public art in order to commemorate the loss of life as a result of the war between the Peruvian army and Sendero Luminoso that took place in 1980-2000.



El ojo que llora, Lika Mutal wearing a white hat. Photo: Yuyachkani Archive