

# SH|FT

SAFE HAVENS - FREEDOM TALKS

## Safe Havens - The Garden Sessions

7 - 8 November 2023

Athens, Greece



Image: Zehra Ömerođlu



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*“Somewhere between right and wrong is a garden, I’ll meet you there.”*

*-Rumi*

## **A two-day pre-meeting November 7-8 for invited artists and caseworkers attending the 2023 Safe Havens Conference in Athens, Greece**

For the 2023 Safe Havens conference we have entered a collaboration with Hildesheim University, together inviting you for a two-day artists’ session with a limited number of invited artists, writers and case workers (around 40 participants). Deriving from the Arts Rights Justice Academy and merging with methods and principles developed through 10 years of Safe Havens meetings, currently run by SH|FT (sh-ft.org), the two-day pre-meeting is designed to support the growing, global, collective voice of artists at risk and relocated persecuted artists through collective conversations - on issues regarding care and well-being, sustainability, and eco-perspectives on the field of arts and artistic freedom.

In addition we have made space for some “artistic-jam sessions” as a means of sharing artistic work in creative sessions between artists of all disciplines.

Collaborating with organisations and facilitators dedicated to these issues, a central topic for the discussions will be: how do various forms of threats and pressure affect the artistic practice and legacy of artists at risk? Whether the pressure artists and writers experience comes from society, from the family, from repressive governments; or is part of other structural oppressive mechanisms, how does this manifest in the artistic practice and production? And, what are the tools and methods artists and writers use to remain inspired and constructive? What needs, resources and gaps are there in the support system and in solidarity initiatives between artists at risk?

Artists and writers invited to join this pre-meeting will have a wider interest in the field of artistic freedom and are interested to share experiences and perspectives on creative practice through presentations, discussions, and interactive workshops hosted by Laguna Collective and facilitators.

During these first two days we will also invite you to a couple of artistic jam-sessions and sharing of art practices. These 2-hour sessions of artistic interaction will be an opportunity for live communication and to make flash experiments for collective art expressions. We hope that the sessions of focused artistic communication can inspire artists from different backgrounds to network and get a feel for each other’s work processes. Perhaps we will come up with a joint art output, perhaps not; perhaps this can spark future artistic cooperation among some, or perhaps not. All this is fine. In any case, this year we will have this extra time for communication and artistic expression.

**If you have any ideas or inputs for the jam-sessions to share before we meet in Athens, please let us know!**

The 2023 Safe Havens Conference has a special focus on the MENA region and Greece, yet as a global meeting platform we understand the importance of viewing the local and the regional also in a holistic and global context and we will welcome participants from all parts of the world. It is also our ambition to gather knowledge regarding needs, resources, and gaps in the support system - which we will share as a graphic presentation after the conference.

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The Duncan Dance Research Centre has kindly invited us as guests in their space in Athens for our sessions and will also share their eco-sustainability perspectives on the arts. On the premises there is a garden for contemplation and insightful conversations. We will meet you there and plant a tree together.

Our vision is that the group-reflection moment of the SHIFT community will help us all grow, stronger, and with an increased awareness around the intersectionality of the artists' cause - and most importantly, with additional tools to enhance the wellbeing of the artists at risk and the sustainability of creative freedom.

After the two-day pre-meeting we are joined by the larger global network of NGOs, policy makers, funders, artists and activists for the general Safe Havens Conference on November 9-10, in a separate venue in central Athens. You will receive the programme for this in a different email.

We are looking forward to meeting you in Athens, Greece!

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## PROGRAMME

### DAY 1 - Tuesday, 7 November

- 10:00 - 10:30 Opening in the Garden of Duncan Dance Research Centre
- 10:30 - 13:00 Presentation of facilitators, participants and programme
- 13:00 - 14:00 Lunch and walk in the garden
- 14:00 - 16:00 To Creativity, Well-being and Care 1
- 16:00 - 18:00 Artistic jam-sessions
- 16:00 - 18:00 To Creativity, Well-being and Care 2
- 18:30 - 22:00 Dinner

### DAY 2 - Wednesday, 8 November

- 09:30 - 10:30 To Creativity, Well-being and Care 1
- 10:30 - 12:30 Artistic jam-sessions
- 10:30 - 12:30 Open session
- 12:30 - 13:30 Lunch
- 13:30 - 14:30 A session in the garden
- 14:30 - 16:30 To Creativity, Well-being and Care 2
- 17:00 - 19:00 Dinner
  
- 20:00 Welcome drink
- 21:00 Artistic programme in celebration of the Safe Havens 10 years anniversary



**Short information on sessions:**

**“To Creativity, Well-being and Care”- Hannah Strohmeier**

During this session, we will speak about the potential impacts of occupational stress on well-being and learn about the syndrome of burnout, including through the presentation of well-established occupational stress models. We will also consider the specifics of activist burnout and discuss the deeper meanings and purposes of self-care, including what it needs for self-care to be effective.

**“To Creativity, Well-being and Care” - Naomi Press**

Community Table: arts and nature based invitations for exchange

## BIOGRAPHIES OF THE GARDEN SESSIONS PARTICIPANTS



**Parvin Ardalan** is a journalist, writer, and feminist activist. She is one of the co-founders of the Women Cultural Center and The One Million Signature Campaign in Iran - a grassroots movement aimed at repealing discriminatory laws against women in Iran. She was awarded the Olof Palme Prize in 2007 and has been living in exile since 2009. She was the first guest writer of Malmö city (2010-2012) in Sweden within the ICORN (The International Cities of Refuge Network) program. Besides writing and being involved in activities related to Iran and Sweden, her interest in gender, social movements, and migration led her to launch two major long-term projects with both intersectional and interdisciplinary perspectives in Sweden as a joint effort with the civil society and numerous cultural institutions, thus creating Women Making HERstory and Migration Memory Encounters in Sweden. Parvin Ardalan is currently a board member of Swedish PEN and works at the Unit Documentation and Freedom of Expression at Malmö City Archives called freedom expression library Dawit Isaak.



**Aysu Arican** works as a program manager at Anadolu Kültür, a non-profit cultural organisation based in Turkey, since 2016 designing and managing cross-border cultural programs (mainly 'Tandem Turkey' and 'VAHA'), artistic collaborations and exchanges across Turkey, Europe, and Iran. As a cultural worker, she collaborates closely with independent art organizations, artists, and collectives while liaising with various funding and networking entities in Europe. She studied Psychology in Middle East Technical University (METU) and received her M.A. degree in Critical and Cultural Studies from Bogazici University. Recently interested in art mediation and hybrid approaches in curatorial practices, she attended several training programs in Amsterdam, Berlin and Vienna. She is a fellow of "Turkey-Europe Future Forum" of Stiftung Mercator, and currently a scholarship holder of Martin Roth Initiative for a cultural research residency in Athens hosted by non-profit art space Noucmas.



**Atefe Asadi** is a writer, editor, translator, and songwriter from Iran. She has worked as editor and translator with various publications and magazines, including underground ones. Asadi's literary work is set in the context of Iranian society and addresses the country's social, political, and religious issues, including gender, sexuality, and women's rights while challenging conservatism, religion, war, and their consequences. Some of her stories were published in independent magazines, including Iran's 'Independent Literature Magazine', 'The Morva Quarterly', 'Consefr', and 'The Shadows' ('Saayeha'). Other works, including her collection of stories, were rejected by Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and declared unprintable. She was under pressure due to her work and civic activities and was interrogated on numerous occasions and arrested in May 2022. In December 2022, she received the Hannah Arendt Scholarship and was welcomed as the ICORN resident in The City of Hannover.



**Samaneh Atef** was born in Iran and pursued a degree in computer engineering. In 2014, while she was already compulsively engaged in drawing since childhood, she serendipitously met a graphic design professor who, upon seeing her sketches in a small sketchbook, told her that she was not an engineer but rather an artist. She then decided to fully dedicate herself to art. Two years later, her painting work was exhibited at the Museum of Naïve and Marginal Art in Jagodina, Serbia, as part of its international triennial exhibition. At that moment, Samaneh Atef fully entered the world of art. As a woman, and a painter, she saw no future in her homeland. With the help of an international association supporting artists, she left Iran and settled in France in 2020. Samaneh Atef's artistic work is highly personal and powerful, driven solely by her passions and emotions. Her aesthetic vocabulary is unmistakable. Her lines, patterns, and motifs, even her leitmotifs, are reminiscent of Persian tradition, of which she is highly knowledgeable. She meticulously depicts eyes, faces, and bodies, with intricate details, illuminations, and interweaving, much like the work of icons or miniatures. Simultaneously, her formal approach, compositions, bold flat colors, bearing the trace of the pencil, and her commitments, make her a significant artist in the international contemporary art scene.

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**Khaled Barakeh** is a Syrian-born Berlin-based multidisciplinary artist, activist, and creative facilitator. Trained as a painter at the Fine Arts Faculty in Damascus, Barakeh shifted his focus to conceptual art practices with his two Master's degrees at Odense and Frankfurt. Barakeh uses his training and education to challenge structural injustice and voice out marginalized voices. His widely-exhibited works, including the internationally-toured 2020 'MUTE' installation, intervene critically on traditional representations of violence. Shortlisted for the 2023 Exile Visual Arts Award, Barakeh is a speaker and collaborator with international organizations

such as Amnesty, the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights, and the Danish Refugee Council. Barakeh's Studio engagement is driven by what he has termed The Practice of Necessity, an ethos that dictates responses to the urgencies of ever-changing realities. That led him to found coculture, a non-profit organization rooted in the intersectionality between art, activism, and community building, to support exiled culture and cultural producers. His work has been exhibited internationally at museums, Biennales, and other institutions and venues.



**Meriam Bouselmi**, born 1983 in Tunis, studied law and political science at the University of Tunis- Carthage. She has been enrolled as a lawyer in the Tunisian Order of Lawyers since 2010. As a multilingual writer, director, lecturer, researcher, and bridge builder, she has been trained to work in different contexts and across borders. She has had the double opportunity/responsibility to conceive, manage and participate in wide-reaching artistic, cultural, and legal projects in different countries. Through ongoing thought-provoking artistic work, she is constantly looking to provide fresh insights into a range of politicized topics surrounding

social, political, and economic inequalities. Her artworks address topics of instrumentalization, labelization, and victimization in the construction of the current dominant transcultural narratives. In 2015, Bouselmi took part in the drafting committee of the "Carthage Declaration for the Protection of Artists in a Vulnerable Situation". Since 2017, she has been working regularly with the ARTS RIGHTS JUSTICE Academy at the University of Hildesheim leading workshops and writing articles on cultural policies. She works as a Doctoral Researcher within the Research Training Group "Aesthetic Practice" at the Institute for Media, Theater, and Popular Culture of the University of Hildesheim. *Photo: Salma Bouselmi*



**Mercy Chepnge'noh** is a graduate of Conflict, Peace and Sociology from the University of Nairobi. She also participated in an undergraduate exchange Program on International Human Rights Law and Global Leadership at Kings College, London. She has more than three years' experience working at Protection International Africa, an organization that supports the work of human rights defenders, who are at the heart of maintaining peace, security and an open society in the Global South. She has been engaging in building the capacity of human rights defenders on comprehensive security management as well as monitoring, documentation and reporting. She also continuously advocates for an enabling working environment for human rights defenders at the local, national, regional and international levels.



**Laila Elmaghrbi** is from Libya, currently residing in France, a writer and journalist. She started to work in journalism after the Libyan revolution in 2011. She rose in journalistic work until she became a trainer in journalism and documentary filmmaker. A human rights activist, she has 4 released books, two short story books, and two anthology books that she co-edited.



**Ayodele Ganiu** is the founder of Unchained Vibes Africa and the executive producer of Freedom Vibes, a series of shows geared towards the use of arts for civic engagements. He was previously the program director at Intro Afrika; artistic director, Yoruba Drum Festival; Nigerian coordinator/continental coordinator for Artwatch Africa, and regional program officer for Africa at Freemuse. Ayodele has dedicated his career to defending artistic freedom in Africa, demanding freedom for persecuted artists, coordinating emergency assistance for artists at risk, and advocating for reforms in legislations hindering artistic freedom. Since August 2020, Ayodele has worked with Nigerian human right lawyer Kola Alapinni and various strategic partners, coordinating campaigns to save Yahaya Sharif Aminu, a Nigerian singer sentenced to death over allegations of blasphemy. Ayodele was a recipient of the O'Brien Fellowship from McGill University, Canada (2019) and Reagan-Fascell Fellow from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), United States (2020).

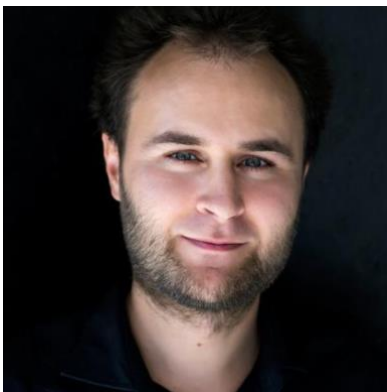




**Zhanna Gladko** is a visual artist, since 2010 has been involved in professional activities and taking part in numerous exhibitions. Since 2014 – editor at [kalektar.org](http://kalektar.org), a research platform on contemporary Belarusian art. All the artist's works, through the strategy of constructing ambivalent images, are aimed at rethinking/deconstructing extensive concepts, such as the system of art and society, religion and culture, history and memory, gender policy, the analysis of the role of contemporary museum, the subject of identity crisis, etc.



**Altyn Kapalova** is a Bishkek based researcher, visual artist, writer, and fem activist. She has been creating experimental art products, combining science, art, and politics. Altyn converts the results of her anthropological research into works of art\curated art projects that aim to make the voices of vulnerable communities louder for influencing political decisions. Her curatorial expertise covers visual arts, theater, and creative writing.



**Andrii Koshman** was born in Ukraine in 1989. His specialization lies in the interpretation of contemporary music and classical opera baritone roles, including works like *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (Rossini), *Don Giovanni* (Mozart), *Eugene Onegin*, *Iolanta* (Tchaikovsky), *La Cambiale di Matrimonio* (Rossini), *Aleko* (Rachmaninoff), *The Telephone* (Menotti), *La Boheme* (Puccini), *La Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo* (Cavalieri), and Ukrainian operas *Natalka-Poltavka* (Lysenko), *Cossacks in Exile* (Hulak-Artemovsky). Andrii has been a soloist in various productions of Nova Opera since 2014. These productions include the improvisational opera

*Coriolanus*, opera-requiem *IYOV*, overnight opera *The UnSimple*, opera-circus *BABYLON*, opera-ballet *ARK*, horror-opera *Hamlet*, funk-opera *AIR*, and futuristic opera *AEROPHONIA*. Additionally, since 2015, he has held the position of concert director at Nova Opera. Since 2016, Andrii has also served as the program director for International Contemporary Art Festivals *GogolFest* (Kyiv) and *Porto Franko* (Ivano-Frankivsk). Since 2021, Andrii has been a voice teacher at the National Music Academy of Ukraine. Since 2022, he has been a producer of the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra.



**Órion Lalli** is a multidisciplinary artist. In 2005, his research focused on the intersection and influences between Dance-Theater and Performance Art. His work is primarily documentary, mainly developed from the experiences of his own body and its dialogue through different languages, such as spectacles, performances, videos, sculptures, photographs, and installations. Since 2018 he has been developing the project EM.COITROS, encounters of a body living with HIV, where he delves into his body and the unraveling about HIV/AIDS and the possible relationships with performances and art installations, a dialogue about public policies in the field of arts. In 2020, he was censured by the Brazilian government, chased and had his life threatened. Lalli was charged as a criminal for "Religious Vilification" by deputies of Bolsonaro's political party. Since 2022 he is recognized as a political refugee by the French government.



**Saitip Majewska** is a Thai artist and a doctoral student who lives in Wrocław, Poland. Her artwork is a connection between mind and body, primarily to heal herself. As an artist, she uses her artistic creations to focus on art psychotherapy, which is interactive and connects people together. She works with tangible senses, especially touching. It is a significant component that can fulfill the perception of humans using a soft and gentle touch. It is a harmony of different techniques and interdisciplinary because of her backgrounds in sculpture, printmaking, and drawing, which she joins together to create her personal art. The concept is specific to the root of culture and represents the Thai-ness identity inside the outside world. Based on the anatomy of humans and nature, such as flowers, plants, or animals, and living lives.



**Vincent Meyrignac** is a visual artist mainly using painting, sculptures, writings and installations, he has lived in Athens since 2017. Along with Katerina Charou and Olga Souri he co-funded NOUCMAS in 2019. NOUCMAS offers artists studios and an exhibition space for various cultural events. Originally created in an effort to offer a venue for young artists in an environment with too few opportunities, it soon broadened its approach and is now dedicated to give exposure to groups and thematic with social impact through art. Its goal remains to create artistic exchanges that question centralising approaches of contemporary art. NOUCMAS remains in close contact with its neighbourhood Kypseli, and builds strong ties with others

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independent space internationally especially with Turkey but also Albania, Serbia, Hungary, Germany and France. Vincent's own work focuses on collective practices mainly through personal contribution in group exhibition and coordination of projects. His work aims at discussing social and historical issues in a creative way. Recent exhibition he took part of includes "Thin Air" (101 project space, 2023, Berlin) "Sailing Through the Sea or Crisis with Legendary Grace" (NOUCMAS, 2023, Athens) and "Platform project" (2022 Athens).



**Kagiso Lesego Molohe** is an Indigenous South African, an award-winning novelist and playwright. She writes post-apartheid, feminist and resistance literature. Her work centres the history and experiences of indigenous South Africans and tackles issues of race, class, sexuality and identity and her books are read in schools across Southern Africa as well as in parts of Europe. Her published novels are *Dancing in the Dust*, *The Mending Season*, *This Book Betrays My Brother* and *Such a Lonely, Lovely Road*. Her play, *Maya Angelou: Black Woman Rising* has been produced and staged at Oslo's Nordic Black Theatre. She

became the first indigenous South African writer to be on the IBBY List in 2006 and to win the Patrick Fitzpatrick Award for Young Adult Literature. In 2019 she won both the Ottawa Book Award and the Inaugural Pius Adesanmi Memorial award, for her third and fourth books respectively. She has been living in Canada for the past two decades.



**Varun Narain** is a Queer puppeteer and live performance director who believes in blurring physical, mental and biological boundaries. His work (since) 1994 has questioned and hi-lighted myths around gender and sexuality. After being the first Indian artist in residence in Switzerland (Facilitated by Prohelvetia, 2007) and teaching Puppetry and contemporary communication at The Mass Communication Research Centre at Jamia Millia University (for over 10 years) and also the Guru Gobind Indraprastha University in New Delhi. Varun's present situation as a queer artist resonates in his work where he looks at intelligence and survival strategies

in the world of plants, fungi and lichens. Varun has also trained in Indian classical music (Sitar) under the tutelage of Ustad Amjad Ali Khan. He presently uses his knowledge to compose underlays for his performances. For the past five years he has been scripting, fabricating and executing performances with gender-fluid and inter-species characters inspired by discoveries in life science and the wood wide web.



**Jannatun Nayeem Prity** is an award-winning Bengali writer, artist, and activist. Only 27, Prity has already published ten literary works, including novels, short story collections, children's books, and two autobiographies. Both her written and artistic work focus on women's rights, systemic gender discrimination, freethinking, LGBTQ+ rights and has criticised government corruption resulting in failure to tackle endemic social injustice in Bangladesh. Jannatun Nayeem Prity's work and activism have made her a target for harassment and abuse from government aligned groups and actors, forcing her to flee her home country. She has participated in

numerous trials in the courts under the very controversial blasphemy law digital security act of Bangladesh before leaving the country. Due to her increasing prominence and media attention, Prity faced intensifying threats and harassment on social media, over the phone and in person, leading her to leave her home country. She arrived in France in 2022, where she is now the ICORN resident in Paris at Cité internationale des Arts for the period 2022-2024.

*Photo: Ashik Ishtiak*



**Shaad Qureshi** is an artist and a performer who likes to express himself in different artistic ways. He believes in equality and integrity for everyone. He explores life using still and video photography in urban and rural scenarios. He also writes poetry by processing situational reality and expressing it as couplets or verse in Hindi, Urdu and English. He is trained in acting techniques from 'Barry John acting studio'. He assisted and documented 'Fragile Kinships' an Art Soiree at The Embassy of Switzerland, New Delhi, 2019. He has worked at the Kingdom of Dreams as an actor on stage in the Musical Extravaganza 'Jhumroo' based on the life and music

of the Indian artist Kishore Kumar. During the covid pandemic along with puppeteer Varun Narain he acted in the online performance 'I am a Plant' for 'Same Boat Theatre Collective' as well as in the multidisciplinary collaboration 'Tales of Hans Christian Andersen'. He assisted Varun at 'Spielart Theater Festival 2021' in Munich, Germany and documented his performance 'The Spice Chronicles'. He and Varun have created and performed a show entitled 'Dark & Delicious' and are in the process of developing it further. The same show is now (2023-2024) supported by Safe Muse, Norway.



**Kathy Rowland** is the Managing Editor and the co-founder of ArtsEquator Ltd, a charity dedicated to supporting arts criticism in Southeast Asia. Kathy has worked in the arts for over 25 years, running arts and culture programs and arts media platforms. She has written extensively on censorship of arts and culture in Malaysia. She was a member of the International Programme Advisory Committee of the 8th World Summit on Arts and Culture, held in Kuala Lumpur in 2019.



**Michael Schmidt** is a veteran Africa correspondent based in Johannesburg who has worked in 48 countries on six continents. He is a bestselling author, with six non-fiction books on history and politics published, the last three on Southern Africa's troubled transition to democracy. Now busy writing his second novel in one of Africa's more idiomatic indigenous languages rather than in the English of his first novel, he also writes awful poems and (apparently) better songs. A grassroots democracy activist and former trade unionist, he began working with the international artistic freedoms sector in 2012, has acted as the rapporteur for Safe Havens since 2016, and co-founded the Amani: Africa in 2020. He has an abiding interest in transitional justice and heads a team of great Argentine investigative journalists researching how the murderous Argentine junta influenced the apartheid state. *Photo: Noel Coston*



**Deema Shahin** has finished her master's degree in 2014 in filmmaking specialising in cinematography/lighting from Goldsmiths-University of London. She played different roles in different films mainly in Jordan; directing, producing and editing since 2004. Deema has also carried out training workshops on filmmaking for children in the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, for journalists and bloggers in Egypt and for interested youth to learn producing audio-visual Public Service Announcements in the world youth forum held in Quebec in 2008. Deema is interested in stories, to hear them, write them and visually tell them. "Amman je t'aime" and "Home is Where Mom is" are where she independently exercises her beliefs since 2015. Between artist residencies and researching her next topics under the themes of temporality, home, motherhood, dreams and memories, she continues to experiment with more ways and

mediums to positively perhaps affect the human condition through the visual matter that breathes her intuition.



**Dimitra Syrou** is a graduate of the ARCHI Drama School of Nellis Karras. In 2011 she was nominated for the "Melina Mercouri Theater Award", for her role in the monologue "My name is Rachel Corrie", directed by Mania Papadimitriou. She has won the "Best Actress Award" for the short film "The Ticket", by Haris Stathopoulos, at the 7th Athens International Digital Film Festival AIDFF and the "Best Director" & "Best Play" awards, at the "Handmade And Recycled Theater Festival" for the political play "Truths and Lies". Since 2008, when she graduated, she has been working as an actress, director and acting teacher. She has performed in theatrical

plays, movies and TV series. She founded "Acting How?" in which she teaches acting techniques with the body being the main tool of expression. She was an athlete in gymnastics and volleyball and before becoming an actress she was a software developer (Microsoft Solution Developer & Navision Developer).



**Melachrinos Velentzas** has worked in cultural spaces creating and developing their identity. His relationship with music and piano started at the age of six with classical studies and advanced music theory lessons, which were followed by jazz improvisation and harmony courses. In theatre, he works as an actor, musician and producer. He has attended seminars with Thomas Moschopoulos, Michael Marmarinos, Eleni Skoti and others. In 2018, he founded his own production company. Lemon, where he co-stars as the virtuoso pianist 1900, is his first production. The play (based on Alessandro Baricco's monologue Novecento) travels

around Greece since 2018 as a site-specific performance literally being presented between land and sea. He has also participated in the plays "Cost of Living" (Thomas Moschopoulos), "If this is a man" (Georgia Mavragani), Symptoms of Weightlessness by internationally acclaimed playwright Gianni Skaragas (Emily Louizou / Athens Epidaurus Festival, Little Theatre) etc. He conducts the physical theatre workshop "From Idea to Act-ion", where he focuses on independent production and communication using a mix of theatre techniques, music, academic theory and practical experience through a holistic approach.

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**Marie Yan** is a multilingual writer and dramaturge, born 1990 in France. She is interested in stories of the near-future and its transformations. Her latest plays *The Theory* (2021) and *A Tidal Home* (2021) were produced respectively in Paris and Hong Kong. Her ongoing projects are the play *Minotaurus* or *the child of the labyrinth* in partnership with the Lou Pantail theatre company, about young people caught in the prison system and *Hong Kong: struggling home*, an essay and diary on Asian subjectivity and political agency. As an occasional curator her focus is on performing arts for the very young and post/decolonial perspectives. She is a member of La

Générale's collective in Paris, a laboratory for social, artistic and political practices welcoming creative research residencies all year round. *Photo: Yan Ho*

## FACILITATORS



**Naomi Press** is an art psychotherapist and supervisor with a background in community arts, development and the visual arts. Based in France, she works with a number of international human rights organizations and in humanitarian settings with a specialist focus around refugees, displacement, and supporting artists and writers at risk. Working from a participatory approach, Naomi uses creative arts and adaptive arts therapy based interventions, to support well being, resilience and mental health. She runs workshops and training in integrating arts in psychosocial support, and is accredited and registered with the UK's Health Care

Professionals Council.



**Dr. Hannah Strohmeier** is a researcher with a focus on occupational mental health; her current research project hosted by Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin explores the psycho-social effects of the experience of racism in the workplace on staff working for humanitarian organizations. Hannah also has an academic background in literature, arts, and media, and recently completed a stint as a Visiting Scholar at New York University's Arts & Health Lab. Aside from her academic career, Hannah works as a consultant for the United Nations in the fields of gender equality, women's empowerment, and staff health and organizational culture.

She founded and chairs the interdisciplinary working group 'Mental Health and the Arts' as

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part of Laguna Collective, serves as Board Member of Antares Foundation and, as a certified conflict mediator, supports the association Mediations Zentrum Berlin e.V.

## VENUE HOST



**Penelope Iliaskou** has an academic background in Classical Philology and Linguistics (University of Athens), Music and Dance (Jaques-Dalcroze Institute in Brussels - Onassis Foundation Scholarship, Athenaeum Conservatory). Her quests around the interpretation and dramaturgy of rhythm expand in the field of education, image, text, choreography and cultural management. Since 2000 she is artistic director of the I. and R. Duncan Dance Research Center, curator and production manager of international and interdisciplinary programs and productions of the organization. She initiated DDRC's connection with the European Dance scene, and has

a long experience in educational projects and expanded connections with the contemporary, community and contextual dance art field.





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## **SAFE HAVENS CONFERENCE**

**9 - 10 November 2023**

**Athens, Greece**

The Safe Havens Conference is a gathering that, since 2013, has been annually bringing together human rights activists and artists to exchange, experience and provide mutual support. The conference is organised by the independent NGO Safe Havens Freedom Talks (SH|FT), which provides inclusive platforms for defenders of artistic freedom worldwide. Initially held in Malmö, Sweden, it was decided by the 2018 meeting that the conference should rotate through global locations annually. This decision aimed to develop a global focus and to promote networks connecting around the world. In 2019, the meeting was organised in Cape Town, South Africa, but subsequent meetings transitioned to virtual platforms due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, after 2 years of COVID-19 restrictions, the Safe Havens Conference was finally organised on-site, this time in Mexico City, in hybrid physical and online form.

The 10th annual Safe Havens Conference will take place in Athens, Greece, and like every year, it will be a community gathering that will address needs, opportunities, and inspire solidarity in the field. Highlighting the MENA region and Greece, this year's programme aims to raise awareness about regional struggles, and engage participants from around the world who will contribute towards a common global understanding of the state of the field; the challenges it faces, the support-networks, resources that exist and the ones that still need to be created. Issues on care, well-being, sustainability and eco-perspectives will be central.

The 2023 Safe Havens Conference is preceded by a smaller, more intimate gathering of artists and caseworkers in the field of artistic freedom, the "Garden Sessions", that will focus on care and wellbeing for the artist, the sustainability of artistic creation and will feed into the open meeting on November 9-10. The preceding artists' meeting is a collaboration between the Hildesheim Arts Rights Justice Academy and SH|FT, facilitating information exchange that will nourish the different working groups and 'hives' of experience-exchange during the conference days. Artist invitations prioritise individuals from MENA and the global south, leveraging the established global network developed through Safe Havens/SH|FT activities.

In 2023, our aim is to 'slow down', creatively reflect over the 10 years of facilitating discussions and network development in the field of artistic freedom and allow for in-depth, inclusive conversations. At the same time, a dedicated effort will be placed to identify and visualise needs, resources and gaps that hinder the true protection of artists at risk and the advancement of the artistic practice. Rather than a typical conference type of setting, the planning foresees a communal, interactive, yet structured meeting to inspire open and active engagement by all participants.

The programme sessions will also feature creative artistic expression, performances and cross-disciplinary artistic "jam sessions" to encourage diverse perspectives.

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## PROGRAMME

### Wednesday, 8 November

*Held at Romantso (Anaxagora 3, Athina 105 52, Athens)*

**20:00 Welcome drink**

**21:00 Artistic programme in celebration of the Safe Havens 10 years anniversary**

### DAY 1 - Thursday, 9 November

*Held at Olympias (57str. Athinas, 105 51, Athens)*

**09:00 - 09:30 Check in**

**09:30 - 10:00 Keynote performance**

**10:00 - 10:15 Opening**

**10:15 - 11:45 Key findings from artists' sessions**

**11:45 - 12:00 Stretch Break**

**12:00 - 13:00 Reports and reporting in the field of artistic freedom**

*Moderated by Svetlana Mintcheva*

**13:00 - 14:00 Lunch**

**14:00 - 15:30 Unfolding Events in the MENA region for artists at risk**

**15:30 - 15:45 Artistic intervention**

**15:45 - 16:00 Coffee Break**

**16:00 - 17:00 Hive: Women Artists at Risk** (in Arabic with English simultaneous translation)

**17:00 - 18:15 Long table** (with artists, key organisations and participants to reflect on the 10 years that have passed, and to look at where we go from here)

*Moderated by Mary Ann DeVlieg*

**18:15 - 18:45 Rooftop toast**

**19:00 Dinner**

### DAY 2 - Friday, 10 November

*Held at Olympias (57str. Athinas, 105 51, Athens)*

**09:15 - 11:00 Artistic Freedom in Greece\_Migration in context** hosted by Prof. Dimitris Christopoulos

**11:00 - 11:15 Coffee Break**

**11:15 - 11:30 Artistic intervention**

**11:30 - 12:30 Hive (Africa): Political Art during Political Instability** hosted by AMANI

**12:30 - 13:30 Lunch**

**13:30 - 14:30 Hive (Southeast Asia)** hosted by Arts Equator

**14:30 - 15:00 Presenting the visualisation exercise by Maia Thomas and Wrap up**

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**Board:** Eleni Tsitsirikou, Fredrik Elg, Jan Lothe Eriksen, Kagiso Lesego Molohe, Lotta Schüllerqvist, Paminder Parbha

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