



PLAY READINGS

**NEW WRITING WORKSHOPS
WITH THE ROYAL COURT - ISTANBUL**

8 NOVEMBER 2014

NEW WRITING WORKSHOPS WITH THE ROYAL COURT - ISTANBUL

2013-2014

Workshop programme

Workshop I, Kadir Has University, 25-29
November 2013

Public Talk with Zinnie Harris, Berkun
Oya, Mark Ravenhill, Richard Twyman,
Kadir Has University, *26 November 2013*
Workshop II, Cezayir Restaurant, 3-7
June 2014

Public Playwriting Workshop with Zinnie
Harris, Mark Ravenhill, Richard Twyman,
Cezayir Restaurant, *3 June 2014*

Workshop III, Cezayir Restaurant, 3-7
November 2014

Play Reading, Bilsardotta Stage, 8
November 2014

Workshop leaders

Zinnie Harris (Playwright)
Mark Ravenhill (Playwright)
Richard Twyman (Royal Court,
International Associate)

Coordination

Funda Küçükyılmaz (British Council
Turkey) *November 2013-August 2014*
Aras Khatami (British Council Iran)
November 2013-November 2014
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August 2014-November 2014
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Workshop participants

Erdem Aşar, Derem Çıray, Oktay Emre,
Ceylan Esen, Mîrza Metîn, Cem Uslu,
Tolga Yalçınler, Berfin Zenderlioğlu
(Turkey)

Ali Gholipour, Shabnam Shams
Moghadam, Mohammed Monem,
Roshanak Moradi, Salma Rafiee (Iran)

Play readers

Ezgi Bakışkan, Gizem Güçlü, Saim
Karakale, Su Olgaç, Mert Öner, İbrahim
Selim, Can Şıkyıldız, Pınar Töre, Deniz
Türkali (Dot)
Alan Ciwan, Bayhan Ekici, Mensûr Zîrek
(Destar Tiyatro)
Özlem Taş

Workshop translators

Zeynep Azizoğlu (English, Turkish)
Belkıs Dişbudak (English, Turkish)
Hadi Hossain (English, Farsi, Turkish)
Ehzan Norouzi (English, Farsi)

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NEW WRITING WORKSHOPS WITH THE ROYAL COURT - ISTANBUL

2013-2014

The British Council offered emerging playwrights in Turkey and Iran the opportunity to work with London's Royal Court Theatre, one of the UK's leading theatre companies, in an international development programme designed to stimulate new writing for the theatre stage. The intensive programme took place over a year and involved three playwriting development workshops in Istanbul in November 2013, June 2014 and lastly in November 2014.

Thirteen participants were selected from more than 100 entries across the country by a panel comprising representatives of the British Council, the Royal Court Theatre and theatre professionals in Turkey. The programme was designed and led by renowned British playwrights Mark Ravenhill and Zinnie Harris, together with Richard Twyman, International Associate at the Royal Court Theatre. The workshops were tailored to the needs and interests of each writer and encouraged participants to explore new ideas and expression in their language of choice.

The new works in Turkish, Kurdish and Farsi are being presented to a public audience for the first time today. We hope that these new plays will find the opportunity to be produced and performed by professional theatres and reach wider audiences. It has been inspiring to observe and support the development of these talented young writers, uncovering new voices from a new generation of playwrights from Turkey and Iran. We would like to thank all participants for investing their trust, time and talents into this programme; Royal Court International Director Elyse Dodgson and Associate Richard Twyman for their creative development programme; renowned playwrights Mark Ravenhill and Zinnie Harris for their generosity in sharing knowhow, skills and interest in talent development; our local partners Kadir Has University and Dot Theatre for hosting the workshops, public talks and play readings; and actors of Dot and Destar Theatres for their contributions in introducing exciting new writing to a new audience.

Margaret Jack, Country Director, British Council Turkey

In November last year, Royal Court playwrights Mark Ravenhill, Zinnie Harris and myself started a year long project with a group of talented playwrights writing in Turkish, Kurdish and Farsi. Although the Royal Court has previously worked with playwrights and directors from Turkey, this is the first time we have had the opportunity to work in Istanbul: it had long been a dream of ours. Each of the playwrights have written full-length plays and today you will see a short extract from them. We began the first workshop by asking the playwrights what they felt was urgent for them to address in their society today. The results are hard-hitting and urgent plays that deal with a wide-range of contemporary issues and stories. We are all immensely proud of their work and we hope that these plays will be embraced by the theatre community here and will go on to play to audiences throughout Turkey and Iran. We would like to thank the British Council for all their support throughout this project, Theatre Dot for their hospitality and help in staging the performance today and the playwrights themselves for their extraordinary commitment over the last year.

Richard Twyman, Royal Court, International Associate

PLAY SUMMARIES (in alphabetical order)

Dark Pink

Erdem R. Avşar, 1988

Language: Turkish

Mehmet.

He has a room in Istanbul and a mattress in his room. And he receives his customers in his room.

“Sir, Mehmet is here from Bursa. They say he ran away from home. He is a rent boy or something. He says he won’t join the army.”

This was not the life he had dreamt of when he escaped from Bursa. But it’s better than joining the army.

Havva.

Mehmet’s mother. She was left alone in Bursa after Mehmet ran away.

If her son hadn’t told her “I need you. The commander says you must come to Istanbul,” she wouldn’t have known if he was alive.

The reunion she had dreamt of was not in the military hospital. But it’s better than nothing.

Mehmet and Havva see each other for the first time in four years.

And they have to learn to live together.

Last Man on Earth

Derem Çıray, 1988

Language: Turkish

Ank, who survived the war by running away, turns to the safe house of Moa in the depths of the forest. Many things unknown to these two strangers about one another surface in time and they find themselves having to confront the past.

Night Birds at the Cemetary and Moonlight

Oktay Emre, 1985

Language: Turkish

The play, trying to depict the panorama of the Armenians of Turkey by abstracting the concepts of time and place, takes the audience on a journey into a different dimension of reality. The play with George Tabori’s Redface, Weisman and Ruth characters accompanied by Phepuk bird from Dersim mythology, freezes when the moonlight is gazed upon in tears. Because the moonlight stands at the same place every night... This may be the only aspect of the truth that we know. What is seen. What about the things experienced under that moonlight?

Back Garden

Ceylan Esen, 1982

Language: Turkish

Ayşe was ready to forgive her father who had left her when she was just a baby. All she needed was a reason; an acceptable or unacceptable one... Because whenever she thought about this reason by herself, she would reach the same conclusion: hatred!

Hasan was revolted by that thing called sacrifice. The feeling of possession was at the centre of every human feeling; owning a man/woman, a house/a car/a bank account,

a friend, a child... and the feeling of love, among the others, was the one that enslaved man the most. Because love, for some reason, demanded big sacrifices and sacrifice meant walking away from oneself, from one's future and from one's own will to live. Sinan loves Ayşe, believes in destiny, trusts Allah and tries to cope with the rebel inside him. Istanbul: one of the neighbourhoods invaded by urban transformation. A father and a daughter, a love-struck rambler from the neighborhood; the main character is a city girl and the setting is everybody's own *Back Garden*.

A Practical Guide to Playwriting for Storks

Ali Gholipour, 1980

Language: Persian

Ali, who has come to Istanbul from Tehran to take part in a workshop on writing plays, talks to Mark (workshop instructor) about the ideas he has for the first draft of his new play. Ali is in two minds about which idea is best. One of his ideas is about prostitutes, drug addicts and all those people who put their bodies in the way of harm and destruction. Another one is about Ahmad (creator of online games and fond of all kinds of drugs) and his wife Zahra (an activist and a social sciences' student) who, in spite of the wish and desire of their mothers to become grandmothers, have taken a firm decision never to attain parenthood themselves.

Boxing

Mîrza Metîn, 1980

Language: Kurdish

A stable in the East.

A light bulb which barely gives light.

Stone walls.

A noble horse.

A few buckets lying around, bloody ropes, a washtub full of water, a blunt chipping hatchet, a broken pitchfork and an old saddle ...

A pungent stench.

Night.

Two old friends...

Hunger and identity are tested against each other. Friend turns into enemy.

What happens when two old friends fight on opposite sides and one of them becomes the torturer of the other?

And that happened!

One of them hung from the ceiling by his feet.

One of them hung the other from the ceiling by his feet.

Breathe

Shabnam Shams Moghadam, 1984

Language: Persian

A young theatre group have prepared a play and intend to perform it in a foreign country with the help of an elderly actress who has been residing abroad for a long time. They perform the play for the elderly woman and a man who is her assistant and receive a favourable response. However, the assistant who is left in charge after the elderly lady leaves with the intention of returning abroad, on learning the full name of the director displays a complete change of attitude and without any explanations leaves the group and is not heard of for a while.

Sara, the director as well as a female actress of the group, finds him amongst the guests at a party. He secretly films them and, on finding out that he has been identified by the two women, runs away. The group members are at a loss and losing hope and the group is on the point of disintegration.

Ooze

Mohammed Monem, 1984

Language: Persian

An actor called Abbas who is short and has a slightly ugly face enters a relationship with a girl, Farzaneh, who is very beautiful and attractive. Abbas is an actor in B-movies and comedy serials. But, as he has a lot of contacts, when he learns that Farzaneh is eager to experience acting he takes her with him to the projects. A friend of Abbas' called Saam also fancies Farzaneh, but on learning that Abbas is in a relationship with her, instead of letting go, sets out to destroy their relationship and, after much toing and froing, gets into a relationship with her. When Abbas learns that Saam is in a relationship with Farzaneh, he feels betrayed and he is gradually driven to insanity. He says to both of them many times that Saam only wants Farzaneh for her looks and not for herself until eventually to prove his point he throws acid into Farzaneh's face. Three years later, when Abbas has served some of his sentence and been forgiven by Farzaneh and served his period of exile, he rings Farzaneh to tell her that he still loves her. Farzaneh who has lost all of her beauty and has not been touched by a man this past three years hesitates, but puts the receiver down. And that is the end of the story.

Day and Night

Roshanak Moradi, 1989

Language: Persian

Sima is a fifty-year-old woman who lives in a house in Tehran with her son Sahand. Sahand has just received a bursary from a foreign university and is ready to leave Iran to study abroad. Sima's daughter Sara was studying in France and has just completed her course and is due back in Iran. Sima's husband left them some years ago and nobody has any news of him. Sima and Bahram and their children had sought asylum abroad but Sima returned to Iran with the children because her brother was ill and as a result Bahram completely gave up on them. Now Sima's brother has passed away and Sima is doing the house up and painting the walls to have it in good order for Sara's return.

Fat Luna

Salma Rafiee, 1984

Language: Persian

Luna is fat. That's natural as she eats a lot. But Luna's father Malek is slim. That's also natural since he eats little. However the unnatural and, as you and I might say, dramatic situation is that Malek would like Luna to eat a normal amount. But does Luna like that? Luna's response: No.....

In Luna there is a fondness for eating that could be called an aptitude or genius for eating. Yes, Luna is an eating genius and, as you know, living with a genius is hard. But Luna's father wants Luna to eat less. However, the enraged Luna leaves home on the eve of her birthday. Luna goes here, there and everywhere. First to her friend Tina's, who is a goddess of eating and that trouble, and then to Smokey Aava's house and this headache, and eventually to Rambod's mother's house and all that bother. To spare you the boring details, Luna goes through a world of bother to slim down but does she succeed?

The Nature of Things

Cem Uslu, 1983

Language: Turkish

A windy, almost chilly night in October of 1938. America. A trailer on a desolate and barren land. Outside lies a darkness illuminated merely by stars and moonlight. Neither a house nor anything else in sight! Only shrubs and hay balls occasionally driven about depending on the wind direction...

A moment ago, a radio announcement declared that the world has been invaded by Martians. Two people who are away from their homeland thinking that they will die in a few hours: a man in his fifties running away from his past, daunted by his repentance, forgotten yet unable to forget; and a woman in her late twenties exiled from her past, running into her future filled with a curiosity full of hatred.

Fears, regrets, dusty ideals, desires instilled at every breath, hope molded by anger that cannot be abandoned despite all...

And an *Alien* from far away joining them out of the blue.

What are they going to do?

Cover the Night

Tolga Yalçın, 1979

Language: Turkish

Hasan sells Turkish bagels in the city square. He witnesses a young person being battered by plain-clothes policemen and some civilians in a hidden corner. That young person dies. After Hasan's identity comes to light, he becomes an eyewitness. Police pressure to deter him from testifying on one hand, and the pressure of conscience on the other evolves into a situation that drags Hasan to a deadlock.

The Sound Behind the Door

Berfin Zenderlioğlu, 1990

Language: Kurdish

A buzz outside, a silent storm inside. Right in the MIDDLE, one can see EAST upon turning a little.

Two women, two men. Everything would shatter into pieces with just a touch. Yet, everything is flowing normally inside. A puppet and a child at the table, eating cake. The voice of the 3rd man resembles a fly's buzz:

"Why have the flowers wilted?"

"Because the soil you brought in smells like gunpowder."

Accompanied by Furuğ Ferruhzad's poem and with tiny birds falling on to our hands, we are starting the party.

Welcome to our dinner table.



Workshop I, 26 November 2013, Kadir Has University
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Public Talk with Zinnie Harris, Berkun Oya, Mark Ravenhill, Richard
Twyman, Kadir Has University, 26 November 2013
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Workshop II, Cezayir Restaurant, 3 June 2014
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Public Playwriting Workshop with Zinnie Harris, Mark Ravenhill,
Richard Twyman, Cezayir Restaurant, 3 June 2014
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