



ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL

MAY 1ST TO JUNE 23RD, 2024

NTGent & MANY PARTNERS

NTGent

ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL COMBINES ARTISTIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT
**BIGGEST TRAGEDY FESTIVAL
SINCE SOPHOCLES BRINGS ALL
32 GREEK TRAGEDIES TO LIFE**

From the open air versions of plays by Milo Rau and Tiago Rodrigues, to dozens of touching collaborations between professional artists and the people of Ghent.

The [ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL](#), unique in the history of European stage arts, simultaneously breathes new life into ancient cultural heritage and holds up a mirror to the city, society and the arts.

ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL, from May 1st to June 23rd 2024, is unique for many reasons. For starters, it is perhaps the biggest Greek tragedy festival since Sophokles, staging all 32 remaining Greek tragedies at once. The festival lasts no less than eight weeks. All performances are free, take place outdoors in the public space and in the (early) morning. **Art first, work second.** In that order of importance.

"A few years ago I was walking through a park in Paris early in the morning," says creator and co-curator **Milo Rau**, house artist at NTGent. "A group of actors were performing Shakespeare among the trees. For the first time in my life, I understood every word. Throughout the day, that experience echoed within me: the simple beauty of performing a classic for those who happened to be there."

During ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL, open-air versions of NTGent plays are shown such as *Antigone in the Amazon* and *Medea's Children* by Milo Rau, *Elektra Unbound* by **Luanda Casella** and *Persians* by **Action Zoo Humain**, a play whose stage version will premiere at the main hall of NTGent during the festival.

The NTGent-makers are joined by groundbreaking collectives and artists such as **Olympique Dramatique**, **STAN**, **de Roovers**, **WOLF WOLF**, **Dood Paard**, **DE HOE**, **Ali Can Ünal**, **Lisbeth Gruwez**, **Khadija El Kharraz Alami**, **Princess Isatu Hassan Bangura**, **Peter De Graef** and **Stefan Hertmans**.

ANCIENT STORIES, CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM

All remaining Greek tragedies will be performed, i.e. 32 performances, spread over eight weeks and eight Ghent neighborhoods. With a closing party and a newly written tragedy as unmissable extras. "It is unprecedented for all tragedies to be performed within one festival," say co-curators Matthias Velle and Benoît Vanraes. They stress that there are **no literal**

performances of classics, only adaptations, often in close cooperation with social organisations and local residents from all over Ghent. "Dozens of artists are currently working with locals on centuries-old texts. They transform the tragedies into performances, rituals, shows and installations with great contemporary relevance. **Again and again, they use ancient stories, the cradle of our Western culture, to take a critical look at our city, society and future.**"

NEW TRAGEDY, REFLECTION AND CLOSING PARTY

In addition to the 32 existing tragedies, a **newly written 33rd tragedy** will be on show. In *our private lives* / *BEDROOM*, Yves Degryse / BERLIN and Barbara Raes / Beyond the Spoken create an alternative version of the tragedy about King Agamemnon. In the first part of *the Oresteia*, Klytaimnestra kills her husband. Son Orestes does not get the chance to pay his father a last salute. In this performance, a farewell does follow. Mother and son, sister and uncle come face to face. A ritual from sunset to sunrise projected on the facade of an apartment building.

Every Sunday, ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL makes time for **reflection sessions**. Greek tragedies inspire conversations about the fragility of democracy, the barbs of Ghent's heritage, (in)sanity, and family and fate.

During the closing weekend, ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL once again catapults ancient dilemmas into today. On Saturday 22 June, there is a Dionisian closing party on the biggest recreation site of Ghent, where a fence now screens off access to 'problem youth'. Control seems to be the highest good in 2024, but at what cost? It is also a central question of the final performance *Bakkhai*. Artists and visitors of Villa Voortman, a home for mentally more vulnerable people, create a musical theatre performance that closes the festival. In early morning of course.

- 'ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL' FROM MAY 1st UNTIL JUNE 23rd, AT DIFFERENT PUBLIC LOCATIONS IN THE CITY OF GHENT
- DOWNLOAD PRESS PICTURES [HERE](#)
- FULL CALENDAR: NTGENT.BE

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PROGRAMME

WEEK 1 – CITY CENTRE

PARADE OF FIRE AND ABUNDANCE – VARIOUS ARTISTS

PARADE – Together with arts centre VIERNULVIER, and several urban partners and artists, NTGent opens the ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL with the colourful, carnivalesque [*Parade of Fire and Abundance*](#). Like the procession that opened the theatre festival in ancient Athens, this parade is dedicated to Dionysos, the Greek god of tragedy, of abundance and rapture, of wine, lust and disorder. A great celebration for all Ghentian satyrs and bacchantes.

Walk along with all the festival participants! Sing and dance with the choirs of laGeste and Mais Quelle Chanson! The procession takes us from the central library De Krook, where the tragedy scripts are kept, to the agora of Sint-Baafs. In front of the city theatre, the festival officially kicks off with the lighting of an Olympic flame, which later travels to all districts of the festival.

At dawn (5:30 am), even before the Parade, performance artist Ruben Mardulier depicts the myth of the rebellious titan Prometheus. Under the rising sun, Mardulier spreads the holy fire of Prometheus all over the polis.

LAMENT FOR THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST – ACTION ZOO HUMAIN

PERFORMANCE - Aeschylus' *Persians* is the oldest tragedy of all, the beginning of the Western canon. The play narrates the Greco-Persian war from the perspective of the losing camp. Out of empathy with the Persian arch-enemy or as veiled Greek propaganda? From that perspective, collective Action Zoo Humain, artist in residence at NTGent, raises a lament to explore whether the Eurovision Song Contest also has that empathetic potential. The festival upholds values like humanity and fraternisation. But in what way do we experience empathy with countries at war and conflict through that song contest today?

For ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL, Action Zoo Humain is creating an alternative version of its brand-new show [*PERSIANS: triumph of empathy*](#), premiering at NTGent on 20 June.

EXHAUST / AJAX - KRIS VERDONCK & A TWO DOGS COMPANY

PARADE - Welcome to the world premiere of *EXHAUST / Ajax*: the execution of the very last internal combustion engine! The explosion of the heart of a monstrous truck! The death row inmate is pulled by his judges on a cart. In front of the NTGent main hall, the sentence is read and carried out. The combustion engine is sacrificed on the altar of ecological catastrophe. Along the way, the procession stops at places where public executions took place in medieval Ghent or where the combustion engine caused irreparable damage, such as schools and busy intersections.

Together with Ghentian citizens and climate action groups, the procession is burying the unbridled drive for economic growth and progress. As blinded and self-destructive as the venerable hero Ajax, the engine is succumbing to its tragic tunnel vision.

BEYOND WORSHIP / IFIGENEIA IN TAURIS – VARIOUS GUESTS

REFLECTION SESSIONS - In Euripides' *Ifigeneia in Tauris*, the god Apollo sends Orestes to the 'barbaric' Taurians to steal the statue of the goddess Artemis with the help of his sister Ifigeneia. They are supposed to bring the statue to 'civilised' and thus 'superior' Greece.

Inspired by this tragedy, we exchange ideas about the future of Ghent's heritage. Who do we want to revere today as a Greek god or place on a pedestal as a tragic hero? What do we definitely want to preserve and pass on to future generations? What mark do our city's migration history and colonial past leave on it?

WEEK 2 – CITADELPARK

MEDEA'S CHILDREN – MILO RAU & NTGENT

THEATRICAL READING - Six children from the cast of *Medea's Children*, Milo Rau's latest NTGent performance, read key scenes from Euripides' *Medeia*, in which a mother murders her own sons. This makes this tragedy perhaps the darkest origin story of Western culture.

While the children are being bloodily silenced in the original play, during this theatrical reading the six narrators discover how they, as empowered young citizens, relate to those ancient words about love, injustice and revenge. How do Euripides' razor-sharp dialogues and heartbreaking choral songs resonate with a group of growing children today?

BLINDED BY SIGHT: AN OIDIPOUS MONOLOGUE – PRINCESS ISATU HASSAN BANGURA

MONOLOGUE - *Blinded by Sight* is a monologue as physical as it is lyrical about the downfall of the iconic king Oidipous. Princess Isatu Hassan Bangura portrays a tragic hero reflecting on fate and free will, insight and blindness, crime, guilt and punishment.

At the end of his days, the blind, exiled Oidipous relives the earth-dark story of his previous life. What remains of a king's body? What remains of his soul? What remains in his heart after his fatal confrontation with fate?

ANTIGONE IN THE AMAZON – MILO RAU & NTGENT

PERFORMANCE - In 2023, on a piece of land occupied by activists in the Brazilian Amazon, Milo Rau created a moving political adaptation of Sophocles' classic *Antigone*. The performance views Antigone's resistance to the tyrant Kreon through the eyes of the indigenous people and activists of MST, the world's largest organisation of landless people. They relentlessly resist the violent ravages, expulsions and massacres by the modern state. During ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL, the NTGent cast performs an adapted version of *Antigone in the Amazon*, with even more music and some previously unperformed excerpts.

KLYTAIMNESTRA – TONEELHUIS, OLYMPIQUE DRAMATIQUE & STAN

PERFORMANCE - The first part of *the Oresteia* narrates the fateful confrontation between Agamemnon, just triumphantly returned from the Trojan War, and his wife Klytaimnestra. The renowned Flemish collectives STAN and Olympique Dramatique combine Aeschylus' original version with Ted Hughes' and Gustav Ernst's into the performance *Klytaimnestra*, a razor-sharp dissection of misogyny, toxic hunger for power and unbridled wariness.

WEEK 3 – SITE GUISLAIN

HEKABE'S REVENGE IS GRIEF - KHADIJA EL KHARRAZ ALAMI WITH GUISLAIN

“Why does tragedy exist? Because you are full of rage.
Why are you full of rage? Because you are full of grief”
– Anne Carson, *Grief Lessons - Tragedy: A Curious Art Form*

INSTALLATION - Theatre maker Khadija El Kharraz Alami draws inspiration from her encounters with children, adolescents and adults staying at Psychiatric Centre Dr Guislain. And from the earth-shattering tragedy *Hekabe*. In it, we are confronted with the

awe-inspiring grief - a grief that reaches beyond language, beyond being human - and the gruesome revenge of the Trojan queen Hekabe, who lost all her children and loved ones.

In this time of extensive psychological suffering and numerous wars, many emotions remain unsaid and unprocessed. Guislain gives El Kharraz Alami the opportunity to dwell on this, to make space for shared mourning.

HYPO, THE HYPOCRITICAL THEATRE - WOLF WOLF

PERFORMANCE - WOLF WOLF's five hypocrites take on the hypocrisy in Euripides' *Hippolytos*. One special day, sometime in the sixth century BC, a brave singer suddenly detached himself from the choir. He exchanged chants for spoken texts, becoming the founder of Greek tragedy. They called him *hypokrites*, which meant "answerer" or "actor".

Gradually, the *hypokrites* lost his reputation and the word its original meaning. The actor became a pretender, a hypocrite. And his respectable craft - the art of acting - became a sham, simply pretending. But in *Hippolytos*, who exactly is playing (with) whom? When does playing become dangerous? When is it necessary? And of course: why do we enjoy doing it so much?

ALL YOU CAN GREEK III – VICTORIA DELUXE & JOERI HAPPEL

PERFORMANCE - Theatre house Victoria Deluxe's collective writing and storytelling atelier, founded to share experiences of mental vulnerability and health, focuses for the third time on a Greek tragedy. Like archaeologists, the writers and actors root in the fertile soil of Euripides' *Alkestis*, looking for ancient shards that touch on themselves and today. Then they exchange meticulous digging for the creation of ferocious collages, like mirrors of our 21st century souls.

BEYOND MADNESS / THE MADNESS OF HERAKLES - ZOË GHYSELINCK, UGENT & VARIOUS GUESTS

"In an instant, luck changes.

In an instant, children die"

- Anne Carson, Grief Lessons – Herakles

REFLECTION SESSION - In this tragedy of Euripides, the goddess Mania drives the hero Heracles to madness. In a state of rage, he mistakes his wife and sons for the enemy and murders his entire family. Heracles' tragic mistake remains painfully topical. How many today regard others as enemies, as inhumans, as vermin to be exterminated? Collective madness destroys the lives of innocent victims and send children to their death.

The Madness of Herakles, however, also shows us the tragedy of vulnerable human beings who see and experience the world and others differently. During this gathering, we turn our gaze to Euripides' ancient text and objects from the Dr. Guislain Museum, which bear witness to the history of psychiatry.

How do we look today at those who see things differently? When does delusion make sense? Can it also be a creative force? And when does delusion transcend all meaning?

WEEK 4 – MUIDE-MEULESTEDE

CHILDREN OF HERAKLES – LARF!

PERFORMANCE - Nearly two thousand five hundred years ago, Euripides described in *Children of Herakles* the fate of minor refugees, begging for shelter and protection. How does a society deal with children on the run, who have nothing to do with age-old geopolitical conflicts but are nevertheless victims of them?

Fate is fickle, Euripides wrote, you can't possibly escape it. But what if it's you who loses out? Together with thirteen teens from the ateliers of theatre house LARF!, theatre maker Silke Thorrez examines what impact Euripides' words still have today.

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN? / WOMEN OF TRACHIS – MANOEUVRE

WALK AND WORKSHOP - The social organisation Manoeuvre, together with a super-diverse group of participants, founded the collective Women of Trachis, based on Sophocles' tragedy of the same name. In it, macho Heracles returns to his wife Deianeira after many wars and wanderings. However, he brings home another woman, the beautiful Iole. From the perspective of those two women, the collective focuses on everyone who remains voiceless or invisible, who is abused or oppressed.

To do so, the collective combines a woolworking workshop with a dusk and silence walk. The result is an empowering ritual from dawn to dusk in which anyone can participate. Centrally, as in the original tragedy, there will be a robe, in which the names of the uncountable Palestinian victims will be embroidered.

FILOKTETES – DE ROOVERS, UZGENT & UGENT

PERFORMANCE - In Sophocles' *Filoktetes*, a Greek hero is bitten by a snake on his way to Troy. He complains, his wound festers and stinks, and he is abandoned by the war-weary Greeks on a desert island. After ten years of war, his archenemy, the devious Machiavellian Odysseus, returns to the island. An oracle has foretold that the Greeks will not prevail until Filoktetes joins them in battle. Will the latter stay bitterly behind on the island and continue to rot, or go to Troy as a celebrated hero after all?

During five evenings, theatre collective de Roovers reads the tragedy together with students and lecturers of university UGent, and healthcare providers and (former) patients of the hospital UZ Gent. How do we deal with illness and (invisible) suffering? With the isolation of those left

behind in hospital rooms? With loneliness, powerlessness and anger? Who helps? What helps?
Can reading together help?

WOMEN IN TROY AS TOLD BY OUR MOTHERS – DOOD PAARD & TIAGO RODRIGUES

PERFORMANCE - *Women in Troy, as told by our mothers* tells the story of the Trojan War from the perspective of women and, in particular, mothers. Renowned Portuguese theatre maker and -writer Tiago Rodrigues wrote the text, using different versions of the Greek myth, recent world events, and stories of himself and the four theatre makers.

Present and past are intertwined, the personal and the mythological merge, heroes become monsters, victims become perpetrators, and in the end the choir claims the leading role.

WEEK 5 – LEDEBERG

I WENT TO TROY AND ALL I GOT WAS ANOTHER GREEK TRAGEDY - PLEUN VAN ENGELEN & JONATHAN MICHIELS

PERFORMANCE - From her desire for truth in a post-truth society of alternative facts and fake news, theatre maker Pleun van Engelen delves into the myths surrounding Andromache. Opposite herself, Van Engelen places Achilles' son Neoptolemos, performed by Jonathan Michiels. The characters look back on the Trojan War very differently, balancing relentlessly on the fine line between fact and fiction. A relationship or even a conversation seems utterly impossible.

Where can we still find meaning and purpose when we constantly bump into the adamant walls of mistrust and conspiracy thinking?

HELEN - ALI CAN ÜNAL / JONG GEWEI & DE LEDEBIRDS

MUSIC THEATRE – As diverse as the Ghentian borough of Ledeborg itself, the music group Ledebirds delegates 15 musicians, adults and children together, for a concert at the Standaert site. The musicians lead the audience to a room where the actors of Jong Gewei, accompanied by a master of ceremony, re-enact 'death plays'.

For this performance, the makers are inspired by ancient Anatolian and Greek beliefs and rituals, as well as by themes from Euripides' tragedy *Helen* such as beauty, barbarism, deceit, fate and opportunities.

SUPPLICATION! - KAPINGA GYSEL & MAIS QUELLE CHANSON, BIEKE PURNELLE & ROSA VZW, LARA STAAL & NTGENT

PARADE – For *SUPPLICATION!*, choir leader Kapinga Gysel, writer Bieke Purnelle and theatre maker Lara Staal are collaborating with a group of Danaïdes from Ghent. They are inspired by Aeschylus' *The Suppliants*, in which the fifty Danaïdes flee Egypt for their forced marriage and beg King Pelasgos of Argos for protection. The play provides the occasion to highlight the often tenuous social position of women, especially those from migrant backgrounds. Their shoulders bear the heaviest burdens: those of often invisible and undervalued care.

A parade from Park De Vijvers to Keizerspark is followed by a hymn that sings of women's lion-like courage and herculean strength. It is both ode and indictment. A chorus of Ghentian daughters, mothers and grandmothers finally steps out of the shadows, climbs the public stage, demands greater recognition and protection in full election time.

BEYOND THE RIVALRY / PHOENICIAN WOMEN – VARIOUS GUESTS

REFLECTION SESSION - In the tragedy *Phoenician Women*, Euripides paints a haunting picture of the Theban civil war. Polyneikes goes to war against his own brother Eteokles and besieges his home town. Their father Oidipous haunts the house like a cancer attacking the city from within. The war ends with a duel in which the brothers kill each other. The parallels with Athens at the end of the fifth century BC are striking. Athenian democracy and its principles (public participation, public debate and legal certainty) were under continuous pressure from populist forces at that time.

Exactly one week before the Flemish, federal and European elections, we take Euripides' play as a starting point for a conversation about our democracy. How vulnerable is a democracy that, as a matter of principle, makes room for equally balanced debates and the most diverse opinions. Is our democracy also under threat? What does that threat look like? And how do we armour our democracy for the future?

WEEK 6 – CITY CENTRE, CENTRAL STATION, RABOT

SUPPLIANTS - STEFAN HERTMANS

SPEECH - At the beginning of election week, renowned author Stefan Hertmans gives a speech in front of the beating heart of Ghent politics and of our polis: the city hall. From the perspective of Euripides' *Suppliants*, he takes stock of our democracy today.

In *Suppliants*, the mothers of the fallen besiegers of Thebes seek help from the Athenian king Theseus. The tyrannical Thebes refuses to hand over their bodies to the grieving mothers. Is Athens willing to intervene in the conflict, even if it drags the city into civil war? What sacrifices is the Athenian community willing to make to defend their democratic principles, human values and early form of international law?

ZITTEN / ELEKTRA - PETER DE GRAEF

NARRATION - In Sophocles' tragedy, the main character Elektra symbolises mourning. She is stranded outside the gates of the palace where her father Agamemnon was murdered by her mother, Clytemnestra. Elektra refuses to resume her daily life in that tarnished house, as if the murder never took place.

In Peter De Graef's meditative experiment *ZITTEN* in the Gent-Sint-Pieters station, he brings about a gentle refusal of the outside world during the morning rush hour, together with local Elektras. His live narration, listened to via headphones, creates space for inner reflection and silence, like a master of ceremonies leading us to a place where language and silence meet.

REVENGE / EUMENIDES - PETER AERS

PERFORMANCE - In the third part of the Oresteia, mother murderer Orestes stands trial in Athens. The play thematises the transition from tribal violence and retribution (the vengeance goddesses cry for Orestes' blood) to democratic justice. A stone's throw from Ghent's courthouse, artist Peter Aers sets up his own court with local residents to explore the role of justice in our city and society. They prepare for this by reading together, making sculptures and building an agora. Outsiders are invited to take on the role of spectator.

RE:DRESS / IFIGENIA IN AULIS – KOPERGIETERY!

MUSICAL MANIFESTATION - The elections on 9 June. The Children's Rights Square. Theatre house KOPERGIETERY has carefully chosen its spot and day during ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL. In a musical event, it calls on all passers-by who have yet to vote not to forget the children, to check every decision they make in the voting booth against their future. Narrator Lindah Leah Nyirenda links that call to the story of *Ifigeneia in Aulis*. In Euripides' tragedy, Agamemnon sacrifices his own daughter to make the journey to Troy possible.

In the family performance *RE:Dress*, Ifigeneia symbolises all children who are sacrificed by adults for the glory of a particular ideology. Together with jazz musicians and young people from the theatre workshops, theatre house KOPERGIETERY points out how dependent children are on us voters, on our often disastrous choices regarding child poverty, climate and war.

WEEK 7 – BLOEMEKENSWIJK

OUTSIDE ORESTES, CYCLICAL PERFORMANCE I - WERKTONEEL WITH KASK DRAMA

PERFORMANCE - Theatre collective Werktoneel and drama students from the conservatory KASK appear in the public space every day of the festival for a week. Always at the same moment (continuously from sunrise) and in the same places. With their visual, cyclical performance, they explore the grand, almost cosmic nature of Greek tragedy in relation to the everyday reality of outdoor public spaces. Not the plot of the tragedy is the essence of *OUTSIDE ORESTES*, but images and benchmarks filled with meaning, such as the moment of recognition and tragic insight that recurs in many tragedies.

PUPPET SHOW ION – CIRQ

PERFORMANCE - A quartet of pleasantly deranged CIRQ'ers adapt the atypical tragedy *Ion*, a comedy of errors including a happy ending, into an absurd puppet show with Playmobil figures. Upcycled popular culture is the name of the game. The inimitable Joost Vandecasteele provides a witty text.

Yet *Ion* also has a darker side. It is a play full of gender inequality and unaccountable gods with highly questionable oracular spells, full of longing for ethnic purity and disgust for those labelled as foreigners or immigrants.

OUR PRIVATE LIVES | BEDROOM - BERLIN & BEYOND THE SPOKEN WITH NTGENT

INSTALLATION / RITUAL - For *our private lives | BEDROOM*, Yves Degryse/BERLIN collaborates with Barbara Raes/Beyond the Spoken to tell an alternative version of Agamemnon's tragedy. The story is projected on an apartment building from sunset to sunrise. Then the torch will be passed to Collective HINTER, which performs its version of *Libation Bearers*, the second part of Aeschylus' *Oresteia*, in the Westerbegraafplaats, a local burial ground.

In the first part of this tragedy *Agamemnon*, the king is killed by his wife Klytaimnestra. Their son Orestes does not get the chance to pay his father a last farewell. In this performance, a farewell ritual does follow Agamemnon's death. Mother and son, sister and uncle come face to face in the bedroom where Agamemnon's body is laid out. We are the silent witnesses to the washing, embalming, waking and recitation but feel behind every gesture a jet-black hole full of vengeance. Not a tear is shed. Yet tragedy is lurking everywhere.

LIBATION BEARERS - COLLECTIEF HINTER & TONEELACADEMIE WITH CITY WORKERS

PERFORMANCE - For its visual adaptation of *Libation Bearers*, collective HINTER starts from the questions Elektra exchanges with the choir of Trojan slave girls. As they pledge sacrifices together, bent over the grave of Elektra's late father Agamemnon, they question the sense and nonsense of the usual rituals. HINTER chooses the Westerbegraafplaats as its location, another place where the dead determine the rhythm of the living. Together with a chorus of 'Groendienst' workers, who tend the place daily with their ritual acts, they make space for care and mourning. How do we as a city and society deal with violence and those who suffer from it? And how can we move forward after that?

BEYOND FATE / SEVEN AGAINST THEBES – VARIOUS GUESTS

REFLECTION SESSION - *Seven against Thebes* by Aeschylus is a pitch-black tragedy. Oedipus' curse, which extends over three generations, hangs ominously over the heads of his tormented family. Although Eteokles realises that he is continuing the inherited curse by killing his brother Polyneikes, he cannot escape fate. The outcome is both obvious and inevitable.

We conclude this festival week, entirely devoted to family, with a talk on parenting and growing up. From the perspective of Aeschylus' fatalistic tragedy, we ask the question: How do family dynamics relate to what we might consider (fate) today? What escapes our control? What gets in the way of our desire for freedom and autonomy? What is inconsistent with the myth of the malleability of man(kind) and society? And above all: how can we look beyond the horizon of fate?

WEEK 8 – BLAARMEERSEN

RADIO INSOMNIA / RHESOS - DE HOE

PERFORMANCE - In this special edition of *Radio Insomnia*, actor Willem de Wolf of collective DE HOE hosts a series of guests on a pontoon in the middle of a river. Together, they hold a (sadly) witty conversation about the tension between the tragic and the comic.

Not a spontaneous conversation, but a scripted one, because DE HOE believes that we are not at our most authentic spontaneously. We only become authentic in the rewriting, deleting and rewriting again of our first meagre formulations.

Is *Rhesos* a tragedy or a comedy? The members of DE HOE can't figure it out. And just that discussion - when is something tragic? - is the starting point for a conversation about fate and free will.

Isn't tragedy at odds with our unshakeable belief in the makeability of man and society? Or are we tragic precisely because of that belief? Can we still deal today with the blindness and overconfidence of a tragic hero who makes a fateful choice out of free will? If neurology and A.I. haven't unmasked free will for good, that is.

KOLONOS - LISBETH GRUWEZ & VOETVOLK

PERFORMANCE - In Sophocles' mystical tragedy *Oidipus in Kolonos*, the blind and exiled Oidipus finally reaches the peaceful sanctuary of Kolonos after many wanderings, the end of his fateful life's journey. He sits down on a stone. Tyrant Kreon and son Polyneikes still try to take him along to Thebes, where a violent civil war is raging. But Oidipus refuses.

Inspired by this tragedy, dancer and choreographer Lisbeth Gruwez explores the body as a place, as a Kolonos where she can transcend herself and the individualistic, human perspective. *Kolonos* shows how a body dissolves itself dancing, in the midst of a world full of anger and violence. And how that body solidifies into a single movement in the eye of a hurricane. The fairy-like setting of this choreography: on steps like those of a Greek temple, by the water where a tributary of the Lys stopped flowing forever.

ELEKTRA UNBOUND – LUANDA CASELA & NTGENT

THEATRICAL READING - The cast of [Elektra Unbound](#), the NTGent performance by house artist Luanda Casella, brings a theatrical reading of the successful play that premiered at NTGent earlier this season. The reading of the script is accompanied by the performance's matchless soundtrack and animated text projections which play the role of the choir.

In *Elektra Unbound*, three young actors compete for the role of Elektra during a fictional theatre audition. The audition gradually develops into a talent show as hilarious as it is uncanny: which of the three auditioners has the most talent for tragic suffering? Thus, the play reveals

more and more of the psychological drama in the lives of director, coach and actors. They all seem to be archetypes of the tragic figures you find on social media these days.

DIONYSIAN MIDSUMMER PARTY – VARIOUS ARTISTS

PARTY - Release all apollonian brakes at the closing party of the ALL GREEKS FESTIVAL! Just like the opening parade, the party is dedicated to Dionysos, god of the collective urge to party. For some vibrant concerts and a delirious party: head to the public recreation space Blaarmeersen during Midsummer night!

BAKKHAI - VILLA VOORTMAN, HET SCHELDEOFFENSIEF & COMP. MARIUS

PERFORMANCE – Together with multi-talented Valentina Tóth, and theatre makers Frank Dierens (Het Scheldeoffensief) and Kris Van Trier (Comp. Marius), the visitors of Villa Voortman sink their teeth into Euripides' *Bakkhai*. That primal tragedy drives home the contradictions between the 'civilised' tyrant Pentheus and the 'barbaric' god Dionysus, between reason and intoxication, order and anarchy, and the patriarchal norm and whoever or whatever deviates. The tragedy shows how violence (in the name of 'security') provokes even more violence (in the name of 'freedom').

The performance by Villa Voortman and Het Scheldeoffensief starts from a swinging, boned script, thickened with spoken word, and rousing music and lyrics by the visitors of Villa Voortman. Brutal. Raw. Of a radical beauty. The performance is set in the recreational park Blaarmeersen, where a fence has recently closed off access to 'problem youth'.

CREDITS

PARTNERS

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