

Press Release

21 November 2022

Akademie der Künste shows the world premiere of the theatre performance *Transit Tripoli* by Caroline Hatem, Beirut, freely adapted from Anna Seghers' novel *Transit*

Theatre guest performance in Arabic with English surtitles

Friday – Sunday, 25 – 27 November 2022

Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg

Press and
Public Relations

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The Akademie der Künste shows the premiere of *Transit Tripoli*, a theatre performance by Caroline Hatem, Beirut. The play, performed in Arabic with English surtitles, is based on the novel *Transit*, written by Anna Seghers in 1941/42 during her exile in Mexico.

Freely adapted and yet close to Anna Seghers' original, the director Caroline Hatem and her co-creators, actor Josef Akiki and dramaturg Bassel Shalgheen, who are members of the Beirut-based YAZAN cultural association, have translated Seghers' text into Arabic for the first time. They shift the setting from 1940s Marseille to today's Lebanon, a hub for the streams of refugees coming from Syria.

The audience accompanies the narrator to the sea and into the streets and cafés of Tripoli, where people wait for their visas and opportunities to flee. In a suggestive monodrama, the young performer Joseph Akiki simultaneously personifies Seghers' protagonist and the people he encounters – artists, civil servants, hotel staff, couples, people who are lost, people who still have hope. The presence of the actor, live music by Rabih Gebeile, the minimalist staging of space by Velica Panduru and the video scenography by Walid Abdelnour evoking the sea and the open city create elements of a theatre that requires almost no sign of updating to make the text's contemporaneity and timeless existential truth tangible.

The premiere of *Transit Tripoli* at the Akademie der Künste emerged out of an initiative by the Schaubühne, which also facilitated a rehearsal residence. This production marks the beginning of a series put on by the Performing Arts Section of the Akademie der Künste presenting works of theatre by and with artists addressing existential societal questions outside of the European cultural realm.

Theatre Director, actress and dancer **Caroline Hatem** studied philosophy in Paris, acting at New York's Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute, among other institutions, and specialised in dance in the United States, France and Lebanon. She is the director and producer of numerous dance and theatre performances; her first straight play, *Al Beyt* by Arzé Khodr, was performed at the Festival of Carthage in Tunis and received awards at the first Lebanese National Theater Festival in 2018. This was followed by *Al Zifaf*, an adaptation of Brecht's *A Respectable Wedding* at the European Theatre Festival in Beirut in 2019.

Al Aadiloun, based on Camus' *The Righteous*, premiered earlier this year at Beirut's Monnot Theatre, and has been touring Lebanon since. Caroline Hatem is co-founder and president of YAZAN, a platform for artists and art practitioners offering intensive training programs, resources and support for their projects while favoring decentralization and sustainability through touring and network.

Transit Tripoli

Director Caroline Hatem, performer Josef Akiki, live music Rabih Gebeile, video Walid Abdelnour, scenography Velica Panduru, light designer Erich Schneider, drawings Jean-Marc Nahas, dramaturg Bassel Shalgheen, production YAZAN, funded by the International Coproduction Fund of the Goethe Institut, Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics, Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
Rehearsal residence: Schaubühne Berlin

The Anna Seghers Museum in Berlin Adlershof preserves the home and study of the famous writer, including her private library, as it was during her lifetime. The writer's bequest, including manuscripts, correspondence and personal documents, is stored in and managed by the Akademie der Künste.

Event information

Transit Tripoli

Theatre performance by Caroline Hatem, freely based on Anna Seghers' novel *Transit*.

In Arabic with English surtitles

Friday 25, Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 November, 8 pm

Akademie der Künste, Hanseatenweg 10, 10557 Berlin

Admission € 13/7, tickets: +49 (0)30 200 57-2000 und ticket@adk.de

Online tickets: www.adk.de/tickets

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