



NASLAH

by Aly Khamees

PROJECT
PORTFOLIO



PRODUCTION
ALY KHAMEES / BELOW THE SKIN

CO-PRODUCTION
TANZHAUS ZÜRICH

PARTNERING
ROXY BIRSFELDEN / ORIENT PRODUCTION / DCAF

PREMIERE
21.04.2023 (SOLD OUT, 110 TICKETS)

PERFORMED SHOWS
22.4/23.4.2023 TANZHAUS (177 TICKETS SOLD)
11.5.2023, ROXY (50 TICKETS SOLD)
OCT 2023, DCAF (PERFORMANCE POSTPONED 2024)

[LINK TRAILER – PASSWORD: NASLAHTANZHAUS2023](#)

NASLAH

BY ALY KHAMEES

Production Aly Khamees / Below the Skin

Coproduction Tanzhaus Zürich

Partners Roxy Birsfelden / Orient Production / DCAF

Premiere 21/04/2023

Performed Shows:

Tanzhaus Zurich 21./22./23.4.2023 (288 Tickets sold)

Tanzfest Roxy Birsfelden: 11.5.2023 (50 Tickets sold)

DCAF Cairo: 25./26.10.2023 (postponed to 2024)

Age Recommendation: 12+

Dauer: 50 min

Accessibility Information: This performance exists of strong images that can provoke strong emotions. The accompanying music is equally strong, its' bases and frequencies evoke a musical experience that can be felt in every cell of the body. For sensitive people, we recommend ear plugs.

Credits Team:

Aly Khamees	Co-Author, Choreography & Performance
Jelena Mair	Co-Author, Production Management
Ahmed Saleh	Composition and Music
David Baumgartner	Lighting Design
Romain Guion	Coach and Outside Eye
Simon Fröhling	Dramaturgy

Supported by:

City of Zurich Culture

Culture Office of the Canton of Zurich

Ernst Goehner Foundation

Landis & Gyr Foundation

Anne-Marie Schindler Foundation

Swiss Performers Foundation SIS

Migors Culture Percentage



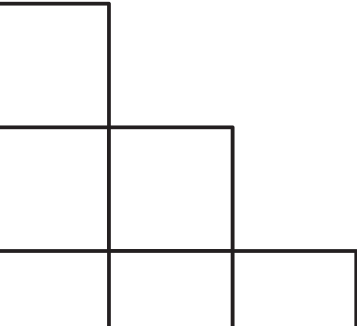
CONTENT

How do norms and stigmas become entrenched in our consciousness, and how can we break free from these inner prisons? Aly Khamees addresses these questions in his powerful and thought-provoking dance solo, *Naslah**. Inspired by the rich tradition of Egyptian street dance with knives, which dates back to Pharaonic culture and is practiced on joyous occasions such as weddings as well as during rivalries in the form of competitions, the knives symbolize additional arms on the body with which the dancers cut or paint in the air to express their own soul voice. Fittingly, *Naslah* also takes inspiration from conversations with people of different backgrounds from Khamee's childhood neighborhood in Cairo and his adopted home in Zurich, which always revolved around the topic of discrimination based on origin or appearance. Khamees aims to tell the stories of people on the margins of society and open up new perspectives on global conditions through his choreography, stating that «In dance we can experience our common humanity».

*In Cairo slang, "naslah" refers to a sharpened spoon used in prison for personal protection.

SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE CHOREOGRAPHER

Aly Khamees uses the language of dance and performance to speak about social challenges and issues. Through his ongoing movement research based on contemporary dance, power movement and traditional Egyptian street dance, he develops his own movement vocabulary, which he calls *Bullet and Knife*. Khamees has danced and studied with dance companies throughout Europe and Egypt. Aly Khamees is the artistic director of the company *Below the Skin*, which he co-founded with Jelena Mair in 2019. His most recent works are: *Naslah* (Tanzhaus Zürich 2023), *Breaches* (Off Cairo Biennale 2018), *The Absentee* (2be Continued, DCAF Festival 2018).





Züritipp

"HIS MOVEMENT GO UNDER YOUR SKIN!"



THEME

Naslah is a poetic dance solo, staged by Aly Khamees, a Zurich-based Egyptian choreographer, in which he explores the theme of stigmatization and discrimination through his personal experiences, research in the streets of his childhood in Cairo and studio research in dialogue with dancers from his adopted home in Zurich. Khamees investigates how norms and stigmas become entrenched in our consciousness, how we can break out of them, and how we can dismantle inherited and imposed worldviews to experience our commonalities as human beings in all our diversity.

For this piece, Khamees is developing a movement vocabulary he calls *Bullet and Knife*, inspired by traditional Egyptian street dance, dating back to Pharaonic culture, and interpreted based on contemporary dance techniques. The movement vocabulary is thus based on a cultural and epistemological exploration of dance with knives and a metaphorical interpretation of it.

"The knife is a symbol of tradition and at the same time a tool of inner resistance. Like a brush for the painter, the knife for the dancer is an instrument to express the inner life." Aly Khamees

Khamees metaphorically places the bullet in dialogue with the knife. The movements of the bullet explore the precision with which it can shoot through the air, hit its target, create an impact and even penetrate. *Bullet and Knife* vocabulary reflects Khamees' desire to create an individual movement language that reflects him and his heritage, giving him a tool of expression that touches his audience. He creates movements that are powerful, high-energy, and explosive, based on a desire to bring depth to the stage. Khamees achieves authenticity by delving into his own inner life and drawing from his somatic and spiritual experience. He aspires to bring not only "correct" technique but also a movement vocabulary that tells stories from heart to heart and moves and touches the audience.

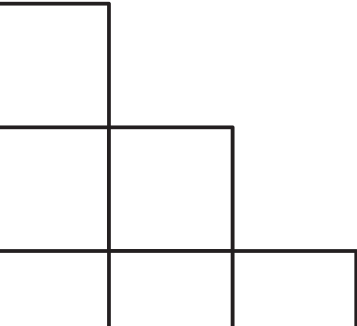


BACKGROUND

The background research for this solo piece is based on the collected narratives and stories of the "Mosagaleen Khatar", which literally translates to "registered as dangerous". They are ex-convicts from the economically poor and marginalized social classes of the neighborhood where Aly Khamees grew up. They developed their own slang and practice their own unique dance rituals, to which he gained access through spending time with them. Through delving deeply into the stories of these human but often criminalized people, Aly Khamees was able to experience firsthand the systemic and structural oppression of marginalized communities. Bringing these injustices and circumstances into a creative expression and involving a broad audience in a dialogue is what motivates his work.

"The narrative of the protagonist who leads through this piece is a person who carries their life on their back and uses dance as a means to free themselves from old identities and stereotypes and to take the writing of their own story into their own hands." Aly Khamees.

In his choreographic work, Aly Khamees uses the language of images, symbolism and metaphors as well as the somatic experience of memories to elaborate movement qualities and create a vocabulary. He is interested in how to reach into the depths of our somatic memories and tap into new themes that may not yet be cognitively grasped. Moreover, Khamees is interested in how through movement practice our bodies become memoirs that tell us transmitted stories, far back to our ancestors. Through the language of the body, much is expressed in his experience as a dancer and choreographer that cannot be put into words. The result is a narrative that is authentically touching and invites the viewer to experience it.





P.S. Die unabhängige linke Zürcher Zeitung
"ALY KHAMEES DEMONSTRATES THE
SHEER HOPELESSNESS OF A
STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION"





SHORT BIOGRAPHY OF THE COMPANY

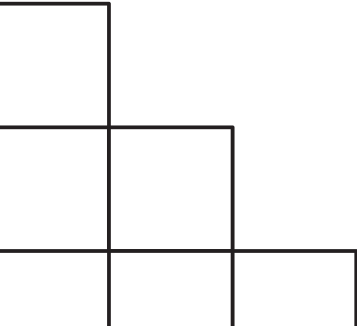
Below the Skin is a company with an interest in transcultural exploration of socio-political phenomena, through dance and performance. It is the stories of people, our common humanity, the circumstances of the environments we find ourselves in, as well as the challenges we face as a human race in the 21st century that moves us. Founded by Aly Khamees and Jelena Mair in 2019.

At Below the Skin, we believe in providing the community with a series of state-of-the-art shows and performances that strive to make an impact.

CO-PRODUCER TANZHAUS ZÜRICH

Since its foundation in 1996, the Tanzhaus Zurich has been one of the most important centres for contemporary choreography and performance in Switzerland. A small team takes care of the concerns of the artists and understands its role as a host. The Tanzhaus stands for artistic research and production, professional qualification and further training, individual information and advice, innovative discourse, international networking, sustainable mediation and presentation.

The Tanzhaus co-produces contemporary dance practitioners working in Zurich and supports them in all areas of the production and creation process based on their individual needs. As a residency venue, it offers local, national and international artists research and development time and creates the opportunity to provide insights into various stages of artistic creative processes - from the open rehearsal to the almost finished performance.



TEAM

Aly Khamees - Co-Author, Choreography and Performance

Aly Khamees is the artistic director of Below the Skin, a company he founded with his wife Jelena Mair in 2019. Khamees was born in Cairo in 1986 and is a choreographer, dancer and actor. He received his training in contemporary dance at the Cairo Contemporary Dance Workshop Program curated by Studio Emad Eddin and Laurence Rondoni (2008-2011). Khamees further developed his skills as a dancer and performer by collaborating with various dance companies in Europe and Egypt: Desent-Danse (2011-2013), Ultima Vez (2013/17), Homa Company (Monkey Fish Technique) (2013/14/17), to name a few. In 2013, he became a member of the International Dance Council. Currently living in Switzerland, Khamees has resumed his own work as a choreographer. He has benefited from important residencies in which he was able to develop his movement vocabulary Bullet and Knife and test the basic ideas for the solo piece Naslah: Pro-Helvetia residency Theatre L'Octagon (2020), Covid-19 working grant of the City of Zurich (2021/22), ATLAS - ImPulsTanz Festival Vienna (2021), Tanzhaus Zurich residency (2022), Mixed Pickles Roxy Birsfelden (2022). Bullet and Knife is inspired by Egyptian street dance, which Khamees brings into dialogue with contemporary dance and power movement. His most recent productions were: Breaches (Off Cairo Biennial Festival 2018), and The Absentee (2be Continued and DCAF Festival 2018). Khamees' work is interested in using the language of dance to speak about social challenges and issues, and to engage audiences in dialogue.

Jelena Mair - Co-Author, Production Manager, Diffusion.

Jelena Mair is the creative director of the Below the Skin company and develops the artistic concepts in collaboration with Aly Khamees. Her professional background is diverse. She studied Expressive Dance and Art Therapy at the Tamalpa Institute in San Francisco (2006), received her Bachelor in Transdisciplinary Studies at the California Institute of Integral Studies (2008) and her Master in Peace and Conflict Transformation in Basel and Innsbruck (2015). She worked as a project manager in various start-ups and NGOs with a focus on peacebuilding, social inclusion and sustainability. She is currently deputy director for the transdisciplinary initiative School of Commons (schoolofcommons.org). Her personal interests and academic background are in the fields of human empowerment, social change, transgenerational trauma and resiliency. She is a certified Resiliency Coach (Organic Intelligence®). Already as a child she spent a lot of time at her mother's theatre, around the stage she feels at home. For her, art is an important means of personal and social transformation.



TEAM

Ahmed Saleh - Composition and Music

Ahmed Saleh is a musician, composer and sound artist from Alexandria, Egypt. He has become one of the spearheads of the electronic music scene in Egypt. (Press - Cairosceen Magazine - March 2015). Saleh's experience as a visual artist had a great influence on his music. He composed his first live solo set and performed at the 100LIVE festival in 2009. Saleh is a member and one of the founders of the well-known band Telepoetic, he composed the soundtracks for many independent films, contemporary dance shows and theatre. In 2014, he was part of the Jazz Nomades project and performed at the La Voix Est Libre festival (France). Saleh's music has been played on many radio shows in Poland, the US, Italy, Germany, France, London and Egypt.

Romain Guion - Coatch and Outside Eye

is a performer, dance educator, festival curator and cultural manager with a 25-year career in the performing arts. He trained at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse in Paris and has subsequently been a member of various international dance companies including Charleroi-Danses, National Dance Company Wales, Dance Theatre of Ireland, John Scott's Irish Modern Dance Theatre, Gelabert-Azzopardi Companya de Dansa, Eun Me Ahn Dance Company, PVC-Stadttheater Freiburg, Staatstheater Mainz, Constanza Macras-Dorky Park and les ballets C de la B, with whom he performed C(H)OEURS and Nicht Schlafen. In addition to his performing career, Romain collaborates in the creation of dance, music, theatre and opera productions with artists such as Alain Platel (Coup Fatal), Martin Zimmermann (Good Bye Johnny; Danse Macabre), Koen Augustijnen (Sehnsucht, limited edition; Dancing Bach), Eugénie Rebetez (Bienvenue), Francesca Foscari (Animale) and Juliette Navis (Tout ce qui reste; La timidité des arbres). Romain curates the Berlin dance festival LUCKY TRIMMER and the professional training of Tanzhaus Zürich. He is artistic coordinator of the collective The Field and artistic director of Brückerei, a platform for choreographic development. In 2019, Romain received a cultural award from the city of Zurich. In 2021, Romain graduated with a Master's degree in Cultural Management from Leuphana University. In his master's thesis, he investigated environmental sustainability in the European contemporary dance sector.

TEAM

David Baumgartner - Lighting Design

is the technical director of the Tanzhaus Zürich, a freelance lighting designer, former cultural manager and has been working on the stages of Europe for 20 years. He completed his training at the IHK Hamburg to become a master of event technology in the field of lighting. He has been technical director at the Tanzhaus Zurich for seven years, before that he was technical director at the Theater Tuchlaube in Aarau. He began his technical and artistic career at the Sophiensaele in Berlin. In addition to his employment, he develops lighting designs for various companies and accompanies them on tours throughout Europe. Most recently he has worked with artists such as Isabel Lewis, Tabea Martin and Alexandra Bachzetsis. He is always happy to work in new places and with different people, and has, for example, been the technical director for the festivals zürich moves! and fanfaluca Aarau.

Simon Froehling - Dramaturgical support Tanzhaus Zurich

Simon Froehling, born 1978, is a Swiss-Australian dual citizen and lives as an author and dramaturge in Zurich. He has published two novels ("Lange Nächte Tag" and "Dürrst", shortlisted for the Swiss Book Prize 2022, both published by Bilgerverlag) and written more than a dozen full-length plays and radio plays for Swiss and German stages and radio stations. He has won various prizes for his work and was Writer in Residence at the German House at New York University. Simon is also involved in the performing arts as a freelance production dramaturge (including for the UTOPISTAS led by Jenna Hendry) and as a lecturer, external mentor and expert, including for the Zurich University of the Arts ZHdK, the Cultural Foundation of the Canton of Thurgau and the Albert Köchlin Foundation. In addition to his freelance work, he is deputy artistic director of the Tanzhaus Zürich and also heads the dramaturgy pool. In the course of this he accompanies productions by artists and groups such as Eugénie Rebetez, Isabel Lewis & The Field, Ivy Monteiro, Lea Moro, Valerie Reding and cie. zeitSprung as well as national and international guests in residence. He also supervised the young talent platforms SHOW-OFF (2020 & 2022) and kicks! (2021) as a coach.

CONTACT

BELOW THE SKIN
c/o Aly Khamees
Rautistrasse 296
8048 Zurich

076 586 4064

website belowtheskin.company
mail belowtheskin@proton.me

instagram
[instagram.com/alykhamees/](https://www.instagram.com/alykhamees/)
[instagram.com/belowtheskincompany/](https://www.instagram.com/belowtheskincompany/)
[instagram.com/ahmedsalehmusic/](https://www.instagram.com/ahmedsalehmusic/)

Video Links

[Link Trailer - password: naslahtanzhaus2023](#)

