

Urban Heat

Cairo City Lab

Cairo, April 13 (arrival) – 17 (departure), 2016

Public space has always been a contested arena, where the political, the social, and the individual overlap. As soon as we leave the confines of our homes in an urban environment, our movements are choreographed by a series of rules and regulations dictating what we can and cannot do in the supposedly collectively-owned public space. Through traffic lights, pedestrian walkways, tunnels and overpasses, we move in a predetermined path, intersecting and sometimes colliding, over how public space should best be utilised to serve us, the public.

But what happens when we disrupt this predetermined path, this carefully orchestrated urban choreography? When we re-imagine and repurpose public space to serve as something different from its originally intended function?

Who can claim a public space as their own? A rally of the politically disenfranchised? A shop-owner who stakes the sidewalk as his makeshift living room through an arrangement of plastic chairs and glasses of tea? A performer using the sidewalk as an impromptu stage?

These questions are particularly pertinent to the local context in which the D-CAF Festival operates, in light of the ongoing changes Downtown Cairo is experiencing. Government-led restoration efforts dance with independent research projects, which pirouette around new arts and culture initiatives, which in turn tango with neglected passageways, public parks and an increasingly young, street-savvy and arts-hungry populace.

The D-CAF-led lab, *Choreography, Performance and the public*, attempts to explore these and other questions, highlighting choreography and performance as a strategy to engage with public space, and drawing on the relationship between arts, political practice and civil society in Egypt and beyond.

Ahmed El Attar – D-CAF's Artistic Director

Supported by:



Cairo City Lab – Schedule

Tuesday, April 12th

Festival Directors' Arrival

Wednesday, April 13th

Artists' Arrival

12:00 – 14:00 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Festival Director's meeting

14:00 – 15:30

Lunch – Felfela Restaurant

Thursday, April 14th

Day 1

8:00

Meet in the lobby of hotel and take a bus to Studio Emad Eddin

9:00 – 10:00 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Welcome note by Ahmed El Attar + some important information

10:00 – 11:00 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Station #1: Cairo public performance initiative, Mahatat

A presentation and talk by Heba El Cheikh (Mahatat)

11:00 – 11:30 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Coffee Break

11:30 – 12:30 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Showcasing by the shore: Alexandria's Naseem Al Raqs Dance Festival

A presentation and talk by Emilie Petit (Nassim El-Raqs)

12:30 – 14:00 (El Alfy Restaurant)

Lunch with guest speakers

14:00 – 15:00 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Open discussion with guest speakers

15:00 – 15:30 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Coffee Break

15:30 – 17:00 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Discussion moderated by Sodja Lotker

17:00 – 00:00

D-CAF Festival Programme

Friday, April 15th

Day 2

10:00 - 11:30 (TBA)

Tour 1

12:00 - 13:00 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Urban Visions – D-CAF's Public space programme

Presentation and Talk by Ahmed El Attar

13:00 – 14:00 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Lunch

14:00 – 17:00 (Alfi Bey street)

Urban Vision street performances

17:00 – 00:00

D-CAF Festival Programme

Saturday, April 16th

Day 3

10:00 – 11:00 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Downtown Cairo's in-betweens: CLUSTER's take on urban passageways

A presentation and talk by Omar Nagati (Cluster)

11:00 – 11:30 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Open discussion with Omar Nagati

11:30 - 13:00 (Downtown Cairo)

CAIRO DOWNTOWN PASSAGEWAYS TOUR: Led by Omar Nagati *

13:00 – 14:30 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Lunch at Eish w Malh

14:30 – 15:30 (Studio Emad Eddin)

Choreographing conflict: Zoukak and psychosocial theatre

A presentation and talk by Lamia Abi Azar (Zoukak) – Lebanon

15:30 – 16:00

Open discussion with Lamia Abi Azar

16:00 – 17:30

Discussion moderated by Sodja Lotker

*** CAIRO DOWNTOWN PASSAGEWAYS TOUR: Led by Omar Nagati**

Based on CLUSTER's extensive research on Cairo Downtown passageways, this tour explores Downtown's network of passages, back alleys, side streets and in-between spaces that house an array of commercial and entertainment activities. These activities extend to the gaps between buildings, setbacks, courtyards, and a number of side streets that were either officially or *de facto* pedestrianized. Uses of these spaces range from food places and coffee shops, to sites for trade and retail, including stationeries and bookstores, bars and restaurants, galleries and art spaces. Being off the main channels of traffic, they operate as hubs for competing interests and claims to space. Viewed together, they offer an opportunity to re-envision Downtown as a network of pathways housing commerce and entertainment.

Sunday, April 17th

10:00 – 11:30

Tour 2 (TBA).

12:00 – 13:00 (Studio Emad Eddin).

Evaluation

Departure

D-CAF

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Syrian Focus**

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Hotel

Marriott Zamalek

16, Saray El Gaeera St, Zamelek

Venue (Lab)

Studio Emad Eddin

18, Emad Eddin Street, 3rd Floor

Restaurants:

Felfela Restaurant

Hoda Shaarawy, Bab Al Louq, Abdin, Cairo
Governorate

El Alfy Bey

3 El Afly street, Downtown

Eish We Malh

20 Adly Street, Downtown

Speakers:

Heba El Cheikh – Mahatat

Heba elCheikh is a cultural manager, studied French, translation and journalism and in 2012 she had her Masters in Arts Management, in focus on community arts and evaluation at Utrecht School of the Arts, the Netherlands. And in 2015, she published her thesis: Community Arts Evaluation Practices in Egypt, Lampard Editions.

In 2011, she co-founded Mahatat for contemporary art. Believing in the democratization of the arts, the cultural leader aims to decentralize the arts making it available to everyone, through arts in public spaces and community arts projects. Her working experiences range from culture management and facilitation, curating art in public spaces, interpreting and journalism (radio and print media) to website editing. In 2009, she co-founded The “Journey cultural Group” in Alexandria, aiming to promote youth creativity and critical thinking through culture and arts. Having travelled to Morocco, France, Spain, Kenya, Italy, England, Belgium, Germany, Syria, Indonesia, Thailand and the USA, Heba ElCheikh published fieldwork-based articles in French and Arabic weeklies and magazines and covers arts and traveling, and tackles local community life style, culture and legacy.

Emilie Petit – Nassim El-Raqs

Artist and project manager, Momkin - espaces de possibles ("spaces of possibles"), Marseilles & Nassim El-Raqs, interdisciplinary dance creation festival in public space, Alexandria, Egypt. Born in 1980, Emilie Petit is a visual artist. She lives and works between Marseille and Alexandria. Through her personal artistic practice based on the experience of geography, which she has developed since leaving art school in 2001, Emilie Petit has been putting together experimental collaborative projects, initiating creative processes in atypical or innovative places and areas. These projects all explore new space-time continuums of experience, cultivating research and experimentation. Thus the Moutawassat project (2007-2009) explores writing's relationship with the Mediterranean Sea on board a 9m wide sailboat. Then the Nassim el Raqs experimental festival project (from 2011 until present) questions the body, movement and the artistic gesture in the city of Alexandria.

In 2012, she founded “Momkin - espaces de possibles” in Marseille to promote and develop her projects, an association that she now directs, surrounded by a dynamic, innovative team.

Ahmed El Attar – D-CAF

An Egyptian independent theatre director and playwright, Ahmed El Attar is the artistic director of D-CAF and Falaki Theatre, as well as the founder and manager of Orient Productions, Temple Independent Theatre Company and Studio Emad Eddin. With several degrees under his belt and having received recognition and awards from institutions worldwide, his work has been performed all over Europe and the Arab region. In 2005 El Attar was chosen by the Arabic edition of Newsweek as one of forty-two personalities who've influenced change in the Arab world. In 2010, El Attar received the prize for best theatre text from the Sawiris Foundation for Social Development for his play 'Life is Beautiful or Waiting for My Uncle From America'. His latest play 'The Last Supper' was in the official selection of the 69th edition of the Avignon International Theatre Festival (2015) and the Festival D'Automne in Paris (2015) making it the first Egyptian play ever to be programmed in both festivals.

Omar Nagati – Cluster

Omar Nagati is a practicing architect and urban planner, and the co-founder of CLUSTER, an urban design and research platform downtown Cairo. Having studied at UBC, Vancouver and UC Berkeley, Nagati adopts an interdisciplinary approach to urban history and design, and engages in empirical research and critical mapping of urban informality. He teaches part-time Urban Design Studio at the MSA University in Giza and is currently a visiting professor at the University of Sheffield, UK. clustercairo.org

Lamia Abi Azar – Performance in times of conflict

Born in 1978, Lamia Abi Azar is a theatre Maker and a founding member of Zoukak Theatre Company. Since 2006 she devised and acted in more than 13 of Zoukak's performances. She acquired a degree in Clinical Psychology at the St. Joseph University (USJ), Beirut, in 1999 while she was studying Theatre at the Institute of Fine Arts of the Lebanese University (1997-1999); in 2004 she graduated in “History & Practice of Arts, Music and Performance”, with an emphasis on theatre at the Università Degli Studi Dell'Aquila, Italy. Performer and drama-therapist, since 2001 Lamia developed a personal approach of drama therapy through continuous experimentation and practice, based on two separate schools: experimental theatre and clinical psychology, applying theatre and art as a tools of alternative expression, personal investigation and self-affirmation. She opened her research in drama-therapy to Zoukak in 2006 and continued to develop it within the company taking the lead of diversified projects across the years that considers theater as a tool of personal, social and political change.

Since 2005, Lamia is conducting a drama therapy laboratory with children with multiple psycho-physical disabilities at “Ghassan Kanafani rehabilitation pre-

school”, Mar-Elias Palestinian camp, Beirut; she has also led different workshops, trainings and trainings of trainers in theatre and drama therapy applied with children, adults and persons with special needs in diverse contexts. From 2008 till 2012 she led a laboratory of drama therapy with incarcerated youth at Roumieh jail, Lebanon. She was a drama instructor of Corporal Expression at the Institute de Psychomotricity, Saint Joseph University, Beirut from 2008 till 2011, and in 2008-2009 she worked as a technical advisor for Handicap International on a psychosocial project in Palestinian camps in Lebanon.