

LEILI YAHR

1980 (Switzerland, Iran, US)

Leili Yahr is a versatile and multifaceted artist whose work ranges from stage director to singer-actress to *butoh* performer. With a fascination for political philosophy and ancient Greek mythology, Yahr strives to question the human condition and its relationship to the cosmos in a poetic and penetrating manner.



Her scenic and dramaturgical explorations are particularly focused around the notion of the feminine and the tension between the sexes. Believing artistic creativity is inseparable from intellectual pursuit, she studies at the University of Lausanne (Master of Arts - MA / Major in Philosophy, minors in Political Science, History and Esthetics of Cinema) in concert with her work in the theatre. Her philosophy thesis, *Obstétrique du philosophe* (2008), tackles the Platonic dialogues from the standpoint of a study in genre.

Raised in a multicultural and artistic family, from an early age Yahr found herself immersed in the disciplines of dance (classical and contemporary), music (piano and singing) and theatre. In 2002, whilst performing as actor and singer in the Berkana company's show *Peur* (performed at Théâtre 2.21 in Lausanne), she discovered *butoh* dancing. From that point onwards *butoh* grew to become her area of specialty, with the help of Carlotta Ikeda and Ko Murobushi, both European-based authorities on the technique.

In 2004, Yahr partnered with Annika Dind to create the Elektra dance and theatre company in Lausanne, an experimental platform for multidisciplinary arts encompassing dance, music and theatre. Fittingly, the style of physical expression embraced by the company draws from *butoh* dance. Elektra sees Yahr working

as both stage director and singer-actress: there, her artistic creations serve as a medium for conveying her philosophical interrogations. The Elektra company has produced three shows: *Kosmose* (2008 and 2010), *Danser sur le fil d'Ariane* (2006) and *Standing Up!* (2005-2007). The shows were performed at the Tojo Theater in Berne, in Lausanne for the Nuit des Musées, at the Grange de Dorigny, the Zinéma, and the Sévelin Theatre, among other venues.

Over the past two years, Leili Yahr has had the opportunity to form new artistic collaborations. She first took part in a research project on the surrealist poets and Horace by H. Müller (2009-2010) with G. Alvarez and his ensemble, before being called upon for performance as a singer and actress in *M...l'hypocondriaque*, an operetta based on Molière's *Le malade imaginaire* (Théâtre du Galpon, Geneva, 2010-2011). The latter involved composer Bruno Defranceschi with whom she was able to enrich her knowledge and understanding of music before furthering her grasp of singing and the tragic chorus whilst working with Francesca Breschi at the Teatro dell'Elfo in Milan (www.francescabreschi.it).

In January 2012, Yahr launched Kaleidos in order to further her artistic explorations and promote a more personal and independent approach more concerned with the musical and the theatrical, a commitment to which MEDEA bears testimony.

On top of her work with Elektra, Yahr contributed to the following projects: *Reza Derakshani & Leili Yahr*, a dance and visual arts performance (2010, Flux Laboratory, Carouge); *Dada out of the Dust*, a poetic performance with Vietnamese director Siu Pham (2009, Luff, Mont-Benon Casino, Lausanne); *Ecran Total*, as artistic coordinator and assistant stage director for a social rehabilitation scheme using theatre to help reintegrate 40 young individuals (2009, Dock's, Lausanne); and *Le rêve d'un homme ridicule*, as dancer, actress and choreographer, with director Nalini Menemkat (2004, Théâtre trois p'tits tours, Morges).