



New Theatre Institute of Latvia

Riga, 19 August 2019

### **15th International Festival of Contemporary Theatre Homo Novus in Riga**

From 5 till 13 September, the 15th International Festival of Contemporary Theatre Homo Novus will take place in Riga. Founded in 1995 as a student and young artist theatre festival, Homo Novus has developed into an annual week long international contemporary performing arts platform, presenting a programme of premieres, guest performances, installations, festival school and special events. This year the festival in Riga will feature established and emerging artists from Japan, Australia, USA, Norway, Belgium, Estonia, France and Latvia.

The programme of Homo Novus 2019 focuses on artworks that urge to disclose the surface of the reality to reveal what's beyond. How does the world sound when the prevailing noise and voices become calm? What stories are written in the faces of Ukrainian women encountered in the streets of Northern Italy? What happens, when people abandon the landscape and new relationships between objects appear? What do the WWI Museum in Ypres and the Louvre Abu Dhabi have in common? The Festival's 15th edition invites audiences to celebrate the new theatre, jointly build new worlds to be experienced by one's heart, body and mind, and stand for the freedom to create, watch and discuss art – a fragile privilege that is neither universal, nor self-evident.

The festival opens on September 5 with a joint performance by two of the festival guest artists from Japan –the expressive performance collective *contact Gonzo* whose practice combines body contact and urban elements, and the delicate sound artist Tetsuya Umeda whose collaborators are transient matters like water drops, smoke or air flow. They will be presenting their performances developed in collaboration with Latvian artists later in the festival week. Another Japanese artist premiering a new work made in Riga is director Akira Takayama – his site-specific project „Heterotopia Riga” takes place as a walk in the city, inspired by the life of Japanese spy Makoto Onedera in Riga during 1930s. A special event “Sonic Dawn” will take place in the last hours of 6 September and continue all through the night. Devised as a sonic journey from dark till dawn, featuring contributions by various artists and musicians, it will focus on our ability to listen for what is not audible and yet there.

For the first time in Latvia, the festival will be presenting the remarkable New York based Lebanese artist Walid Raad with the performance „Les Louvres and/or Kicking the Dead” where Raad takes visitors on a special tour of his exhibition in which real events, fiction and the artist's commentary are all intertwined.

Another legendary company to visit Riga for the first time is Norwegian *Verdensteatret* with their latest work “Hannah”, a hybrid of a performance, concert and installation, in which the entire space is being played as one polyphonic audiovisual instrument. The



physical theatre company *Branch Nebula* from Australia will present „High Performance Packing Tape”, a solo show where we follow a middle aged man, facing with difficult and menacing situations brought onto him by various objects and hazardous technical equipment with a very durable tape as his only companion. The physical experience for everyone present is guaranteed in the performance “Klapping” by choreographers Ahilan Ratnamohan and Feras Shaheen where artists, once semi-professional footballers themselves, together with local football professionals, amateurs and youngsters will collectively create a new form of urban movement - a street dance drawing its roots in football. These three performances are suitable also for young audiences and schoolchildren.

In the final days of Homo Novus, we will introduce the new work by Estonian artist Kristina Norman „Lighter Than Woman”, a poetic documentary performance based on Norman’s study of and collaboration with Ukrainian women working as carers for the elderly in Italy. The festival closing is in the hands of Flemish artists, set designer, director and performer Miet Warlop who will visit festival with two performances „Fruits of Labour” and „Ghost Writer and the Broken Hand Break”, that mesmerizingly blend live concert, art exhibition, performance and poetry reading. Warlop’s work is characterized by absolute artistic freedom, impressive imagination and great sense of humour. Those who have seen the show say it works as a painkiller for those who have been wounded by this world.

Full Homo Novus festival programme is available on [homonovus.lv](http://homonovus.lv)

Tickets to shows are available online at Biļešu paradīze, [www.bilesuparadize.lv](http://www.bilesuparadize.lv)

Information:

Laura Stasane, [laura@theatre.lv](mailto:laura@theatre.lv), T.+37167228477