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Baltic Circle Festival Explores Borders, Bodies, and Nordic Colonialism

The next edition of Baltic Circle International Theatre Festival takes place in Helsinki, Finland on the November 14–19, 2017. The programme features Finnish premieres, international guest performances and a program of works and encounters exploring the history and present situation of the indigenous Sámi people.

“This year, Baltic Circle is hosting a platform for discussions on the rights and self-governance of indigenous peoples; on cultural genocide; on rights to land and water; on climate change and solutions to it; on the revival of ecosystems and of people; and on the possibility of changing a nation. - - The festival’s performances make sharp observations about sore, hushed, frail and complex topics – without forgetting soft senses and sensitive bodies.”

–Satu Herrala, Artistic Director.

The opening performance of the festival, *The Time of Autonomy* by **Pauliina Feodoroff, Maryan Abdulkarim** and **S. Nousiainen**, aims to unravel the conditions where something as fragile and comprehensive as a sense of self can or could be born. The performance is a part of a program of works and encounters titled *First Nations*, curated by Pauliina Feodoroff, which invites the audience to encounter a painful subject – Nordic colonialism.

Maadtoe, an exhibition by Sámi artist **Anders Sunna** and Swedish-Dutch photographer **Michiel Brouwer**, raises questions about Sámi policy, racism and exploitation operated by the Swedish government. The *First Nations* programme also includes *Sijdsääbbar*, a two-day Skolt Sámi village council meeting, a club and a film screening.

Another Finnish première takes a peek into the life after death through the work of **Post MJ-Era Institute of Consciousness**, a collective that examines **Michael Jackson’s** spiritual heritage. *Afterlife* brings its audience to a joint voyage into the post-mortem consciousness of Jackson. The performance is the third and final part of a trilogy that seeks to chart the influences of a pop-icon. It was preceded by *Neverland* (URB 15) and *Wake* (Baltic Circle 2015).

The international guest performances of the festival examine various borders, the ways in which they are constructed and crossed as well as bodily experiences of borders. **Rima Najdi**, a Lebanese

Berlin-based performance artist, has created *Think Much. Cry Much.*, an experiential radio play that transports the audience to the border zones of a fenced in Europe. Performer **Silvia Calderoni's** autobiographical material and **Jeffrey Eugenides'** Pulitzer-winning novel *Middlesex* come together in *MDLSX*, a performance of the legendary Italian theatre collective **Motus**. The result is a kaleidoscopic queer universe that has already charmed its way through five continents, and will now finally arrive in Finland.

Gender diversity is also valued in *Sleeping Beauty*, a participatory performance by **Reality Research Center**. It approaches sexuality through power and role play, and gives room to personal fantasies, sensations and feelings, and communication through touch. It welcomes all kinds of bodies, genders and sexual orientations.

Last Yearz Interesting Negro Alias Jamila Johnson-Small, a promise among the new generation of choreographers in Britain, introduces her electronically pulsing performance *i ride in colour and soft focus, no longer anywhere*. During her visit, Johnson-Small will also give a lecture at Theatre Academy Helsinki and lead a workshop aimed at professionals in Zodiak – Center for New Dance.

The collaboration of Baltic Circle and *What the Cirk?* festival of Cirko – Center for New Circus continues this year in the form of a club night. The festival centre, located in Cirko's Maneesi, will at night be transformed into a club where performers such as **Serot, Anni Koskinen & Onni Hämäläinen, Silvia Calderoni** and **Laura Murtomaa/Mr. Playbackboy** will appear.

The programme in its entirety can be seen at the festival's home page: www.balticcircle.fi

Baltic Circle is an international theatre festival which creates intensities in cities, takes a stand on topical questions and challenges to a dialogue. The festival offers the artists a space to imagine and experiment what theatre and performance could be, and offers the audience a chance to encounter the latest endeavours within performing arts. The main organiser of Baltic Circle is Q-teatteri ry.

Baltic Circle's ticket sale has started in Tiketti and Q-teatteri. Tickets to the performance *i ride in colour and soft focus, no longer anywhere* are sold by Lippupiste. No pre-sale for *Sleeping Beauty*.

Tickets 17 € / 12* €

Festival Pass (incl. 5 tickets) 75 € / 50* €, sold until 1.11.

* student, unemployed, pensioner, conscript/civil servant, arts professional

Tickets sold by Tiketti and Lippupiste will include a service fee.

balticcircle.fi

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Press images:

balticcircle.fi/media (2017 images available from 19.9.) or via email johanna@balticcircle.fi

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