



theatre

connecting

people

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Chapter 1. About the Project: Theatre – Connecting People

1.1. Project background

Theatre – Connecting People was an international Erasmus+ project that explored how theatre could support the inclusion of migrants and refugees and strengthen connections between people from different cultural and social backgrounds. The project was implemented by partners from Poland, Italy, and Türkiye: **Fundacja Cooperacja**, **Le Tre Ghinee**, and **Beşiktaş Belediyesi**.

From the beginning, the project was based on the belief that theatre could become much more than an artistic practice. It was approached as a space of encounter, expression, listening, and shared creation. The project emerged from a common interest in working with people with migrant and refugee experience not only through support services or educational activities, but also through participatory artistic processes that would give visibility to lived experience, foster empathy, and create new forms of dialogue with local communities.

Rather than developing a purely theoretical reflection on inclusion, the partnership focused on practice. The project was built around joint learning, experimentation, exchange of methods, and the collective creation of a final performance. In this sense, *Theatre – Connecting People* was both an educational and an artistic process.

1.2. Aim and main objectives

The overall aim of the project was to support the social inclusion of migrants and refugees through theatre and to strengthen the competences of people working in this field. The project sought to connect local communities and people with migrant experience by creating spaces in which stories could be shared, differences could be acknowledged, and common ground could be discovered.

The project pursued several interconnected objectives. It aimed to:

- strengthen intercultural dialogue through creative and participatory methods,
- equip educators, facilitators, and activists with theatre-based tools for inclusive work,
- create a safe and empowering environment for people with migrant and refugee experience,
- develop a collective theatre script rooted in personal memories, emotions, and reflections,
- challenge stereotypes and open space for more nuanced conversations about migration,
- create an artistic outcome that could be shared with wider audiences in different countries.

An important foundation of the project was the understanding that people with migrant and refugee experience should not be treated only as beneficiaries of activities, but as active participants and co-creators of the process. Their presence, perspectives, and contributions shaped both the methodology and the artistic result.

1.3. Why theatre?

The project chose theatre because it offered a form of communication that could go beyond language barriers and conventional educational formats. During the project, theatre proved to be an especially meaningful tool in work connected with migration, because it made space for voice, body, memory, silence, image, and emotion.

It allowed participants to express complex experiences in ways that did not depend only on verbal fluency. It also created room for ambiguity, symbolism, and multiple perspectives, which was particularly important when working with themes such as home, loss, displacement, identity, and belonging.

Throughout the project, theatre was not treated only as performance. It was used as a methodology of encounter. It supported trust-building, self-expression, collective reflection, and co-creation. It helped participants to listen to one another, to recognize difference without simplifying it, and to build relationships through shared presence and creative action.

1.4. How the project developed

The project developed step by step, through a combination of international cooperation, methodological exchange, training activities, artistic experimentation, and rehearsal processes. Its final shape was not fixed from the beginning; rather, it emerged gradually through meetings, workshops, reflection, and the involvement of all partners and participants.

From the outset, the partners worked closely to define the educational and artistic direction of the project. What connected them was not only a shared thematic interest in migration and inclusion, but also a belief that meaningful work in this field required sensitivity, participation, and trust in process.

Partner meeting in Leszno



An important stage in the development of the project was the partner meeting held on **16-17 April 2025 in Leszno**. During these two days, the partners reviewed the project's goals, refined the programme of the upcoming training in Türkiye, and discussed the educational logic of the process.

The meeting was also an opportunity to connect the international project with local realities. The partners visited the **Centre for Integration of Foreigners** and the **Foundation Leszno for Ukraine**, learning more about the everyday experiences, needs, and support structures related to people with refugee and migrant backgrounds in the local context. These visits helped ground the project in lived realities rather than abstract assumptions.

Another important part of the meeting was the encounter with **Barbara Prądyńska** in CK ZAMEK in Poznań. Her long-standing work in social theatre and in projects with people with migrant experience, Roma communities, and refugees became an important source of inspiration for the team. Her perspective helped the partnership think more deeply about theatre not only as an artistic form, but as a social and ethical practice based on listening, presence, and shared creation.

International training in Istanbul



The central educational activity of the project was the **LTTA – Learning, Teaching, Training Activity**, which took place in **Istanbul from 25 to 29 May 2025**, hosted by **Beşiktaş Belediyesi**.

The training brought together participants from Poland, Italy, and Türkiye, including people professionally or socially engaged in working with migrants and refugees, as well as people with migrant and refugee experience themselves. This was an essential element of the project: the learning process was not built around speaking about migration from a distance, but around working together with those whose experiences were directly connected to the themes being explored.

The programme combined non-formal education with theatre practice. Participants worked on building trust in the group, reflecting on adaptation processes, examining issues such as

ethnocentrism, discrimination, and cultural sensitivity, and exploring theatre tools that could later be used in local work.

The training became a key moment of transformation in the project. It was there that the group began to develop not only shared methods, but also a common artistic language. Through exercises, reflection, improvisation, and dialogue, the foundations were laid for the later creation of the performance.

The training also included a visit by the Consul of the Republic of Poland in Istanbul, Dariusz Gumieniczek, as well as a study visit to the **Marmara Municipalities Union**, where participants learned about local approaches to migration and integration policies. These elements broadened the project perspective by connecting personal, educational, artistic, and institutional dimensions.

1.5. Working process and co-creation

One of the defining features of the project was the way the work unfolded: gradually, collectively, and through a strong connection between methodology and artistic creation.

The project did not begin with a ready-made script. Instead, the performance emerged from the process itself. Participants brought stories, memories, gestures, languages, songs, objects, emotions, and images. These materials were explored through theatre exercises, improvisation, movement, discussion, and reflection. In this way, the script grew organically from the participants' presence and contributions, guided and shaped by the artistic vision and facilitation of **Barbara Prądyńska** and **Veronica Pinto**.

This working method was especially important in the context of migration. It allowed the project to move away from simplified representations and toward a more layered, human, and polyphonic form of storytelling. The process did not seek to produce one representative narrative about migration. Instead, it created space for many voices, many sensitivities, and many ways of remembering and expressing experience.

The multilingual nature of the group also strongly shaped the artistic process. Different languages were not treated as an obstacle, but as an integral element of the performance itself. This became one of the strengths of the project: meaning was created not only through understanding every word, but through rhythm, presence, gesture, sound, image, and relation.

1.6. Artistic guidance and collaboration

The project gained important depth through the collaboration with experienced theatre practitioners, whose approaches supported both the educational and artistic dimensions of the work.

A particularly important role was played by **Barbara Prądyńska** – actress, director, and theatre pedagogue – whose experience in social theatre and work with people at risk of exclusion deeply influenced the process. Her perspective helped the group understand how theatre could become a space of courage, dignity, and encounter.

The project was also shaped by **Veronica Pinto**, whose artistic and pedagogical work connected theatre, education, and human rights. Her contribution was especially significant in the development of the dramaturgical and methodological approach that later informed the Rome version of the performance.

Together, these artistic collaborations strengthened the project's ability to move between process and product, between workshop and performance, between personal testimony and theatrical form.

1.7. The performance: *The Jaguar and the Fish*

The final artistic outcome of the project was the performance *The Jaguar and the Fish*. It was not created as an isolated final product, but as the result of the entire project journey: the meetings, the training, the exercises, the relationships built, and the materials that emerged from shared work.

The performance became a multi-voiced theatrical composition on migration, memory, home, identity, absence, and encounter. It combined languages, images, movement, music, silence, and symbolic actions. It was intentionally open and layered, allowing audiences to engage with migration not through simplified statements, but through emotional, sensory, and poetic experience.

Leszno premiere

A first version of the performance was created during the intensive international rehearsal process in **Leszno from 3 to 5 November 2025**. The premiere took place on **5 November 2025** at the **Municipal Theatre in Leszno**.



This version of the performance emerged through a very concentrated collaborative effort. In a short time, the team worked intensively on scenic composition, dramaturgy, movement, rhythm, and visual language. The result was a moving and multidimensional performance that brought together participants from Poland, Italy, and Türkiye.

The premiere in Leszno was not only an artistic event, but also a moment of encounter between the project and the local audience. It opened space for reflection and emotional response, showing that theatre could indeed function as a bridge between different experiences and communities.



Rome Version

The process continued in **Rome from 4 to 6 February 2026**, where the team met again to prepare the Italian version of the performance. The Rome stage was not a simple repetition of the Leszno version. It was a continuation and development of the earlier work.



In Rome, the performance was revisited, adapted, and reshaped in response to a new space, context, and audience. Some elements became more direct, local references were introduced, and the overall structure responded to the new performative environment. This demonstrated

one of the strengths of the project: its artistic results remained alive and adaptable, rather than fixed once and for all.

The Italian premiere took place on **6 February 2026** and was followed by the public discussion “**Border Art: Practices, Care, Resistance, Welcome.**” This discussion extended the project beyond the performance itself, creating a space for dialogue on migration, art, hospitality, and the social role of culture.



1.8. Meaning and legacy of the project

By the end of the project, *Theatre – Connecting People* had become more than a series of international activities. It had become a shared process of learning, creation, and encounter.

The project showed that theatre could serve as a language of integration – not because it erased differences, but because it allowed them to exist together in a shared space. It created conditions in which people from different countries, cultures, and life situations could work together, create together, and be seen and heard together.

Its legacy lies not only in the final performance and this handbook, but also in the methods developed, the relationships built, and the experiences shared. The project demonstrated that artistic work can support inclusion in a meaningful way when it is based on trust, participation, and respect for the complexity of human experience.

In this sense, *Theatre – Connecting People* was both a project and a process: one that connected education with art, local practice with international exchange, and personal stories with collective imagination.

Chapter 2. Migration and Displacement in Türkiye, Poland and Italy

2.1. Migration and Displacement in Türkiye: Intersecting Realities in a Changing Landscape

Türkiye has emerged as one of the most significant host countries for migrants and refugees in the 21st century, acting as both a transit and destination country due to its unique geographic location between Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. With over four million registered migrants currently residing in the country – more than 3.2 million of whom are Syrians under Temporary Protection – Türkiye faces a complex and evolving migration landscape shaped by regional conflicts, domestic policy shifts, and natural disasters.

The majority of migrants in Türkiye reside in urban centers rather than refugee camps, which were once prominent in provinces bordering Syria. Cities such as Istanbul, Gaziantep, Hatay, Ankara, and Şanlıurfa have become home to large migrant communities, where individuals often live in low-income neighborhoods or informal housing. While Türkiye initially relied on large-scale temporary accommodation centers, most of these have been closed or downsized, with integration into urban life becoming the default pathway. Migrant communities can now be encountered in various public and civil spaces, including community centers, municipal services, hospitals, schools, labor markets, and local NGOs offering psychosocial and legal assistance.

Legally, Türkiye's migration regime is governed by the 2013 Law on Foreigners and International Protection and managed by the Directorate General of Migration Management. The country maintains a geographic limitation to the 1951 Geneva Convention, offering full refugee status only to asylum seekers arriving from Europe. As a result, individuals from Syria, Afghanistan, Iran, and African countries are granted either Temporary Protection (in the case of Syrians) or Conditional Refugee Status. While these statuses provide access to essential services like healthcare and education, many migrants face legal uncertainty, labor market exclusion, and discrimination in everyday life. Challenges also arise from bureaucratic delays in permit processing, limited housing options, and growing social tensions.

One of Türkiye's notable policy areas has been the integration of migrant children into the national education system. By 2023, nearly 800,000 Syrian children had been enrolled in Turkish public schools. Although this marks significant progress, barriers remain, including language acquisition difficulties, classroom overcrowding, and insufficient mental health support for children who have experienced trauma. Migrants seeking access to higher education or vocational training often encounter further restrictions due to residency status or financial hardship, limiting long-term integration prospects.

In recent years, Türkiye has implemented a range of migration and integration programs with the support of the European Union, particularly through the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT). These projects have aimed to strengthen healthcare, education, and social cohesion infrastructure. Nonetheless, the country continues to face the dual pressures of high migration volumes and shifting political discourse, often framing migrants as temporary guests rather than long-term residents.

Beyond international migration, Türkiye also grapples with significant internal displacement. The devastating earthquakes in February 2023 forcibly displaced millions within the country, particularly from provinces such as Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, and Adıyaman. Entire families were uprooted from their homes and relocated to other regions, including major cities like Ankara, Mersin, and Istanbul. These internally displaced persons now face many of the same challenges as refugees: lack of stable housing, disrupted education and employment, and ongoing trauma. Despite remaining within their national borders, they must navigate a profound loss of community, identity, and opportunity – making their experience a critical dimension of Türkiye's broader migration narrative.

In addition to being a destination for migrants and refugees, Türkiye also functions as a strategic transit point. For some, acquiring Turkish citizenship – through long-term residence or investment – is not an end in itself but a means to facilitate mobility toward Europe or North America. Others remain in Türkiye temporarily while preparing for onward movement via legal resettlement programs or irregular routes. This reflects broader imbalances in the international protection system, where national asylum regimes differ significantly in the level of rights and long-term prospects they offer. In this context, Türkiye's role becomes that of a geographical and legal bridge, shaped as much by external migration policies as by its own domestic framework.

Türkiye's migration reality, therefore, cannot be understood solely through the lens of border crossings or asylum statistics. It encompasses a range of human experiences – voluntary and forced, internal and external – that challenge conventional definitions and demand a more inclusive and sustainable policy framework. Whether responding to conflict, economic hardship, or natural disasters, the country must continue to evolve its understanding of migration to address the needs of all displaced populations living within its borders.

2.2. Migration in Poland: Between Solidarity and Selectivity

Over the past decade, Poland has undergone a rapid transformation from a relatively homogenous society into a country navigating the complexities of large-scale migration. Once considered a transit country, Poland is now a key destination – particularly following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, which triggered the largest refugee movement in Europe since World War II. As of 2024, Poland hosts more than 1.5 million Ukrainian refugees, alongside smaller but growing migrant communities from Belarus, Georgia, Vietnam, India, and the Middle East.

The presence of migrant communities is most visible in urban areas such as Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław, and Gdańsk, where they live in a mix of temporary shelters, rented housing, and accommodations with host families. In the immediate aftermath of the Ukrainian crisis, reception centers were established along the eastern border and in major cities, supported by an unprecedented mobilization of civil society and local governments. These spaces served as the first point of contact for many refugees, offering emergency aid, legal advice, language courses, and emotional support. Over time, the role of community centers, NGOs, and educational institutions became more central in supporting long-term integration. Organizations such as the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights and the Polish Migration Forum have played a critical role in offering legal aid and raising awareness of migrants' rights.

Poland's legal response to the Ukrainian refugee crisis has been shaped by the European Union's Temporary Protection Directive, which Poland implemented in early 2022. This framework allows Ukrainian citizens to reside legally, access healthcare and education, and enter the labor market. As a result, hundreds of thousands have been able to find employment and enroll their children in schools. While widely welcomed for its effectiveness and humanitarian scope, this response has also highlighted a stark disparity in treatment of

different migrant groups. Non-European migrants and asylum seekers continue to face bureaucratic obstacles, lengthy application processes, and limited access to essential services. Migrants arriving from the Belarusian border, for instance, have frequently been subject to violent pushbacks and detentions. During the 2021 border crisis, the Polish government built a steel wall along the Belarus border and adopted a highly securitized approach, raising serious concerns about the violation of international human rights norms.

Socially, the reception of migrants in Poland has been shaped by a mix of solidarity and selective empathy. Ukrainian refugees have generally been met with widespread public support and institutional goodwill. In contrast, migrants from Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia often encounter discrimination, xenophobia, and exclusion from the broader social safety net. Public discourse and media portrayals often reinforce this hierarchy, framing some migrants as victims of war and others as potential threats. This division has exacerbated existing racial and religious biases and shaped both policy priorities and societal attitudes.

In the education sector, Poland has made efforts to integrate migrant children into public schools, with over 200,000 Ukrainian children enrolled as of 2023. However, structural challenges persist: school systems are overstretched, language support is limited, and teachers often lack training in intercultural pedagogy. These issues are even more pronounced for non-Ukrainian children, who may not benefit from the same institutional focus or community solidarity. While some universities have introduced scholarships and preparatory programs for displaced students – particularly Ukrainians – access remains uneven across regions and institutions.

At the policy level, Poland has balanced EU support mechanisms with a highly centralized, security-oriented migration governance model. While EU funding has helped bolster infrastructure for refugee reception and integration, gaps remain in long-term housing strategies, employment protections, and mental health services. Migrants from non-European countries often face legal ambiguity and prolonged limbo due to slow or restrictive asylum procedures, with Poland maintaining one of the highest rejection rates in the EU.

At the local level, the capacity of municipalities to provide inclusive services is often constrained. Many local governments lack institutional infrastructure or sufficient funding, making them reliant on partnerships with civil society organizations to deliver social services. Simultaneously, migrants – especially those without full legal status – are disproportionately concentrated in precarious, low-wage jobs in agriculture, construction, logistics, and domestic

care. This economic marginalization, combined with limited protections, deepens their vulnerability and hinders meaningful integration.

Poland's experience illustrates the challenges of managing migration through a lens of emergency rather than sustainability. While the response to the Ukrainian crisis has demonstrated the country's capacity for generosity and rapid mobilization, the lack of a comprehensive and inclusive migration strategy risks entrenching a two-tier system – one that privileges certain nationalities while marginalizing others. As migration becomes a long-term reality rather than a temporary shock, Poland must address the disparities in its approach to different groups and invest in inclusive, rights-based policies that ensure dignity and opportunity for all newcomers.

2.3. Migration in Italy: Between Humanitarian Commitment and Structural Constraints

Italy has long been at the heart of migration flows across the Mediterranean, functioning as a primary point of entry into Europe for individuals fleeing war, poverty, political persecution, and environmental crises. Due to its geographic location, Italy continues to receive thousands of migrants each year, many arriving by sea from North Africa, the Middle East, and Sub-Saharan Africa. While the country has demonstrated significant humanitarian capacity in responding to these flows, it continues to struggle with the legal, administrative, and social challenges that come with sustaining long-term integration and ensuring equitable treatment across diverse migrant populations.

In the early stages of arrival, migrants and asylum seekers are typically processed in coastal reception points such as Lampedusa, Sicily, or Calabria. From there, they may be relocated to other parts of the country within a tiered reception system composed of hotspots for identification and initial screening, Extraordinary Reception Centres (CAS) for temporary accommodation, and the SAI system (Reception and Integration System) designed for longer-term support. However, this system is uneven in quality and coverage, with conditions in some centers failing to meet basic humanitarian standards. In addition to formal infrastructure, many migrants – particularly seasonal workers – live in informal settlements and overcrowded rural barracks, especially in southern agricultural regions such as Puglia or Calabria.

Italy's migration legislation is based on the 1998 Consolidated Immigration Act, complemented by European Union regulations and more recent national reforms. The legal framework distinguishes between asylum seekers, humanitarian protection holders, regular labor migrants, and undocumented individuals. While asylum procedures are in place, they are often slow and inconsistent, with a significant backlog of cases and frequent appeals. The 2018 Salvini Security Law introduced notable restrictions on humanitarian protection and narrowed the rights of individuals residing within the CAS system. Although some of its provisions have since been reversed, the broader legal and political environment remains volatile and marked by competing narratives of security and solidarity.

According to ISTAT, during the 2023–2024 period, Italy experienced a significant increase in migratory activity, with approximately 760,000 new immigrants arriving in the country – a 31% increase compared to previous years. At the same time, around 270,000 Italians emigrated, reflecting broader demographic and labor market trends. Among the migrant population, the largest groups included Ukrainians, Albanians, Bangladeshis, Moroccans, Romanians, Egyptians, Pakistanis, Argentinians, and Tunisians.

Socially, the presence of migrant communities is most visible in urban centers such as Rome, Milan, Naples, and Bologna, where they participate in various sectors of the economy, particularly construction, care work, agriculture, and logistics. Specific neighborhoods like Esquilino in Rome and Via Padova in Milan have become hubs of migrant life, where everyday encounters reflect Italy's evolving multicultural reality. However, many continue to face marginalization, limited access to stable housing, and discrimination in employment and public services. Informal and precarious labor – particularly in agriculture, maintenance, and construction – remains a major challenge, alongside the exploitation of undocumented workers and limited enforcement of labor protections.

Civil society organizations – such as Caritas, ARCI, and various church-affiliated institutions – play a crucial role in filling gaps left by the state, offering legal aid, food distribution, language classes, and psychosocial support. Education for migrant children is guaranteed by Italian law, and over 10% of the student population now has a migrant background. While most children are integrated into public schools, challenges remain around language support, intercultural competence among educators, and unequal academic outcomes. Access to higher education is expanding, but financial barriers, complex recognition procedures for prior qualifications, and bureaucratic obstacles persist – particularly for refugees and asylum seekers.

At the political level, migration remains a highly contentious issue, regularly dominating electoral campaigns and shaping coalition dynamics. Policies often oscillate between humanitarian commitment and securitization, with the Mediterranean sometimes framed as both a humanitarian corridor and a national border under threat. Meanwhile, local and regional governments often adopt more pragmatic approaches, tailoring services and programs to address the specific needs of migrant populations within their jurisdiction. Progressive regions – often led by left-leaning administrations – tend to implement more inclusive integration strategies, while others adopt more restrictive stances, leading to stark regional disparities in service provision.

Italy's migration trajectory reveals the contradictions of a country caught between its role as a frontline European state and the limitations of a fragmented and reactive policy environment. While many Italian citizens, institutions, and civil society actors continue to offer vital support to migrants and refugees, a sustainable and rights-based national strategy remains elusive. As migration into and within Italy becomes more structural than exceptional, long-term policy solutions will require greater coherence, equitable burden-sharing at the European level, and a political climate that moves beyond crisis-driven narratives toward inclusive and pragmatic governance.

Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1. Methodology: Inclusion of Migrants through Theatre. Türkiye – Bahadır Ülgen.

Introduction

Theatre has long been a medium for storytelling, identity exploration, and challenging social norms. In the context of migration, it provides an inclusive space where diverse voices can be expressed and acknowledged. Unlike lecture-based approaches, theatre-based methods emphasize participation, collaboration, and lived experience. They allow participants to step into different perspectives, reflect on complex realities, and imagine alternative futures.

Erasmus+ KA2 projects aim to generate intellectual outputs by equipping participants with practical competences and innovative methods rather than offering individual certification. Within this framework, theatre is a compelling approach to foster inclusion, intercultural awareness, and empathy across different age and cultural groups. The methodology is grounded in non-formal education principles, emphasizing experiential learning, participatory processes, and reflective practice. These ensure that outcomes are not only acquired but also directly linked to the project's intellectual output: a theatre script on migrant inclusion.

Our methodology was implemented in a three-day programme with 16 participants from three countries. The design followed a clear three-phase process:

- Connection and trust-building – establishing group cohesion through playful, interactive activities.
- Collective exploration and co-creation – identifying and analysing issues related to migration and co-developing creative responses.
- Embodied empathy and integration – using theatre-based techniques to experience perspectives of groups at risk of exclusion and explore inclusion in practice.

Theoretical grounding

Non-formal learning in KA2 projects builds on learner-centred, experiential, and collaborative approaches. Following the principles of the European Training Strategy (ETS), the methodology promotes:

- Safe and inclusive learning environments, enabling meaningful engagement of participants from diverse backgrounds and ensuring ethical facilitation, informed consent, and safe space.
- Competence-based progression, covering personal, social, intercultural, and civic competences.
- Reflective practice, supporting the internalization of insights and their transformation into tangible outcomes.

These practices are grounded in well-established non-formal learning theories:

- Experiential learning (Kolb): a cycle of experience → reflection → conceptualization → application;
- Active methods: role-play, simulation, improvisation, image theatre/tableaux, and collaborative group work;
- Guided reflection: structured debriefing, peer feedback, and facilitator-led analysis;
- Intercultural dialogue: shared storytelling, problem-solving in mixed groups, and collective meaning-making.

Learning in such projects is competence-oriented, aligned with the EU's Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (e.g., multilingual competence, cultural awareness and expression, citizenship, personal and social learning, digital skills, and collaboration). Recognition of outcomes – through individual reflection, collective production, dissemination, and informal Erasmus+ tools – strengthens these competences.

Quality standards outlined by ETS further stress the importance of: (a) understanding and facilitating individual and group learning processes; (b) creating and sustaining inclusive environments; and (c) linking learning practice to broader social participation. The Programme's Inclusion & Diversity guidance highlights activities that address linguistic, cultural, social, or economic barriers and foster meaningful participation. Theatre, as a multimodal and embodied medium, is particularly well-suited to these aims: it enables

expression beyond language, nurtures collaboration, and provides a shared, inclusive space for dialogue and co-creation.

Methodological approach

The methodology follows a structured, progressive learning cycle: building trust and contact → collective inquiry and co-creation → embodied exploration and integration. Each phase combined playful exercises with structured reflection, balancing structured activities with flexible, participant-driven exploration to respond effectively to group dynamics.

- **Phase 1 – Connection and trust-building.** Activities in this phase helped participants get to know each other in a relaxed, supportive atmosphere. Exercises were aimed at fostering intercultural collaboration and teamwork, promoting group cohesion and lowering linguistic barriers. Tasks encouraged creativity, humour, and dialogue, while highlighting the cultural assets of each participant. Pedagogically, this phase operationalized ETS principles of safe learning environments, group dynamics, and ethical facilitation.
- **Phase 2 – Collective exploration and co-creation.** Participants explored migration-related challenges by reflecting on causes, consequences, and personal experiences. Group discussions and collaborative problem-solving fostered critical thinking, active listening, and co-creation. Some solutions took the form of community initiatives or short, improvised performances. These activities helped transform abstract social issues into concrete, shared understanding and link learning to broader societal contexts.
- **Phase 3 – Embodied empathy and integration.** The final phase focused on empathy and inclusion through theatre-based techniques. Participants embodied characters from groups at risk of exclusion, using movement, gesture, and expression to interact and find their “match.” Non-verbal communication exercises reinforced the ability to interpret and express complex social situations, ensuring equal participation regardless of linguistic background. Through these embodied exercises, abstract concepts of inclusion and diversity became tangible, linking personal experiences to collective learning, and preparing the ground for sustainable outcomes. Participants translated personal stories into civic imagination – a pathway from the rehearsal room to community life.

Principles underpinning the methodology

This methodology is grounded in the principles of non-formal education: learning through experience, active participation, intercultural exchange, and structured reflection. It draws on elements of participatory theatre, where participants are both creators and interpreters, and where the aim is to challenge assumptions, promote empathy, and inspire action.

By moving through the three phases – building trust, exploring migration issues collectively, and engaging in embodied empathy – participants experienced a holistic process that addressed both cognitive and emotional dimensions of inclusion. This structure is adaptable to different group sizes, age ranges, and cultural contexts, and can be replicated by organisations seeking to foster migrant inclusion through creative and participatory methods

Pedagogical rationale

The pedagogical rationale merges non-formal learning principles with participatory and embodied practices. Rooted in constructivist and experiential learning traditions, it engages participants cognitively, emotionally, and physically. Role-play, theatre exercises, and group dialogue foster empathy, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving. Learners act as co-creators of knowledge in a safe, inclusive environment, with agency and flexibility embedded throughout the process.

Learning outcomes and recognition

The methodology generated both individual and collective learning outcomes, which can be observed on cognitive, emotional, and social levels. Participants developed a deeper understanding of migration not only as a political and legal phenomenon, but also as a lived human experience. They strengthened empathy, critical thinking, and intercultural awareness, while also acquiring practical communication and collaboration skills. The process encouraged participants to reflect on their own positionalities and privileges, fostering a sense of shared responsibility for inclusion.

Recognition of these outcomes was ensured through structured reflection sessions and group debriefings, which allowed participants to articulate and validate their learning. Beyond the immediate context, the outcomes align with European frameworks for key competences, particularly in citizenship, cultural awareness, and social learning. This alignment facilitates

the transferability of the methodology to schools, NGOs, and municipalities, where recognition of learning – formal or non-formal – remains crucial for long-term impact.

Transferability and sustainability

One of the strengths of the methodology lies in its adaptability to different educational and community contexts. The structure – trust building, collective exploration, and embodied empathy – can be replicated with diverse age groups and cultural backgrounds. Its reliance on non-formal education principles ensures flexibility, making it suitable for schools, youth centers, NGOs, and municipalities working on migration and inclusion.

Sustainability is embedded in the approach through its participatory and low-resource nature. Rather than depending on external experts or expensive materials, the methodology empowers facilitators and participants to co-create the process. This not only reduces costs but also strengthens ownership and long-term engagement. Furthermore, its alignment with European policy priorities on social inclusion and intercultural dialogue increases the potential for institutional support, ensuring that the methodology can be integrated into ongoing educational and civic initiatives.

Conclusion

This methodology seeks to bridge the gap between abstract discussions on migration and the lived realities of people. By combining narrative-based learning, experiential exercises, and participatory reflection, it creates a space where empathy is not only understood but also practiced. The process strengthens critical thinking, challenges stereotypes, and equips participants with the tools to engage constructively with diversity in their communities.

Rather than a fixed model, the methodology is an adaptable framework that can be reinterpreted in different cultural and institutional contexts. Its strength lies in balancing structure with flexibility, enabling facilitators to respond to the dynamics of each group. Situated within Erasmus+ priorities and aligned with the ETS quality framework, it systematically moves from contact to collective inquiry and embodied, shareable practice. This structured progression not only fosters empathy and inclusion but also translates into competence development and visible social outcomes, transforming personal stories into civic imagination – a pathway from the rehearsal room to community life.

In this way, the methodology contributes to broader educational and civic goals, including social cohesion, democratic participation, and the recognition of shared humanity. It does not end with the completion of a workshop; it plants seeds for ongoing dialogue, cooperation, and solidarity. Its sustainability depends on being owned by those who implement it and lived by those who experience it.

3.2. Theatre tools in working with people with refugee and migrant experience; based on the “Theatre – connecting people” project. Poland – Barbara Prądyńska

What to keep in mind when working theatrically with people with refugee or migrant experience?

People with refugee or migrant experience who find themselves in a host country – whether within the majority community or in dedicated support centres or camps – face a variety of challenges:

- Prejudices and stereotypes toward newcomers / “others” / foreigners.
- Language barriers – the need to learn a new language.
- Different culture, mentality, and customs.
- Often also a different climate and living conditions.
- The need to start life over, including economically.

Theatre is rarely the first thing that comes to mind for someone in such a situation. Yet it can become a space for breathing, empowerment, and encounter – with others and with oneself. Creative expression can have a therapeutic effect: it helps to understand and process difficult experiences, and to build inner space for a new life. For children, teenagers, and young adults, theatre often feels like a natural form of expression and play. For older people, it may offer a valuable opportunity for connection and integration. It is usually hardest for working adults with families to find time for theatre.

Creative work and process

In community theatre, we recommend the method of “writing on stage” – meaning the collective creation of a script during the rehearsal process, through improvisations and

theme-based exercises. If there's not enough time or tools for this, the performance can still be built based on the personalities and experiences of the participants – their strengths and weaknesses, skills, and sensitivity. This gives the project a unique character, enhances the agency of the individuals involved, and replaces unattainable professionalism (especially with non-actors) with authenticity and sincerity.

Language

If the group is international and multilingual, it's worth using physical and visual theatre tools (e.g., shadow theatre), which can serve as a bridge for communication – both among participants and between actors and the audience. Physical expression and imagery (both realistic and abstract) speak to the audience on a deeper level than verbal language, which is often culturally and intellectually limited. Using music, songs, and fragments of poetry in participants' native languages also proves effective due to their strong emotional resonance.

Cultural differences

Theatre can both highlight and bridge differences between people. Each individual becomes part of a shared “machine” – made up of unique individuals who shape the group's dynamic. Therefore, it's worth acknowledging and embracing the individuality of each participant, especially in culturally diverse groups. The meeting of cultures is not just a challenge – it's also a great value. Getting to know “the other” often reduces fear of the unknown.

At the same time, one must be aware of potential cultural or religious differences that may make full participation in theatre activities more difficult (e.g., gender-related issues such as close physical contact in improvisations or dance). These aspects should be discussed with participants at the beginning or during the process.

Working principles and atmosphere

A safe, supportive environment is fundamental in theatre work – especially with non-professionals. Since theatre is a process whose result may be a performance, key values include: responsibility, discipline, mutual respect – but also joy, freedom, and play.

At the beginning, it's worth collectively establishing some basic rules, such as:

- Informing facilitators about health issues.
- Freedom to decide whether to participate in each exercise.
- The right to withdraw (without disrupting the group's work).
- Focus and turning off phones.
- No judging of self or others.

The workshop space should feel different from everyday life and provide a sense of agency and shared responsibility for both process and outcome.

Imagination and abstract thinking

Not all participants have the same level of imagination or ability for abstract thinking – it depends, among other things, on previous contact with literature, film, and art. For those less familiar with this form of expression, it's easier to work with tangible elements – such as a puppet, an object, or light – and to tell stories in the third person. Shadow theatre or object theatre can serve as excellent starting points for further work.

A few principles to keep in mind

- Each participant is an independent, valuable part of the shared “machine.”
- Build trust, create space for creativity, and make room for everyone.
- Care for both the physical and emotional workspace.
- Balance between play and work.
- Responsibility – for oneself, others, the process, and the final result.
- Strive for quality – theatre is exposure, and the performance should be as good as possible.
- The work should be contextual, local, and based on each participant's resources.
- Principle: “Turn weaknesses into strengths” – what's difficult can become creative material.
- Goal and effect: empowerment, support, and recognition of each participant's individuality.
- Listen to participants and give them space to express themselves.
- Address meaningful topics – either directly (as a manifesto) or symbolically (through shadows, movement, dance, images).

Example exercises for getting to know each other and starting group work

Tip: It's a good idea to build your session plans based on your own experience, available online resources, or books. A classic and valuable reference is "*Games for Actors and Non-Actors*" by Augusto Boal, creator of the Theatre of the Oppressed – a theatre of change and liberation, both personal and social.

Let's remember: Theatre is delicate matter. The pace of work should always be adjusted to the group's dynamic and the individual capacities of participants.

In the "Theatre – connecting people" project, we worked with adults (aged 19–40) with migrant and refugee experience, as well as with facilitators and professionals working in this area through various organisations and institutions.

Below are examples of exercises from one of the workshop sessions:

- **Icebreaker and integration exercises:**
 - **Name with a gesture:** Participants stand in a circle. One by one, each person performs a gesture that represents them (e.g., a jump, a bow, fixing their hair, etc.), then says their name. After everyone has gone once, in the next round each person again performs their gesture and says their name, and the whole group simultaneously repeats their gesture and name. This allows each participant to present not only their name but also a piece of their personality.
 - **Name with changing places:** This exercise helps with name memorization: the person starting points to someone in the circle, says their name, and walks toward them. Before the starter takes their place, the called person points to someone else and says their name, vacating their own spot and moving toward the new person. This continues until everyone has had a turn. It's effective for memorizing names.
 - **Impulse:** Still standing in a circle. The first person sends an "impulse" or "arrow" (a loud clap directed to the person on their left), making eye contact. The impulse is passed along the circle until it returns to the first person. In the second round, the impulse can be sent either left or right, even back to the person who just sent it. In the third round, it can be sent to anyone in the circle. Eventually, all the variations are combined.

- o **Samurai:** Explain the rules first: The starting person raises their joined hands (like a sword) above their head and shouts “Ha!” – the sound should come from the diaphragm. Then the two people next to them aim their joined hands toward their belly (without touching) and shout “Hi!” The starter then points with their joined hands to someone in the circle and shouts “Ho!” That person becomes the new starter. Usually, concentration improves when players are “eliminated” after making a mistake.
- o **Who likes what, like me...:** Participants sit in a circle on chairs. One person is left without a chair and stands in the middle. They say, “Who, like me, likes...” (e.g., coffee, dogs, swimming in a lake, hip hop) or “Who, like me, doesn’t like...”. Everyone for whom the statement is true stands and quickly changes seats – but not back to their original seat. The person left without a seat offers a new statement. Great for getting to know each other and practicing language/communication.
- o **I like / I don’t like:** This exercise adds movement and physicality. Each person secretly chooses another person. At the facilitator’s signal, everyone tries to get as close as possible to the back of the person they chose. That person, however, is also following someone. The result is chaos and laughter. In the next round, the goal is to stay as far as possible from the chosen person. In the final variation, each participant chooses **two** people – trying to be as close as possible to one and as far away from the other.
- o **Yes / No:** Participants move freely around the room. As they pass others, they look them in the eyes and express either a “yes” or a “no” toward the person they encounter. This can be shown through eye contact, energy, or a subtle gesture (turning away, smiling, stepping closer, etc.). It’s important to clarify that the “yes” or “no” isn’t personal – it’s just an acting exercise.
- **Group work in space – physical theatre** (*Based on the practice of Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium / Odin Teatret*)
 - o **Position in space:** Participants sit in a row at one end of the room, facing an open space. One by one, starting from the right, they stand up and take a place in the room. They don’t have to face the others. Once in place, they stand with slightly bent knees, pelvis dropped (like in martial arts for a stable stance), and arms hanging by their sides. When the first person is settled, the next person takes their position, and so on.

- o **Panoramic view:** Once everyone is in position, introduce the “panoramic view.” Participants look at two fingers held together in front of their face and slowly separate them until both fingers are visible in their peripheral vision without moving their eyes. This expanded focus, rather than fixating on one point, is key in physical theatre.
- o **Jumps:** The facilitator performs a jump with a turn (doesn't have to be a full spin) and lands stably. The rest of the group jumps simultaneously. Next, everyone takes a turn being the jump leader. The leader should use an energy surge to “pull” the group along.
- o **Filling the space:** Participants move around the space, trying to **evenly fill** it – no empty zones, no collisions. They can vary speed and direction.
- o **Frames (Tableaux):** Suddenly, the leader freezes in a “frame” (like a still image – body alert, not relaxed). Everyone freezes at the same time. When the leader resumes movement, so does the group. Over time, anyone can become the leader, stopping and starting the group. The length of the freeze is up to the leader.
- o **Floor work:** As in previous exercises, the leader begins. While moving through the space, the leader suddenly moves to the floor – crouching, sitting, lying down. The rest of the group follows and also chooses a floor position. Leadership can shift to different participants.
- o **Combinations:** The final variation involves combining three possible actions: jump, frame, or floor. At first, only the leader guides the group; later, anyone can introduce an element. The group must listen and observe closely to stay synchronized.
- o **Choreography:** Ideal for groups of no more than 9. If the group is larger, divide into 2-3 subgroups. One person – the leader – stands at the front. The others stand closely behind, facing the same direction. Music begins. The leader moves – not necessarily dancing, it can be a walk, pause, crouch, head turn, etc. The group copies the movement in real time, aiming for maximum synchronicity. If the group changes direction, the person now at the front becomes the new leader. Changing the music throughout adds variety and shifts the rhythm and character of the group’s choreography.

3.3. Methodological notes. Italy – Veronica Pinto

Introduction

Much of the methodological notes I am about to write owe a great deal to my theatrical and philosophical studies, but above all to the practical–theoretical work with various masters of Odin Teatret and with the participants in the workshops. Some exercises are reproduced in their entirety, others adapted. Every activity I discuss is therefore the result of traditions and of encounters with groups of people who entrusted me with their time and who always gave back new directions. Where I may think I have invented something, I know in fact that it belongs to a tradition unknown to me, which I now wish to honor.

For about fifteen years I have been working with groups of people who are not professional actors: of all ages, both children and adults. Migrants, immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, new Italians, and women in processes of leaving situations of violence. Some workshops are experiential and then theatrical, others purely theatrical, still others use theatrical methodologies for human rights education. The workshop is my home: a space separate from production, where temporary human communities can emerge – solidary, strong, and creative. In these spaces, one can experience and cultivate that sense of communion with life which manifests itself when the imaginative and the real worlds become one.

For this to happen, I know it is necessary to take care, from the very beginning, of the two coordinates that truly guide the work – often underestimated in social and creative contexts: space and time. A spacious, clean, enclosed place, not accessible to anyone at random, well-ventilated and uncluttered. An attention and care for time: individual and collective, respectful of each person’s inner rhythm. In the soul everything moves without steps and heads everywhere and nowhere.

In my work with groups I have recognized three recurring phases, which vary in duration and in the way they manifest. I name them after animals:

- Monkey time – beginning: observation, imitation, individual expression still limited, but construction of a safe base as a group.
- Tiger time – individuality grows, differences and selective connections emerge; the group fragments but is enriched by the personal contribution of each.

- Cow time – return to unity, with greater awareness and integration of individual experiences.

These phases guide me in understanding what happens in the workshop space. I always consider them circular: each returns in individual work and manifests in the group in pure or mixed forms.

For this reason, the methodology is not a rigid sequence, but an elastic structure, capable of adapting to the real conditions of people, space, and time.

At every beginning, my wish is to keep eyes and heart wide open, whatever the circumstances. The microcosm of a workshop is always a distillation of life: human beings and what unfolds during creative work are surprisingly rich, in both light and shadow.

Having outlined the framework and principles that guide my work, I now move on to a more concrete description. The following example arises within the Theatre Connecting People project and shows sequences I often use. The first phase marks the entry into the creative dimension.

First phase – Monkey time

The initial phase is designed to set the group in motion on a physical, perceptual, and relational level. The progression moves from simple to complex, without separating exercises from the first forms of scenic play: from the very beginning one enters a creative dimension, even if still basic. The aim is to move gradually from an individual experience to a choral dynamic, stimulating awareness of space, time, energy, and relationship.

- **Welcome and breathing:** A brief opening moment helps release tension and create openness. Sharing the emotional state (“we are all nervous because we are among strangers”) allows the group to feel acknowledged: sometimes it generates laughter, other times a complicit silence. When working with non-professionals, this moment is particularly important: people do not know what to expect, they are tense, and each reacts in unique ways. Observing and welcoming every reaction allows for the creation of a foundation of trust that will accompany the entire process.

This is followed by work on the breath: standing in a circle, a few cycles of Sama Vritti Pranayama (box breathing: inhale 4, hold 4, exhale 4, hold 4) to encourage centering and a shared rhythm.

- **Sensory exploration**

The world exists in forms, colors, atmospheres, tactile qualities: an ostentation of things that represent themselves [...] things speak; they show in their form the state they are in. They announce themselves, they bear witness to their own presence: "Look, we are here." – J. Hillman

Participants walk through the space, registering colors, shapes, sounds, and atmospheres. The images gathered ground perception in the shared space and become creative seeds that may resurface later.

- **The journey of the name**

"Call Me by My True Names" – Thich Nhat Hanh

Walking freely, each person pronounces their own name aloud while moving toward an object of attention: a point in space or a concrete object. Once reached, they continue toward a new point. Each time, the name takes on a different quality, following the categories explored earlier: color, shape, sound, atmosphere. Example: "Shila" as red, then round, then sharp, then tense. At first, people "steal with their eyes" and imitate others, reproducing or doing the opposite. This dynamic enriches each person's expressive variety and taps into the collective memory: while acting, participants listen to others and memorize names and nuances, even if unconsciously.

Later, the goal is no longer an object but a partner: moving toward a companion while pronouncing one's name according to the quality that arises spontaneously, then moving toward another, changing quality each time. The choice should be made without overthinking.

- **Centering the group**

The next step introduces group centering. I ask participants to continue the previous exercise but, at a signal (a handclap), everyone gathers in the center of the space. This is repeated until walking and regrouping become harmonious – a first attunement.

- **The flock and variations**

Do you know that sudden rustle of wings, that exclamation, that song, that confusion...
– Virginia Woolf

Gathered in the center, participants move as a flock swept by the wind, following instructions given through movement (right, left, forward, backward, slowly, quickly, etc.). The goal is to perceive the common rhythm, until the leadership can be passed from one to another. Once the group is able to move well together, I introduce external cues to vary the energy. I do not use emotions but natural elements – fire, water, air, earth, and variations – to be understood not literally but as inner stimuli. One can work on restrained energy, as in “contained fire,” which generates minimal but dense movements, or on the exaggeration of a stereotyped action, making bodily conditionings visible and therefore surmountable. The work can continue by modulating energies: contrasting fire and water or earth and air, or segmenting the body, for example legs as “fire” and arms as “air.”

A variation I often propose is “The Lost Baby”: at a certain point one person stops and loses the flock, and the rest of the group must notice and bring them back in. This interruption introduces rhythm breaks and, on the relational level, stimulates the sense of mutual care. The “lost child” element is powerful even if the group does not notice it. One must be ready to welcome and direct into the creative work the emotional reactions it may trigger: whether hilarious, frustrating, or painful.

These exercises, beyond preparing the scene, are crucial in the first stage of group creation – the collective Monkey Time – where imitation and the desire for belonging prevail.

- **Sharing and scenic applications**

The sequence ends with an open sharing: whoever wishes may speak aloud, others may write in their notebook. At this moment, possible scenic applications also emerge:

the name can become collective material, the encounters between names can generate unexpected stories, walking and gazes construct space and guide the audience's attention, while *The Flock* remains an inexhaustible reservoir of entrances, dispersals, and regroupings.

Second phase – Tiger time

The second part of the journey opens with the introduction of a theme to work on. From there, a creative exploration takes shape, alternating individual moments, pair work, and small groups.

The selective connections that arise between people in this phase concern not only what is activated in the shared creative space, but also each person's individual energies. Observed with care and depth, they are revealing: like a detector, they signal what in the process of creating the work is functioning, or not.

A consolidated practice

In work with migrants, refugees, and other marginalized groups, a good practice has established itself: to let participants bring stories, images, and materials from which the scene comes to life.

It is an approach I have made my own and that, over time, has become almost natural to the point that it is difficult to imagine a workshop where it does not happen. Yet any good practice remains such only if it is continuously tested. To follow it uncritically can become risky. Who can assure us, in fact, that it does not become a form of exploitation of the participants' lived experiences by those leading the creative process? How much of what they bring is reshaped and bent to personal visions, perhaps even to the detriment of the very causes we wish to support? Who authorizes us to enter the lives of others to draw material from them? Where does the limit lie? And how can we treat these materials without burdening the audience or triggering violent, discouraging emotions? These and other questions accompany the work in every phase with the whole group, so that the "good practice" may remain truly "good" – or at least strive to be. From these questions, pathways open: practices and exercises that help explore the creative territory together.

- **Exercise 1 – The song of the object**

You are the music while the music lasts. – T. S. Eliot

Participants arrive bringing with them an object and a short text or a song. I invite them to arrange themselves in a semicircle, silently accompanying each person's presentation. In turn, each participant steps forward with the object in hand: they move toward the proscenium (or, in a rehearsal room, toward a designated point), singing their song and showing the object to the group and to me. Everyone presents themselves in this way, one after another. When the round is over, I call them back on stage: together we try to recognize what has emerged in each person – an action, an energy, a trace of "character." This is followed by an exploration of encounters: two or more characters interact through simple actions, such as giving their object, receiving another's, showing it, singing to or against each other. A character is not a role: it is the scenic appearance of deep, rooted qualities of the person. They may emerge consciously or not, respond to significant needs of the moment, or manifest parts of identity that at that time demand space. The choice not to verbalize the story of the object or the song is the result of long reflection. It allows me to preserve delicacy toward personal experiences, avoiding reducing them to an explicit narrative, and to orient the work in a direction I consider necessary when dealing with autobiographical stories and intimate experiences.

"Canta e cunta" – R. Balistreri

If it is true that throughout all phases of sharing we must ask ourselves questions, then one of the most urgent concerns the stories themselves. Is it really possible to tell one's own story? What does "one's own story" even mean? Who is that "I" who speaks? Could there be another – and yet another? How many versions live within us? In the words of philosopher Daniel Dennett, "the self is a kind of convenient fiction, like a center of narrative gravity." Not a single truth, but a plot that can be rewritten endlessly. In the workshop we look for multiple versions: those that open unexpected passages, bring forth silenced voices, and allow us to look at ourselves from different perspectives.

- **Exercise 2 – The multiple versions**

I believe there are two abysses in man: the face and the memory. – Jorge Luis Borges

I spread many images on the floor, drawn from art history or artistic photography. I invite participants to choose four, guided by what inspires them – by something that seems to speak of them or to them. For each image, I ask them to find a meaningful action, linked to a memory or an act that represents it. Then I invite them to connect the four actions into a narrative that makes sense for them, a story built from fragments. The work then continues individually: we return to their creations, develop some actions, transform them, allowing them to become something else, to come alive on stage.

Collective Sharing

At the end of the second exercise, an extended time for sharing opens. The contents that emerged, often held in silence during *The Song of the Object*, are shared and deepened. The stories told through action, in their multiple versions, are placed at the center and reworked together verbally. All these contents are brought to the center and, through the development of the chosen theme – in this case home and journey – micro-structures begin to appear, and characters and scenes come to life.

Third phase – Cow time

The third phase of the work corresponds to the collective Cow Time: it is the moment when the workshop gains substance. Together we revisit what we have done and put it back into play through increasingly complex exercises, with the goal of reaching the definition of the final performance.

- **Exercise 1 – Vocal landscapes**

Me han traído una caracola. Dentro le canta un mar de mapa. – Federico García Lorca

After a brief vocal warm-up in which I give imaginative prompts to move the voice through space with vowels or syllables (“I push the sound underground, I launch it above my head, from the chest to the wall...” with variations of movement: sharp/soft, etc.), I have participants arrange themselves in a circle. Each places their hands on the body of the companions to the right and left, on different points that should resonate, as practiced in the previous phase. In this way, a weave of voices is created, which

progressively moves and harmonizes. From the outside I conduct, marking the rhythm with claps of the hands or feet. When the ensemble has harmonized, I introduce a variation: the atmosphere changes: it is early morning, it is night, we are in the countryside, it is a celebration, a funeral, a night of passion, and the collective sound transforms accordingly. Finally, within this soundscape, I resume the work using fragments of the songs or texts brought by the participants, inserting them into the common flow. In this way, a harmonious musical base is born, attuned to an atmosphere, from which a first narrative voice emerges.

- **Exercise 2 – The table of dreams**

Our dreams recover what the world forgets. – James Hillman

Before the workshop begins, I ask participants to bring with them the idea of an important dream from their life. During the exercise, I guide them through a short meditation of no more than ten minutes, with some simple questions: Where were you? Who were you with? What is the most important action that happens in this dream? I then invite them to imagine themselves in a very beautiful place, freely chosen: the sea, a forest, a corner of the city they love. In that imaginary place a large table appears, which I have set up in the space before the exercise begins. As this is a concluding exercise, participants are invited to bring to the table their songs, texts, stories, and objects, everything that can help shape a scene lasting about three minutes. I give them twenty minutes to create their piece. At this point I ask them to bring the dream to the table: to perform the dream's main action or to speak with whoever was present in it. When they arrive at the table, participants improvise starting from the most significant action (for example: I was jumping off a cliff because I was being chased; I was paddling a canoe down a river), or from a spoken scene (the roof was leaking, my father was watching television while I looked for buckets). One by one, each brings their idea of a scene. We then continue working, looking for connections and possible interactions among the different scenes.

Sharing and opening to the audience

The third phase ends with a time of sharing and deepening of the materials that emerged, always in relation to the chosen theme. This is followed by a phase in which

I work individually on the dramaturgical weaving of the material, which I then present and rework with the group in the rehearsal days. Before concluding, I propose an activity aimed at investigating expectations about the audience. I ask each participant to write at least five things they expect from the spectators during the performance, demanding maximum precision. The notes, collected anonymously and placed at the center, are then read and discussed collectively: some want the audience to laugh and feel moved, others to deeply understand, still others to feel provoked. Up to this point, the process had been directed mainly inward: toward the individual and collective dimension, toward the creation of the group and the work. Yet one fundamental actor was missing: the audience. We end with some open questions, which will accompany the rehearsals: How do the materials change in the light of this new gaze directed toward the audience? In what way do the different expectations influence you, and how do you think they will influence the scene?

*“Quick, said the bird, find them, find them,
Round the corner, through the first gate
Into our first world, shall we follow
The deception of the thrush?”*

– T. S. Eliot

Chapter 4. Performance Scenarios: *The Jaguar and the Fish*

As part of the project, the final performance developed into two distinct versions. Both were based on the same artistic process and thematic core, but they responded to different contexts, audiences, and performance conditions. The first version was staged in Leszno, Poland, and the second in Rome, Italy.

The title of the performance is: **The Jaguar and the Fish**.

Version I – Leszno, Poland

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B5fk3NBld8>

Performance format

This performance is a multilingual ensemble piece built from a sequence of visual and physical scenes. It explores home, family memory, migration, loss, mourning, and political violence. The dramaturgy is based on images, objects, movement, sound, and short spoken texts in different languages.

The performance should be staged without breaks between scenes. Transitions are created through light, sound, movement, and the changing arrangement of bodies and objects on stage.

Performance roles

The following stage functions are needed:

- **The guide** – opens and closes the performance, speaking directly to the audience; introduces the journey (jaguar, fish, fisherman) and returns at the end to stop the action and close the performance
- **The fisherman** – appears with a radio in the night scene; later performs a physical rescue action (pulling people from the sea), speaks a text in Spanish, puts on the jaguar mask, and in the final scene exchanges it for the family book
- **The keeper of the family book** – carries a small notebook with family history (names and dates of births, marriage, departures); in Scene 3 stands at the front and reads it in Portuguese while the Travelers stand behind her and illuminate her with flashlights
- **Travellers:**
 - **The carrier of memory** – carries a medallion; in Scene 5 tells a short personal story about his mother who gave him this medallion; later places the medallion on the table
 - **The seeker of home** – carries keys; in Scene 5 steps forward, makes the keys sound, and whispers short phrases about searching for home; later places the keys on the table
 - **The body** – a performer dressed in white; in Scene 5 is dragged or pulled across the stage on a long red fabric (the red fabric represents blood); remains passive
 - **The mourner** – in Scene 5 pulls/drag the body (a performer dressed in white) across the stage on the red fabric; then remains close and sings or accompanies a Turkish lament while the roses are being placed
 - **The rose bearer** – places red roses one by one after the body scene during the lament; slow and deliberate action
- **The border guard** – first appears during the body scene, pointing (as if aiming a weapon) at those dragging the body; later appears with the Politician and prevents the Cleaner from approaching him; represents control and threat
- **The cleaner** – enters with a broom and sweeps away the roses; speaks in Turkish and English, reacting with frustration (“Look at this mess...”); later remains alone looking at her hands
- **The politician** – enters with authority; speaks a Shakespeare text in English; does not perform physical action but dominates the scene
- **The politician’s daughter** – speaks calmly to the Cleaner (“Do not be emotional”), stands behind her, takes a rose, and breaks it in a controlled gesture

Depending on the size of the group, several functions may be combined.

Stage space

The stage should remain mostly open. The main elements are introduced gradually during the performance.

Basic layout

- **Upstage / back:** projection screen
- **Stage left:** position for the Fisherman and the radio in the opening night scene
- **Centre stage:** open playing space
- **The wooden table** enters only in Scene 7

Props

The following props are required:

- one radio
- one small family notebook
- one jaguar mask
- one bunch of keys
- one medallion
- approximately 20 red roses
- one broom
- one large wooden table
- one long red fabric
- flashlights for the ensemble
- personal objects carried by the travelers, for example:

- o photographs
- o scarves
- o shells
- o cloth
- o handkerchiefs
- o small bags

Costumes

Costumes should remain simple and readable.

- **Travelers:** everyday clothing
- **The fisherman:** practical work clothing
- **The guide:** visually distinct from the rest of the ensemble
- **The politician and the politician's daughter:** formal clothing
- **The cleaner:** practical clothing of someone cleaning after an event
- **The body:** dressed entirely or predominantly in white

The jaguar mask is the main symbolic costume element.

Projection

In Leszno, we used projections throughout the performance.

Projection sequence

- **Scene 1:** Sun
- **Scene 2:** Moon
- **Scene 3:** fragments or image of the family book
- **Scene 4:** fish shadows

- **Scene 5:** jaguar image
- **Scene 6:** red projection
- **Scene 7:** Sun
- Polish translations of selected spoken texts

Sound and music

Scene 1

No music.

Scene 2

- Pink Floyd – Is There Anybody Out There?
 - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aiu5Fr7-hFQ&list=RDAiu5Fr7-hFQ&start_radio=1
- radio static
- low ambient atmosphere:
 - o https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWuvvx7pg_k&list=RDLWuvvx7pg_k&start_radio=1

Scene 3

No music.

Scene 4

- sea disaster / Cutro shipwreck atmosphere
- Travellers flock:
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIVXBxAuDGw&list=RDp30mIRwIjD0&index=3>

Scene 5

- low atmospheric sound or oud if available

- Turkish lament:
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWv2VWVclOE>

Scene 6

- bee sound
- recorded montage of politicians speaking about migration

Scene 7

- no music during the first exchange
- then ritual / circular movement music:
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ys5xfdn5rlo&list=PLWnQZrbdGvjz9xGEozwEDi6vdr5kWRltu&index=13>

Scene 8

No music.

Scene-by-scene description

Scene 1 – Opening

Stage image

The stage is empty. Warm general light fills the space. A projection of the **sun** appears on the screen.

Performers on stage

- The guide

Action

The guide enters from stage right, crosses to centre stage, faces the audience, and speaks directly. The tone is clear, practical, and welcoming, with a slight irony. This speech opens the journey and prepares the audience for the figures of the jaguar, the fish, and the fisherman.



Spoken text

Language: English (translation on the sun)

Oh, look at you. You have come all the way here, to the shore.

Each of you carries something – a bag, weariness, or only your own silence.

And I? I am here at the threshold.

I watch. I wait.

Today you will meet the jaguar and the fish.

One lives in the jungle. The other in the deep water.

Both know what it means to travel.

And you – you are here to listen.

Listen carefully.

*Because when the fisherman casts his net, he does not catch only fish –
he catches voices.*

End of scene

The Guide exits. The warm light fades. The projection changes from sun to moon.

Scene 2 – Night on the shore / home words

Stage image

The stage becomes dark. The projection shows the moon. The fisherman is visible on stage left with a radio.

Performers on stage

- The fisherman
- Travelers

Sound

The scene begins with Pink Floyd's **Is There Anybody Out There?**

The line should be clearly audible. After it repeats, the fisherman changes the station and radio static is heard. A low ambient sound then continues under the scene.

Action

The fisherman turns the radio knob and listens.



From upstage, the travelers enter one by one. Each performer stops in a visible place, says one **concrete word connected to home**, turns on a flashlight, and remains on stage.

The words should be ordinary and specific. They should refer to things, people, sounds, and sensations of home, not abstract concepts.



Composition of the scene

At first, the words are spoken one by one. Gradually, they begin to overlap. The stage fills with many small flashlight beams and many languages at once. The result should feel like a chorus of domestic memory.

End of scene

The travelers remain on stage. Their lights stay on. The general light begins to isolate the next figure.

Scene 3 – The family book

Meaning of the object

The family notebook is a personal family record. It contains names and dates of family members and major family events: births, marriage, departures, journeys, and the continuity of family life across time. It should be treated as a precious archive.

Stage image

A single spotlight isolates the keeper of the family book. The projection shows fragments or an image of the notebook.

Behind the Keeper, the Travelers remain on stage in a semicircle or loose line. They hold their flashlights and direct the beams toward the Keeper and the notebook. They do not speak. They watch and witness the reading.

Performers on stage

- The keeper of the family book
- Travelers behind her with flashlights

Sound

No music.

Action

The keeper of the family book steps forward with the notebook in both hands. She presents it carefully, as an inherited object containing the history of a family.

The travelers stand behind her, still and attentive. Their flashlight beams frame her presence. Their position makes the scene feel collective: one person reads, but many people witness.

The keeper opens the notebook and reads the entries. Her movement should be very small and precise:

- opening the book
- turning pages
- holding it close to her body
- pausing between entries



Spoken text

Language: Portuguese (translation on the moon)

Morgado was born on October 9, 1937

Lutinha was born on February 20, 1940

Nini was born on June 22, 1942

Chicho and Chicho were born on March 29, 1945

Tujinha was born on October 18, 1947

Our wedding took place on July 9, 1938

Lurdes was born on February 3, 1951

Julio was born on July 13, 1953

Morgado moved from Boavista to Praia on June 8, 1964

He left for abroad on July 27, 1964

Ines was born on December 22, 1955

End of scene

After the last line, the keeper lowers the notebook. The travelers remain behind her for a short pause. Then the light cuts and the stage shifts into the next scene.

Scene 4 – The fisherman / The sea / The jaguar / The flock

Purpose of the scene

This scene shows the reality of sea rescue and then transitions into a collective movement (flock), which gradually breaks into individual human stories.

Stage at the beginning of the scene

- **Light:** cold blue, low intensity
- **Projection:** dark / empty (no fish yet)
- **Sound:** sea / storm / cutro shipwreck atmosphere

Performers on stage at the beginning

- The fisherman only

Part 1 – The rescue (Fisherman alone)

The fisherman is alone on stage.

He performs a physical rescue sequence:

- pulling something heavy from the ground
- reaching forward
- dragging bodies toward himself
- losing balance and continuing
- repeating the action several times

The movement must clearly read as rescuing people from the sea

Transition

As the rescue sequence ends:

- the sea sound begins to fade
- the fisherman slows down
- he remains on stage, catching breath

He starts speaking in Spanish (translation on the moon):

The river is within us, the sea is all about us;

The sea is the land's edge also, the granite,

*Into which it reaches, the beaches where it tosses
Its hints of earlier and other creation:
The starfish, the horseshoe crab, the whale's backbone;
The pools where it offers to our curiosity
The more delicate algae and the sea anemone.
It tosses up our losses, the torn seine,
The shattered lobsterpot, the broken oar
And the gear of foreign dead men. The sea has many voices,
Many gods and many voices.*



Part 2 – Transformation (Jaguar)

The fisherman takes the **jaguar mask**.

He puts it on slowly and deliberately.

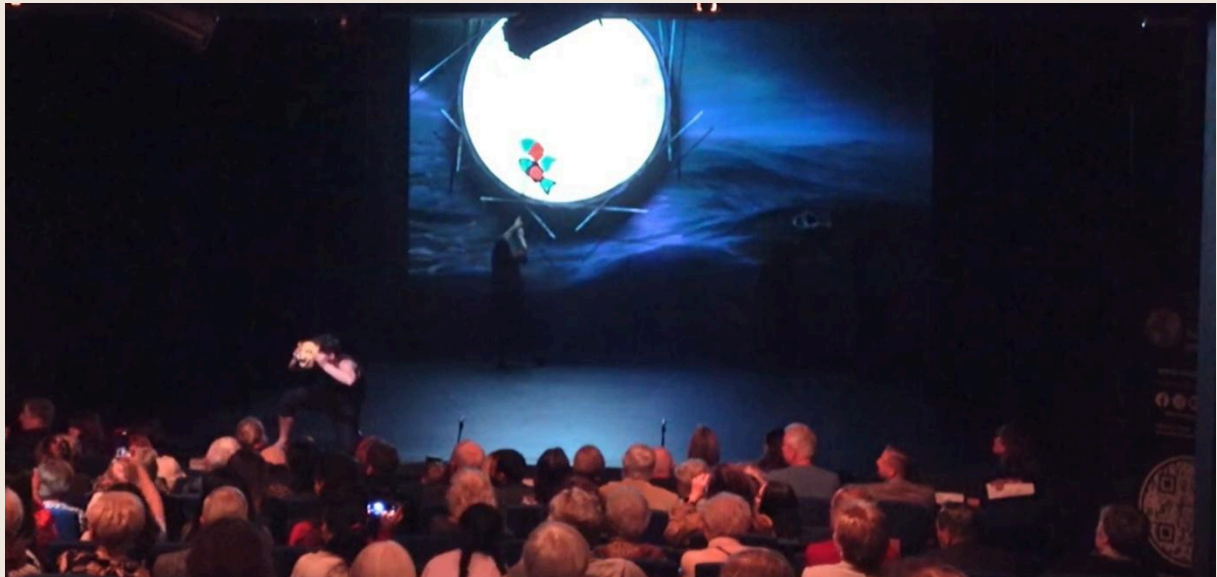
This marks the transformation:

- from fisherman → to symbolic figure (witness / instinct / animal force)



Transition to movement

- **Sound changes** → start movement music:
 - o <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MIVXBxAuDGw>
- **Projection changes** → fish / fish shadows appear



Part 3 – Entrance of the travelers (Flock)

Travelers enter from **the audience space (through the audience)**. They walk onto the stage and immediately form a group.

Flock movement

The Travelers move as one body (school of fish):

- same direction
- same rhythm
- close distance between bodies
- soft, continuous movement

The fisherman (with the mask) remains present on stage, observing.



Breaking the flock

Gradually, the movement changes:

- one person stops
- another changes direction
- another speeds up
- another freezes

The group loses unity.

The flock becomes a group of individuals

Revealing objects

Each traveler now shows a personal object.

Examples:

- keys
- medallion
- photograph
- cloth
- shell
- scarf

No one speaks in this moment.



End of the scene

- movement slows down
- music fades
- performers remain in their individual states

Scene 5 – The travelers’ stories

This scene is composed of short solos and images.

Scene 5A – The carrier of memory

Performer on stage

- The Carrier of memory

Prop

- medallion

Action

The performer steps forward holding the medallion. The delivery should be direct and personal.



Spoken text (example):

Language: Polish and Spanish (translation on the moon)

My mother gave me this medallion.

Inside it, there is a coffee seed.

A Colombian coffee seed.

She gave it to me before I left.

So I would carry home with me.

Madre,

no me olvides.

I still touch it when I am afraid.

I still carry it when I travel.

I still carry her with me.

Scene 5B – The seeker of home

Stage image

A more intimate light isolates the performer with keys.

Performer on stage

- The seeker of home

Prop

- keys

Action

- The action should suggest searching for a lost room, a lost address, a lost door, or a place of return. At the same time, a recorded voice plays from speakers:

Recorded text in Polish (Mahmud Darwish poem):

There is no longer a place for us on earth.

We have crowded into the last passage

and we remove parts of our bodies to squeeze through.

The earth presses the juice out of us.

If only we were wheat that dies in order to live.

If only we were our mother,

to know what motherly mercy is.

If only we were images of rocks

whose reflection will carry our dream.

We saw the faces of those

whom the last of us will kill

in the final defense of the soul.

We wept in sorrow for their children.

We saw the faces of those

who will throw our children

from the windows of this last space.

Our stars will hang mirrors.

Where shall we go from this last border?

Where will the birds fly from the last sky?

Where will the plants sleep

when the final breath has fallen still?

We will write our names in scarlet-tinted vapor.

We will cut off the hand of the song

so that our bodies may complete it.

Here we shall die.

Here, in the last passage.

Here, exactly here, from our blood

an olive tree will grow.



Scene 5C – The body on the red fabric

Stage image

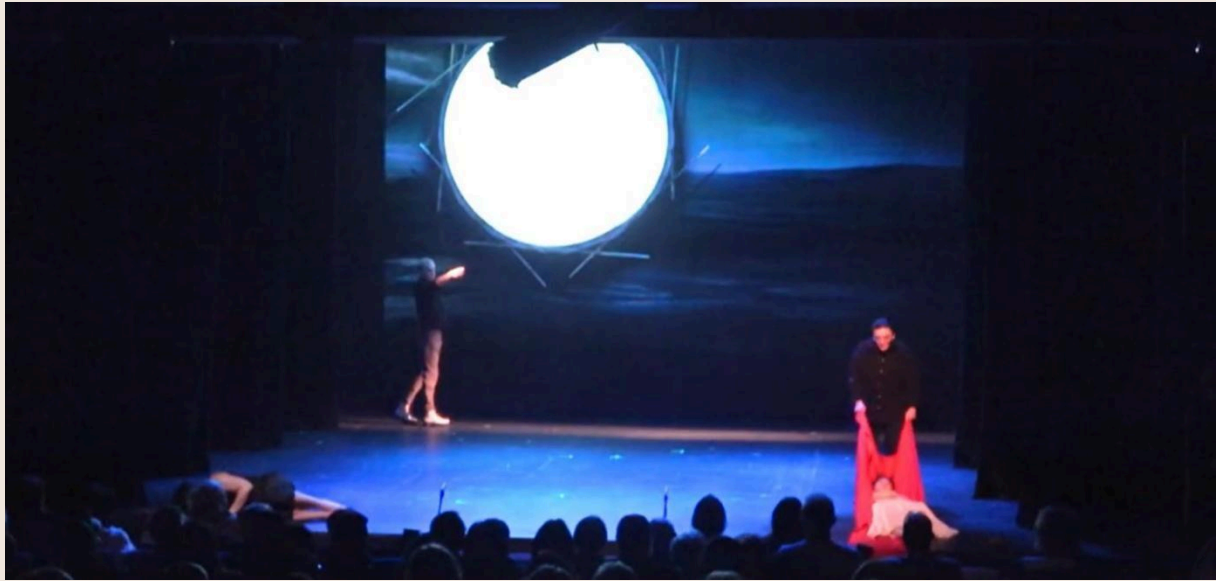
A performer dressed in white is dragged on a long red fabric. The white clothing marks the body. The red fabric represents blood.

Performers on stage

- The body
- A performer dragging the body
- The boarder guardian

Action

The body is pulled across the stage on the red fabric. The performer's white clothing creates the image of the corpse. The body is positioned on or with the red fabric so that the sense of blood remains visible. At the same time, the border guard is present in the background, pointing (as if aiming a weapon) toward the person dragging the body, creating a sense of threat and control



Scene 5D – The mourner and the roses

Performers on stage

- The mourner (the same performer who dragged the body)
- The rose bearer

Props

- red roses

Sound

Turkish lament, sung live or played from the recording:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mWv2VWVclOE>

Action

During the lament, the rose bearer places roses one by one on the stage. The action should be slow and deliberate.



End of scene

The lament ends. Silence follows. The roses remain.

Scene 6 – Cleaning the roses

Stage image

Harsh white light. Roses and other remaining traces are still visible on stage. The atmosphere shifts from mourning to control and erasure.

Performers on stage

- The cleaner
- The politician
- The politician's daughter
- The border guard

Sound

Bee sound continues under the scene. A montage of politicians speaking about migration is heard.

Action – Part 1

The cleaner enters with a broom and starts sweeping away the roses. She behaves like someone forced to clean up after public mourning. She is irritated, repetitive, tired, and increasingly agitated.



Spoken text

Language: Turkish and English (translation on the sun)

Oh God... again?

Again this?

Look at this mess!

Roses everywhere!

Filthy!

Nobody cares!

Disgusting!

Action – Part 2

The Politician and his daughter enter with the border guard. Their authority should dominate the stage without exaggerated movement.

Spoken text

Language: Polish

For mine own good,

all causes shall give way;

*I am in blood
stepp'd in so far that,
should I wade no more,
returning were as tedious as go o'er.*



Action – Part 3

The cleaner reacts emotionally to the politician and tries to approach him. The border guard prevents contact.

The politician's daughter steps forward and addresses the cleaner. She stands behind the cleaner, guides her arms, takes one rose, and breaks the blossom from the stem. The gesture must be cold, visible, and controlled.

Spoken text

Language: Polish

Not like this, madam.

*With these matters you must not allow yourself
to be carried away by emotion.*



End of scene

The politician, daughter, and guard leave. The cleaner remains alone, looking at her hands. The projection becomes red. The bee sound continues briefly, then fades.



Scene 7 – The table / The objects / The final ritual

Performers on stage

- The fisherman
- The keeper of the family book
- Travelers

Action – Part 1

The fisherman and the keeper of the family book meet at centre stage.

They exchange objects:

- the fisherman gives the jaguar mask
- the keeper gives the family book

This exchange marks the passing of memory, witness, and story.

Spoken texts: Portuguese and Spanish (translation on the moon)

→ *I cannot forget the sea... it remains inside me.*

→ *The sea remembers the names that the wind erases.*

→ *Sometimes silence speaks louder than the body.*

→ *And if it looks at me... will I know how to look at myself in it?*

→ *The sea does not answer – it only returns those who listen to its song.*



Action – Part 2

The Travelers bring in the wooden table and place it at centre stage. All the personal objects are on the table.

Action – Part 3

The Travelers move around the table in a circular pattern. This movement should feel like a shared ritual.

Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ys5xfgn5rlo>



Scene 8 – Epilogue

Stage image

All performers remain visible around the table. The music stops. The guide enters.

Performer on stage

- The guide
- ensemble remains still

Action

The Guide steps forward, looks at the table, the people, and the objects, then addresses the audience.



Spoken text

Language: English (translation on the moon)

The shore is empty now.

The jaguar has slipped back into the jungle.

The fish has returned to the deep.

They have gone.

And yet their footsteps still remain,

quietly,

inside us.

End of performance

Blackout.

Version II – Rome, Italy

Performance format

This version keeps the same core themes as the Leszno version – home, family memory, migration, mourning, and political violence – but shifts the form and tone to fit a different context.

The Rome version is more direct, less poetic, and more strongly connected to current local realities. It does not use projections. Instead, the performance relies more heavily on bodies, objects, spoken language, and the direct presence of performers in the space.

This version also includes the participation of a young girl and ends with a public panel discussion after the performance.

Main conceptual changes

- no projections
- use of current and local references
- less poetic language, more direct speech
- participation of a 10-year-old girl
- public panel discussion after the performance

The performance should be staged without breaks between scenes. Transitions are created through light, sound, movement, and the rearrangement of performers and objects in space.

Performance roles

The following stage functions are needed:

- **The guide** – opens and closes the performance, speaking directly to the audience in Italian; practical, ironic, slightly detached; starts the event and stops it at the end
- **The young girl** – appears at the beginning with the bowl of water and paper boat and returns in the tribute scene singing
- **The fisherman** – appears after the book scene; performs a physical rescue action and then delivers a direct monologue in Italian based on the Cutro shipwreck

- **The keeper of the family book** – carries and reads the small book of names, dates, departures, and deaths; reads in Portuguese while the others illuminate her with flashlights
- **Travellers:**
 - **The carrier of memory** – tells the story of a medallion given by his mother, in English and Spanish
 - **The seeker of home** – carries keys and searches for home; appears with oud music
 - **The body** – a performer dressed in white, carried or dragged on red fabric
 - **The mourner** – brings or drags the body and later returns alone singing a Turkish lament
 - **The rose bearer** – enters during the lament and places roses on the board
- **The border guard** – appears during the body scene and later with the political figures; creates threat, surveillance, and blocked access
- **The cleaner** – enters with a broom and clears the roses while speaking in Turkish and English
- **The politician** – enters with authority and speaks a Shakespeare quotation
- **The politician's daughter** – cold, calm, elegant; instructs the cleaner and breaks the rose in a controlled gesture

Stage space

The stage should remain mostly open. Since there are no projections, the space must be shaped through bodies, objects, sound, and light.

Basic layout

- **Audience area / first row:** performers are already seated there at the beginning
- **Centre stage:** open playing space
- **Centre stage, opening image:** glass bowl filled with water
- **Upstage / back:** entrance area for ensemble scenes

- **Downstage / front:** final placement of the board during the tribute scene

Props

The following props are required:

- one glass bowl filled with water
- one paper boat
- one small family notebook
- one jaguar mask
- one rope or fishing rope
- one bunch of keys
- one medallion
- red roses
- one broom
- one board / wooden panel used to receive roses and objects
- one long red fabric
- flashlights for the ensemble
- personal objects carried by the travellers, for example:
 - photographs
 - scarves
 - shells
 - cloth
 - handkerchiefs
 - small bags

Costumes

Costumes should remain simple and readable.

- **Travellers:** everyday clothing
- **The fisherman:** practical work clothing
- **The guide:** visually distinct from the rest of the ensemble
- **The politician and the politician's daughter:** formal clothing
- **The cleaner:** practical clothing of someone cleaning after an event
- **The body:** dressed entirely or predominantly in white
- **The young girl:** simple clothing

The jaguar mask is the main symbolic costume element.

Sound and music

Opening

- sound of phone calls

Scene 2

- no fixed song required; the atmosphere should remain warm and human

Scene 3

- no music

Scene 4

- storm / cutro shipwreck atmosphere
- voices calling for help

Scene 5

- strong rhythmic music for the jaguar dance

Scene 6

- oud music for the seeker of home
- Turkish lament during the mourning sequence

Scene 7

- no additional music required unless needed for rhythm of transition

Scene 8

- no music

Scene-by-scene description

Scene 1 – Opening

Stage image

When the audience enters, all performers are already seated in the first row. The stage is empty. At centre stage there is a glass bowl filled with water.

Sound

The performance begins with the sound of phone calls.

Performers on stage

- The young girl
- The guide
- the rest of the performers begin in the audience area / first row

Action

Lights slowly rise.

The Young Girl enters first. She approaches the bowl of water, plays with it, and places a paper boat inside.



Then the Guide enters. She addresses the audience directly in Italian. Her tone is practical, ironic, slightly detached, and energetic. She does not explain the story in a serious or literary way; instead, she starts the event, pushes it forward, and invites everyone to begin.

After speaking, she calls the performers onto the stage.

Spoken text

Language: Italian

Are you here? Great! Let's get started!... Wait a minute! This is the part where I'm supposed to explain the plot, the story, the themes... but I don't feel like it! I hope you're ready, because now that you're here, you're going to have to watch! The only advice I can give you is to keep your eyes wide open. Are the actors and you ready? Then let's begin!

End of scene

The performers move from the first row toward the stage and the action continues directly.

Scene 2 – Home

Stage image

Through a light mist upstage, figures begin to appear. The stage should feel warm, open, and alive.

Performers on stage

- Travellers

Action

The travellers enter one by one or in small intervals, each with an individual movement quality. Their bodies should carry energy, hope, and memory.

Each performer speaks in their own language – Polish, Spanish, Italian, Turkish, English, or other languages present in the group – recalling home, family, daily life, and loved ones.

The scene should feel spontaneous, but still harmonised as a group image.



Composition of the scene

This is not a scene of fear or fragmentation. It should carry warmth, human presence, and the possibility of belonging.

End of scene

The atmosphere gradually narrows toward the next figure.

Scene 3 – The little book of travel

Meaning of the object

The small book is a family record and also a record of departures, absences, unnamed dead, and migration history. In this version, the family archive is interrupted by references to more recent public tragedies.

Stage image

The keeper of the family book steps forward. The others remain present and illuminate her with flashlights.

Performers on stage

- The keeper of the family book
- Travellers with flashlights

Action

The keeper of the family book faces the audience and reads from the small book in Portuguese. Her tone is neutral, factual, and almost administrative. The names and dates should sound like entries in an archive.

Her movement is minimal. She handles the book carefully, with very small gestures.

The ensemble stands around or behind her, illuminating her and the book with torches.



Spoken text

Language: Portuguese and Italian references inside the list

Morgado was born on October 9, 1937

Lutinha was born on February 20, 1940

May 23, 2021: Musa Balde, Turin.

Nini was born on June 22, 1942

Chicho and Chicho were born on March 29, 1945

Tujinha was born on October 18, 1947.

Our wedding took place on July 9, 1938

September 2015: Alan Kurdi, Bodrum.

2023, Cutro, NN

Lurdes was born on February 3, 1951

Julio was born on July 13, 1953

Morgado moved from Boavista to Praia on June 8, 1964.

He left for abroad on July 27, 1964

Ines was born on December 22, 1955

2026, Niscemi, Mediterranean NN

NN

NN

NN

NN

End of scene

When the reading ends, those associated with the unnamed dead (“NN”) exit. The stage empties toward the next scene.

Scene 4 – The Fisherman

Stage image

The atmosphere becomes dark, unstable, and marine.

Sound

- storm
- cutro shipwreck atmosphere
- voices calling for help

Performers on stage

- The fisherman

Action

The fisherman enters and prepares his rope for fishing.

Then the voices are heard.

He begins a physical rescue action:

- reaching out
- pulling people from the sea
- dragging them toward the shore
- struggling with the force of the water

After the physical action, he speaks directly in Italian. The tone should be plain, immediate, and grounded in lived experience.



Spoken text

Language: Italian

Ero sulla spiaggia, stavo pescando con la canna. A un certo punto ha sentito delle urla ma era buio, non si vedeva niente. Accendo la luce del telefonino e quello che vedo...non lo dimenticherò mai. Gente che urlava. Corpi sulla spiaggia. Il mare che se li riprendeva

indietro. Cercavo di prendere più persone possibile, di tirarli fuori dall'acqua, di portarli sulla sabbia, sulla terraferma. Ma la risacca era forte, il mare era agitato, e mi scappavano dalle mani. Dopo un po' sono arrivati i soccorritori. Io non abbiamo lanciato l'allarme, cioè... penso che lo sapessero già. Non ho chiamato nessuno. In quel momento pensavo solo a salvare persone. Un macello. Un macello vero. Ce l'avevano quasi fatta. Se il mare fosse stato buono, se noi fossimo stati con una barca, li avremmo salvati tutti. Questa cosa mi fa rabbia. Tanta rabbia. Al mare non ci vado più, non per un bel po'. È tre giorni che non dormo. Non mangio. Non è facile dimenticare. Ho ancora davanti agli occhi quelle immagini. E un po'...un po' mi ha spezzato.

End of scene

The monologue ends in a state of exhaustion and rupture. The next scene emerges from this tension.

Scene 5 – Jaguar dance

Stage image

The jaguar mask appears. Strong rhythmic music begins.

Performers on stage

- The guide
- Travellers

Action

The guide performs the jaguar dance.

From the back of the stage, the travellers enter like a flock of fish. At first they move as a collective group. Then, one by one, they step into the light and reveal their individuality through their bodies and the personal objects they carry.



End of scene

The flock dissolves into individual presence, leading into the sequence of travelers' stories.

Scene 6 – The travellers

This scene is composed of a sequence of short actions and testimonies.

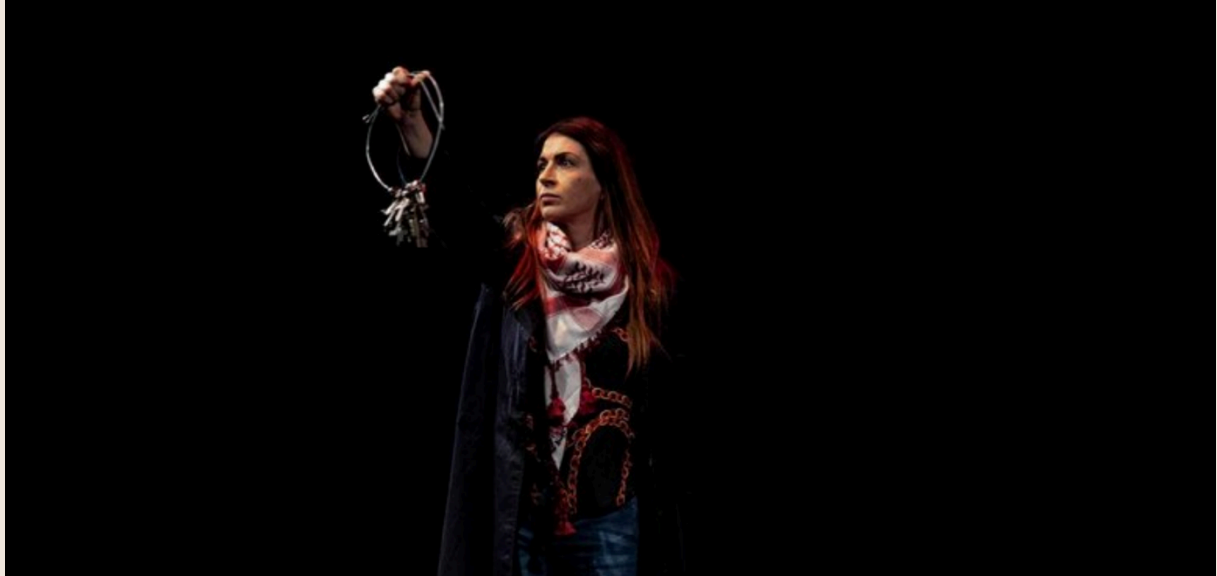
Part 1 – The carrier of memory

The carrier of memory approaches the audience and tells, in English and Spanish, the story of the medallion given by his mother, containing a Colombian coffee seed.



Part 2 – The seeker of home

The seeker of home enters with oud music and Darwish poem, recorded in Italian. She carries keys and searches for home.



Part 3 – The body and the guard

The body, dressed in white, is carried or dragged across the stage on red fabric. The border guard appears and creates an atmosphere of threat and control.



Part 5 – Mourning and roses

The mourner returns alone and sings a Turkish lament. During the lament, the rose bearer enters with roses and places them on the board.



End of scene

The lament ends. The stage remains marked by roses, the board, and the trace of mourning.

Scene 7 – Breaking roses

Stage image

Only the roses on the board remain visible.

Performers on stage

- The cleaner
- The politician
- The politician's daughter
- The border guard

Action – Part 1

The cleaner enters with a broom and sweeps aggressively, muttering in Turkish and English. Her speech becomes a bitter litany.

Spoken text

Language: Turkish and English

Ah Tanrım... again? Again this! Look at this mess! Roses everywhere! Filthy... filthy! Nobody cares! Disgusting! They're everywhere!

Action – Part 2

The politician and the politician's daughter enter, with the border guard behind them.

The Politician speaks rhetorically in English:

*For mine own good,
All causes shall give way; I am in blood
Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more,
Returning were as tedious as go o'er.*

The cleaner lights up when she sees him and tries to shake his hand, but the guard stops her.

Action – Part 3

The politician's daughter approaches calmly and says:

Not like this, madam. With these matters you must not allow yourself to be carried away by emotion.

She positions herself behind the Cleaner, guides her arms, takes a rose, and snaps the blossom from the stem.

The gesture should be simple, cold, and brutal.

The politician, his daughter, and the guard then leave.

The cleaner remains frozen, staring at her hands.



Scene 8 – Tribute

Performers on stage

- The young girl
- The keeper of the family book
- Travellers

Action

The young girl enters singing, accompanied by the keeper of the family book.

Gradually, the others return. They place and hang their personal objects on the board together with the roses.

Then they bring the board to the front edge of the stage.

When the young girl finishes singing, the guide enters.

The guide steps in, stops the actors, and closes the performance in a direct and almost playful way.



Spoken text

Language: Italian

So, did you see that? Did you like it? If you did, give us a round of applause!

End of performance

Blackout.

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