

Muna Mussie began her artistic career as performer in 1998 in Italy, with Teatrino Clandestino and Teatro Valdoca directed by Cesare Ronconi, with which she still collaborates. Since 2001 she has been an active member of the research group Open, a project through which she approached new ways of being on scene, with the performance *opentolikemunamussie* (2004), and recently with the happening *Waudeville* (2010). After 2005 she moved on to authorial works, taking care of their ideation, production and interpretation, creating the performances *Madre-patria* (2006), *Più che piccola, media* (2007), *Con Permesso* (2008), *Ti ho sognato, ma non eri il protagonista* (2009), supported by Xing Bologna. She collaborated, among others, with visual artist and film-maker Luca Mattei and visual artist Flavio Favelli, with whom she co-authored the project *FFMM*, a collection of clothes. Her work has been presented in performance spaces, like Raum Bologna, and art institutions, like Gallerie d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea in Ferrara and MAMbo Bologna. She has been awarded with premio Riccione TTV, premio Pier Vittorio Tondelli/Nuovi Talenti 208, premio Iceberg 2009. Muna Mussie is currently working in Bruxelles at a new project: *Monkey see, Monkey do* with swiss artists and curators Giorgia and Muriel Del Don.

*“Intimacy and exposition. Precarious identity and the subtle ambiguity of everyday life are the base of my artistic research. The space of the action, vision and experience collide in short-circuits of acts and declarations that do not always coincide. Diaphragm eyes training to contemplate, to contain something more, or something less, that emit visions through psychophysical tensions between bodies; staged body, hostage body, body to dedicate our life to, a means to commemorate a past which is constantly evoked and a present which is about to be. The intent is that of keeping in mind something I cannot remember, creating tiny rules every time, to get closer to you.”*

**Monkey see, Monkey do (Chapter II)**

*concept* Muna Mussie

*with* Giorgia Del Don *and* Muriel Del Don

*and video director* Gian Luca Mattei

*production* workspacebrussels, Teatro Valdoca, Xing

*with the support of* Summer Studios / Rosas Parts

*collaboration sound* Massimo Carozzi

*thanks to* Piersandara di Matteo

The first chapter of “Monkey see, Monkey do” was driven by the desire to investigate the experience of a body in front of the mirror playing with the figures of two twin sisters.

The twins circular movement -at the same time encounter and escape from the self- at the end of the piece was confronted with the advent of the object- mirror.

This open/closed entity standing on the back of the stage has the power to keep the public and the performers spatially distant but visually intimate.

The mirror is the element which the second chapter of the work focused on.

In the second chapter of the piece are still the two performers, elastic mediums on stage, to show us a path. Their going towards the mirror and their coming backwards to the audience declares their constant attraction towards the other.

The tension that usually flows between what is visible and what is not, can be here be experienced with a single glance.

This fast and loose dynamic between stage, audience and mirror, attempts with ironic regression to immerse us into the imaginary of a chaotic genesis that remixes fragments of theater, cinema, and the world as it is given.

“And there was light!”



## Monkey see, Monkey do

*concept* Muna Mussie

*with* Giorgia Del Don *and* Muriel Del Don

*and the collaboration of* Gian Luca Mattei

*production* workspacebrussels, Xing

*with the support of* Summer Studio/Rosas Parts, Bains Connective, Teatro Valdoca

*Observing oneself into the mirror is something that one usually does alone.*

*I would like to look into the mirror with a multitude.*

Imagine a stage with a large mirror as a backdrop.

It produces a sort of fusion between the audience and stage spaces. The mirror curls the sight back on itself; watching and being watched becomes the same, the audience's gaze is sent back to where it came from.

This "fusional glance" represents for me a sort of collective ego, a malleable collective unconscious that speculates about itself.

On stage, two *identical* figures — two twin sisters — will become the prototype that ushers the audience through the fantastical and ambiguous encounter of one's own image. These doubles are *one*. They embody the idea of fusion rather than that of duplication. They act in a total symbiotic mimesis, but they also meet the other, and are capable of a sort of mutation-evolution.

A further step in the research will be to develop this stage device into a screen-mirror in which different visions can co-exist: a vision of a hypothetical *real* - confused and merged with itself through the mirroring of one's own image - and a vision of a hypothetical *unreal* drawn from the collective imagination which cinema projection provides us with.

## Monkey see, Monkey do – A few thoughts

In this first phase of the work I wanted to make use of the mirror as a tool to outline the process of a body discovering its own image.

The departure point of the piece was the sound material. This sound material evokes the "body-self" understood as a complex of concrete elements, and the "political-self" understood as a complex of abstract elements.

This work proceeded in oscillation between a "knowledge" supported by language, which names and regulates the realm of the visible (conscious) and a "recognition" which depends on a process of trial and error in order to name and regulate the realm of the invisible (unconscious).

The *error* is the element that allows me to reconsider the question, to evaluate whether the original demand was right or wrong.

I have associated the audio tracks with actions on stage as well as with "stage voids". This places the sounding element of the piece at the nexus of words and images.

It seems to me that words and images share the same high degree of artificiality. They are prone to a form of perverse reciprocal attraction which forces them into relationships resulting in paraphrase, metaphor, or symbolic effects.

After this first phase of work, it appears clear to me that the actual perversion resides in the attraction toward these codes more than in the codes themselves: the desire is only directed *towards* the mirror and does not reside *in* the mirror.

The mirror isn't the object of a morbid desire. It loses its role as a perturbing agent. The disturbing element has left the mirror, it flows freely among us.

The mirror is empty. If God is dead, then is maybe Narcissus reborn?

**Ti ho sognato, ma non eri il protagonista**

*by* Muna Mussie, *in cooperation with* Luca Mattei  
*with* Manoel Morelli, Nina Vitali, Irena Radmanovic *and* Muna Mussie  
*video director* Luca Mattei  
*lights director* Leonardo Monti  
*sound* Massimo Carozzi  
*with the technical support of* LM Cineservice  
*production* Art FALL 09 – Ferrara Galleries of Modern and Contemporary Art, Xing

*Ti ho sognato, ma non eri il protagonista* is a sequel to the work of *1PER1*. A solid and wide wall marks the boundary between audience and stage. On the audience's side of the wall, the action on stage is projected in delay. This marked division and time lag puts the focus on and enhances a power aiming at going beyond, to the deep knowledge that ignores what it knows, and that maybe we have in common with dreams, animals, children. Our daily attempt to recover it, our daily attempt to choke it, are the daily appointment of a forced coexistence. The meeting-clash that derives from it is not overcome and is not exhausted in a gradual loss of the two parts, but rather is fed by a loss which is higher than any desire.



**Primavera 2009**

*by Muna Mussie, in cooperation with Gaetano Liberti  
production support Riccione TTV*

Commonplace, often seen as a point of closure, becomes here an open door, aiming at playing free, following rhythm and metrics, through logical and intuitive associations, with analogies and discordances. *Primavera 2009* wants to give shape and value to simple and everyday language, which primarily holds social conscience.



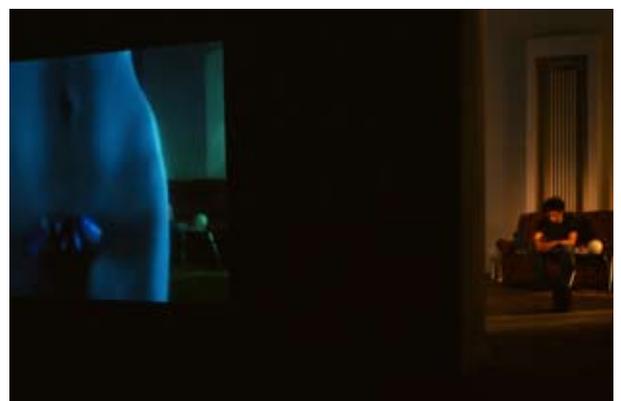
## 1PER1

by Muna Mussie, in cooperation with Luca Mattei  
on stage Michele Bruzzi and Muna Mussie  
video director Luca Mattei  
lights director Leonardo Monti  
with the technical support of LM Cineservice  
production support Xing/Raum, Riccione TTV

*“In a phone call, physical distance and vocal proximity converge in a limbo, an ideal and real space where life rests and accounts for itself, all of it”.*

Two mirror-spaces divided by a wall. One of them is inhabited by a person, three microphones, a sofa, a few objects and a camera projecting it all in the nearby space. The latter is inhabited by the projection, the audience and a second figure, in a simulated dialogue investigating the daily life of the subject. The audience can therefore consciously and simultaneously experience two spaces and times. In *1PER1* the space for action, vision and experience collide in a mise en abime, only revealed by the open-scene backstage. And reported daily life – a scan of the trivial succession of common facts – seems puzzled by the non-correspondence of questions and answers, in the short-circuit of actions and declarations in various senses and times. What is being pursued is the creation of a possible climate, through the photo-quality of an image. A visual space that becomes a stage and encompasses a partition of actions continuously suspended between inside and outside. By representing themselves, the protagonists with names and surnames of *1PER1* represent “whatever”, a contemporary figure described by Agamben.

*“The being that comes: neither individual nor universal, but whatever. Singular, with no identity, defined, but only in the empty space of examples. And, however, not generic nor indifferent: on the contrary, such that it matters anyway, as an object of its own love”.*



Più che piccola, media

by Muna Mussie  
with Sonia Brunelli, Irena Radmanovic, Manoel Morelli and Muna Mussie  
objects on stage Flavio Favelli  
production support Xing/Raum

*“I would like to cover all the roles in a family, in a house marked by actions that protect and reveal something else”.*

A personal insight on the concept of family - yesterday and today – tells about the overlapping of solitary biographies. Placed on different narrative levels and in constant reorganization, they tend to the construction of a single, compact and heterogeneous nucleus: the performative body.



**FFMM****Flavio Favelli / Muna Mussie**

*Clothes vs habitats, because sun is hot even with ozone, water is cold even if it's pure, and wind, as they say, drives you crazy.*

*FFMM* is an installation made up of a closet containing 4 shirts, 2 T-shirts, 2 suits, that is a small sample for a possible collection, produced by Studio Osti.

*FFMM* stems from the need to wear memories “sewed on our body”.

Clothes conceived as works of art but also for a real fashion collection, characterized by evocative embroideries, with numbers and letters: ITAVIA, PA931166 (the number plate of one of the cars escorting Judge Giovanni Falcone on the day of the bomb attack), PGR (Per Grazia Ricevuta, ‘For Grace Received’), but also the birth date of those who purchase the item, names and figures representing specific moments of our private and public story.



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