

**ZÜRCHER
THEATER
SPEKTAKEL**
15.8.—1.9.24

SHU LEA CHEANG
Presents Living Gaya
Dreaming Hagay
With Dondon Hounwn &
Elug Art Corner

An Elug Art Corner theater work, funded by
National Culture and Arts Foundation,
Ministry of Culture, Taiwan



Performances Fri 23 to Sun 25 Aug, 20.30 hrs **Duration** 1:30 hrs, no break **Language**
no language skills required **Note** The performance starts with a ritual at Zürcher Theater
Spektakel site and a walk to Shedhalle for the performance. The audience moves freely,
few seats available **Cooperation** An artistic project, jointly developed and presented
by Zürcher Theater Spektakel and Shedhalle



GAYA outlines a spiritual world—through the merging of body and soul to re-possess «snhiyi», a power of total trust. HAGAY are gender fluid spirit beings who share knowledge of rituals, hunting and weaving. LIVING GAYA DREAMING HAGAY aims to transmit the GAYA living principle and the HAGAY spirit with rituals, tales, movements and ballads.

Shu Lea Cheang (France, USA, Taiwan)

Shu Lea Cheang is an artist and filmmaker who engages in genre bending gender hacking art practices. Celebrated as a net art pioneer with «Brandon» (1998 – 99), the first web art commissioned and collected by Guggenheim Museum, New York, Cheang represented Taiwan with the mixed media installation 3×3×6, at Venice Biennale 2019. Crafting her own genre of Scifi New Queer Cinema, she has made four feature films—«Fresh Kill» (1994), «I.K.U.» (2000), «Fluidø» (2017) and «UKI» (2023). In 2024, she received the LG Guggenheim Art and Technology Award. In early 2025, she will direct the theatre performance «Hagay Dreaming» at Tate Modern and the exhibition KI\$\$ KI\$\$ at Haus der Kunst, Munich. <http://mauvaiscontact.info>

Dondon Hounwn (Taiwan)

Truku artist Dondon Hounwn was born in the Dowmung tribe in Xiulin Township, Hualien County, Taiwan. Dondon Hounwn's work cuts across media, generational and cultural lines, blending ancestral knowledge with avantgarde, cross-gender aesthetics. An inheritor of tribal ballads, instruments and rituals, he works in performance, installation, video and environmental theatre. In 2015, Dondon Hounwn founded Elug Art Corner where the indigenous youths research Truku cultural heritage. Since 2023, Dondon Hounwn holds annual Gaya Cosmos gathering with artists and researchers in exploring Gaya living principles.

Artistic director Dondon Hounwn **Singer** Kumu Basaw **Performers** Dondon Hounwn, Pilaw Uraw, Dremedreman Ljaucljijiljing, Kiyu Pahauran **Installation artist** Temu Basaw **Laser artist** aka chang **Administration** Cheng Hsuan Weng **Coordination** Hsin Yu Hsieh **Design** Jih Ting Jheng **Project director** Shu Lea Cheang **Producer** Ping Yi Chen

Production Elug Art Corner **Coproduction** Zürcher Theater Spektakel, Shedhalle **Support** National Culture and Arts Foundation (Taiwan), Ministry of Culture (Taiwan), Indigenous Peoples Cultural Foundation (Taiwan) **Premiere** Zürcher Theater Spektakel, 2024

Production

Sponsors



Elug Art Corner



Shu Lea Cheang and Dondon Hounwn on «Living Gaya Dreaming Hagay»

Shu Lea Cheang Our collaboration started in 2020. I was invited to curate a series of labs titled LAB KILL LAB at C-LAB (Taiwan Contemporary Culture Lab) in Taipei. Dondon was invited to lead Phytopia lab. He led a forest walk in the Dowmung mountains and created a prototype theatre performance based on the Hagay legend. I was immediately attracted to the Hagay as non-binary spiritual beings. I proposed to Dondon to further collaborate and develop the Gaya Living principle and the Hagay Dreaming stories into a formal theatre work. We invited Ping-Yi, who already was coordinating the lab project, to join as producer for «Hagay Dreaming», termed a techno-fantasia guided theatre of revival. We gave ourselves five years towards completing a large scale theatre work while the troupe actively engaged in presenting the work in various environments and formats, including the summer tour 2024, which starts at the Zürcher Theater Spektakel and Shedhalle and will go on to Denmark (Click Festival and Tofu Collective) and Lausanne (Platforme10). In 2025, we will finally present the full-length theatre version with Dance Reflections at Tate Modern in London.

Dondon Hounwn Gaya is a principle and order of the society, the world, the cosmos held most valuable for Truku people, the indigenous tribe I come from. For us, Gaya is everywhere and everything. It applies either for individual or collective living, from death to birth, in continuation as an endless loop. Ultimately Gaya outlines a spiritual world—through the merging of body and soul to re-possess «snhiyi», a power of total trust. It is our way of understanding the world.

SLC The Gaya Living principle understands all living creatures as connected, non-binary creatures. This worldview is a returning to the beginnings of Taiwan, in our tribal societies there was non-binary gender perception. This changed through history, because of the colonial settlements of the Western world with its Christian missionaries, the Japanese rule, and then the mainland Chinese domination. When we talk about reconnecting with the Gaya principle in an artistic approach, it means reclaiming indigenous cosmos knowledge, in which a non-binary fluid gender is accepted.

DH Weaving can bring different worlds together. It stands for the non-binary spirits and the spirits of Gaya.

Lea Loeb, interview with Shu-Lea Cheang, Dondon Hounwn and Ping-Yi Chen for the online magazine of Zürcher Theater Spektakel 2024



LIVING GAYA DREAMING HAGAY

An intimate performance with a prelude
and 5 acts

Act 0 Ritual (30 mins)

The Powda ritual connects humans and the spirit world, informing the local spirits of our presence, praying for blessing and protection.

Act 1 Guard (10 mins)

The spirit of the guardian is inextricably intertwined with the land. Each tree branch, each stone, reflects the pulse of the land. The guardian prays for ancestors' blessing, the ritual echoes the flow of Gaya eternity in time of interference and oppression.

Act 2 Destruct (15 mins)

Ancient chants recount ancestors' teaching and wisdom, like the streams flowing by the ears. The bodies carry the burden of the past. The colonial intervention brings about destruction onto the land. We reclaim our forest, our land through rituals and dreams.

Act 3 Strength (15 mins)

A boy awoke by a rushing landslide in the night was shocked to see a lit candle and hears rhythmic thumping of his grandmother weaving peacefully. Through weaving, playing Jew's harp, hunting, farming, and rituals, we bring back childhood memories and words of strength.

Act 4 Myth (15 mins)

The myth of the origins traces three deities emerged from the spiritual realm's large stone. One didn't stay; the two remaining ones brought plants and animals. Guided by the fly messenger, they proliferated and created lives of abundance.

Act 5 Return (10 mins)

The stone carries the power of reconciliation with the oppression and the ruin in the past. Guided by the spirit messenger, we follow the path of light back to the land of utmost beauty, praying for the light of the spirits to shine on us, to bless us.

CHANTS, LYRICS

Act 0 Song for Welcoming the Ancestral Spirits

mqaras na wi misu mnan

We are very happy you have come

paah kana o rudan su

All the ancestors

kana mnswayi su wa

All the relatives

o o o o ~

(The sound of calling)

Act 1 MRabay Nomin

MRabay Nomin

MRabay Nomin

Sediq balay wa

Is a real woman

Mlutuc lutuc

Following the footsteps of the ancestors

MRabay Nomin

MRabay Nomin

Act 2 Song of the Ancient Teachings

iy skugan sa babaw hi simu

Your bodies come from Kgogan

iy soyan mamu ka musa masa msiyaq mqyanux

You should enjoy living with the smile of your eyes

ungat ta la lalungun mamu , musa simu mhkangi na

There is nothing to worry about, your life must go on

iy slaxi qu yaqih inlungan ki

Keep your hearts good

laxi qu yaqih inlungan, usa pshzyu qu inlungan mamu

Keep your hearts good and upright

iy sisu lama mosa su ngasal na sqliq,

If you visit someone else's home

laxi qu musa ramat qu yaya ngasal quliq

Do not only think of your own home

iy skugan sa babaw hi simu skugan sa babaw hi simu

Your bodies come from Kgogan

iy laxi qu langan inlungan mu laxi langan inlungan

Keep your hearts diligent

usa mbhoyaw qu maqayanux mamu

Go and live a plentiful life

Act 3 I am a real woman
wa uwa ku wa saqawyaw wa
I am a woman from Tawsay
em tay saw ku wasil pada wa
I am as strong as the rope that catches the muntjac
uwa ku uwa ku wa na rimuy wa
I am a beautiful woman
uka ku wa makelan wa
No one can compare to me
wa uwa ku wa Nabuun wa
I come from an ancient tribe
em balay ku saw ma ima wa
Who else has such capacity as me

Act 5 Spiritual Song: The Sound of Calling
o balay wa miyah ta hini
I have truly arrived here
peuyas rudan cbiyaw
I sing the enduring and ancient melodies
solay wa misolay
You must believe it

Curtain Call Gathering Song

kana ta risaw
All the young men
kana ta uwa
All the young women
supu ta mqaras
We are filled with joy
supu ta mgrig
We dance together
kana ta payi
All the elders (female)
kana ta baki
All the elders (male)
lmgug qaqaq su o
Lift our feet
laqi brax(bnaw) u o
Children, keep it up
ohnay ohnay
Very joyful, very joyful

Felix Stalder on «Living Gaya Dreaming Hagay»

« (...) the power of the play unfolds primarily on visual levels. On the one hand through the strong presence of Hounwn who led a group of performers, staging seven theatrical acts in a very measured, yet highly expressive style of dancing and musical performances that mixed traditional and experimental styles in an entirely fluid way. This blend of indigenous and futuristic was even more evident in the brilliant use of lasers as a visual medium by aka_chang.

In a deceptively simple, almost modernist construction without any of the kitsch and bombast that characterize most laser shows, the beams created something that could be read as a river or the flow of time. At times, it moved forward, at others backward. The actors stepped in and out of this flow similar to the hunter stepping in and out of his dream. At the same time, when in the flow, the beams were visible as points on the bodies of the dancers which created a unique type of motion capture aesthetics. However, in contrast to conventional motion capture, where the points are fixed on the body and the body is placed in a stable, Euclidean space, here the points were relative to the movement of the body through the flows of time and space, de-colonizing a technology that is still steeped in Western notions of individualism and the accordant relationship between the body and its environment.

This is deeply moving and makes it palpable how Western culture is facing a dilemma. On the one hand, digital technology is a key element in the «grat acceleration» that is about to destroy the geophysical foundations of human civilization. On the other hand, it is so a necessary requirement for understanding and dealing with the precarity of contemporary planetary conditions. I fear that Western culture alone cannot resolve this dilemma, for its technological imaginary is too entangled with the destructive forces of hyper-individualism and generalized capitalist competition.

Hagay Dreaming, at the very least, provided a poetic vision of a world created with advanced technologies embedded in another imaginary. And nothing could be more urgent than that.»

Felix Stalder: Hagay Dreaming. A Vision of non-binary, indigenous techno future.



Do not miss

HAGAY CAVE

Temu Basaw

Fri 23.8., 15.00–17.00 hrs, Sat 24. and Sun 25.8., 14.00–17.00 hrs,
Landiwiese, Admission free

The cave installation titled «The Reappearing of Ever-Changing Dwelling» is an intertwined structure with its wood planks intersecting each other, inviting the public members to step inside. Guests can donate old jumpers, echoing a 50s and 60s practice where Taiwanese indigenous communities repurposed gifted jumpers into traditional garments. The young performers share the weaving skills with traditional weaving tools while recounting tales and legends, chanting ballads and interacting with the visitors, crossing cultural and gender boundaries.

DONDON HOUNWN & ELUG ART CENTER

Hagay Exhibition

Fri 23. and Sat 24.8., 22.00 hrs, Wed 28. to Fri 30.8., 17.00 hrs, Sat 31.8.
and Sun 1.9., 15.00 hrs, Tickets on site at Shedhalle, sliding scale

The exhibition takes place at Shedhalle and traces and continues the process of the performance «Hagay Dreaming». On show will be the three channel installation «Hagay» (2013, Collection of Kaohsiung Museum of Fine Arts) by Dondon Hounwn, as well as video documentations of Hagay Dreaming's previous performances. The «Hagay Exhibition» can be seen until the end of the festival and marks the transition to the next ProtoZone of Shedhalle this autumn, an exhibition format for process-based art.