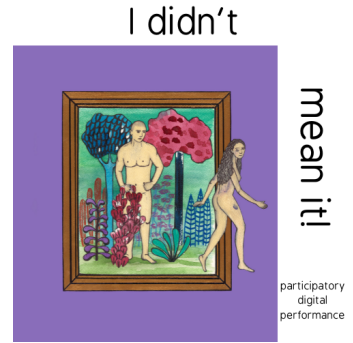


## **“I didn’t mean it”** project description

### **About**



“I didn’t mean it!” is a participatory performance-based research that came to life during April 2021 after a long period of a 6 month-lockdown in Greece.

The performance, in the in-situ version, takes place in an abandoned house. The audience watches an abusive relationship encapsulated in a 4-minute performance. The partner who practices violence is performed symbolically by the sole performer’s hand.

The spectators acquire the active role of writing the script and at the beginning they are asked to respond to a few dramaturgical questions such as:

- When was the last time they fought?
- What did she do when she locked herself in the bathroom?
- What was the first thing she did when she stayed alone in the house?
- What does she think of when she is alone?
- Where does she go?
- What does she want to tell him?

Later on in the living room there is she, performing their relationship. People get the chance to respond through online application software and write down what the abusive partner tells her. The words and phrases are being projected on screen. People can also watch online, the digital version. At the end they get the chance to watch the performance with all the phrases projected as subtitles.

The spectators become the dramaturges of the performance creating a map of a common and not-so-common abusive vocabulary.

The documented dramaturgy that is being created during the performances is archived and wishes to be published in a digital publication in order to function as a tool of empowering people to speak up and report similar events. The main purpose is creating the dramaturgy together with the spectators as an empowering method. The pedagogy of empowerment here lies under the techniques of applied theatre “role on the wall”, “inner voices” and role building techniques. The idea is to invite people to write in their mother tongues or in a language they feel most comfortable with.

## What people say

We have created a feedback form where people can anonymously fill in.

“Simple clear and concise. Hard not to identify with some even to a small degree. And precisely because it is sadly so self-evident that almost all of us have at least once been subjected to some of these attitudes even in its most simplistic form, it makes you feel less lonely. I felt a little empowered, you can say that”  
“It's a sense of suffocation, pressure, confinement and deadlock that was created inside me. It comes down and speaks directly to me, evoking memories, a suffocating feeling and anger. The fact that it has no voice I like it a lot, it gives a strength and severity that comes in nice contrast with the sweet little face that it caresses. In the end though, without being able to explain why and how you did it, I felt empowered and not at a dead end. You shout without speaking and that's shocking. And for that, well done”

“The presence and the movements created constant conflicting emotions. Along with the tension due to the soundscape, it almost reached anxiety. In the second round, the [projected] phrases relieved some of the nervousness by defining the situation”

## Watch

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HxcSu4iOqOY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rM7GHPXcSSc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SILNEGmFmo>

Presentation in the Digital Performing Arts Conference

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4g9evVfyfzQ&t=3145s>

Live and digital participation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eeJs1EcoaUE&t=2s>

## Who are we

Concept-performance: Nikoletta Dimopoulou

Audiovisual arts: Fotis Kolokithas

Poster: Maria-Eliza Kouloudi

Photography: Ioanna Paka

Assessment: Iro Potamoussi

Scientific critical friend: Betty Giannouli

## **Performers**

I am **Nikoletta Dimopoulou**, based in Greece, working as an applied theatre facilitator and devised theatre maker. I like to create environments of participatory theatre and performance practices for people with no, little or more experience in these kind of practices. The target group is usually children, teenagers and adults with migration or refugee status, participants from poverty stricken areas or with people in the spectrum of autism. Together with the organization I cooperate with each time, we design programs to meet the needs of the participants regarding independence and social inclusion, including skills development. Devised Theatre, Forum Theatre and Applied Theatre techniques have been so far the main tools for participatory and interactive practices.

For the last two years I was on Lesbos Island working with adult and teenage refugee women and men in the context of building resilience and working on self- & community-empowerment. At the same period I was facilitating a performance workshop for NGO workers oriented towards decompression. Right before that I was in Athens creating and performing with other professionals a hybrid theatre piece accompanied by a workshop on issues of intergenerational relationships between teenagers and adults.

## **Fotis Kolokythas**

I am a visual artist. Graduated from the School of Fine Arts of Florina in 2014, specializing in painting and new media. I also studied in the studio of Yannis Kastritsi. My diploma thesis was about the psychiatric hospital of Leros island. In 2019 I completed the Master's Degree Programme "Creation and Communication in the Visual Arts" of the Ionian University of Corfu island, with the subject of Interactive installations and video art. My diploma thesis was presented at the New Fortress of Corfu with the title "The visual pleasure of destruction". I have participated in various art exhibitions and festivals in Greece and abroad. I have also collaborated with ADAF and Festival Miden with presentations in Athens, Thessaloniki, Kalamata, Lesbos, Tenerife, Barcelona and Milan. Since 2017 I have been working as a teacher in adults' classes, teaching drawing, art history and aesthetics.

## **Collaborators**

### **Maria-Eliza Kouloudi**

I am a graduate of the Theatre Department of the School of Fine Arts of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. I work as an illustrator and set designer based in Berlin, Germany. I like to create handmade illustrations by mixing different materials, mainly acrylics, markers and watercolours, and digitally editing them. Space, colour and narrative play an important role in my illustrations. I have a wide range of subjects, but I am particularly interested in human psychology, sexuality and social awareness. I am mainly inspired by the reality around me and art in all its forms. I have collaborated in performances and projects with the State Theatre of Northern Greece, Volksbühne Theatre in Berlin and independent companies in Greece and Germany.

## **Ioanna Paka**

I come from Larissa and for the last few years I have been working in Athens. I specialize in studio photography. I take photos of people, food, products and things I love. The images are smart, enticing, have a second reading, leave you with a smile, a reflection, a question, an inquiry, a mood of exploration. I graduated from the Theatre Department of the School of Fine Arts and studied photography in Paris at the Speos Photographic Institute. I have worked as a theatre teacher in formal education and I always make sure to combine the image, with the story behind the image and/or the biographies of people in the stories of the images that we can all make together. A portrait is always ready to tell us many stories.

*The collaboration with the people who have undertaken the assessment and scientific overview of the project is part of the partnership with the Hellenic Theatre/ Drama & Education Network*

## **Betty Giannouli**

I am a sociologist and hold a PhD in Theatre Pedagogy . Since 2017 I have been teaching at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (TEAPI) on the subject of Theatre in formal and non-formal education. Since 1998 I have been involved in collectives for the promotion of research and practice of Theatre in Education. My research interests include the theory and practice of Theatre as a learning tool, as a cultural action and as a social intervention. I have been involved in the design and implementation of theatre education programmes for children and young people, teacher training programmes and the organization and coordination of international conferences on Theatre and Performing Arts in Education. I have facilitated for ActionAid's center, a women's empowerment group (2019-2020). Since 2006 I have been a scientific collaborator in European and international projects that use Theatre in Education and the coordinator for Greece in the European programme "International TeacherArtistPartnership-Professional Development (ITAP-PD) (Erasmus+, 2020-2023). I am a founding member of the Panhellenic Network for Theatre in Education, have served as president and vice-president of the association's board and a member of the editorial board of the journal Education and Theatre.

## **Iro Potamousi**

I am a graduate of the Department of Sociology of Panteion University and I have completed my postgraduate studies in Theatre in Education at the University of Warwick, UK, where I conducted research on theatre education programmes. Since 2018 I am a PhD candidate at the University of the Aegean. I have been professionally involved in the design and facilitation of educational support material for theatre performances for adolescents since 2008. I have collaborated with organizations in Greece (National University of Athens, Panhellenic Network for Theatre in Education, UNHCR, Action Aid etc.) and abroad (Liverpool Institute of the Performing Arts, University of Warwick, UCL, Wergeland Centre and Pedagogical University of Zurich) in the design and implementation of educational programmes, social interventions, trainings and trainings.

Supported by Hellenic Theatre/ Drama & Education Network



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