

## Statement \_ Simona Sala

My work develops around the search for witness. This research has led me to a continuous flow from the field of anthropological theatre to that of performance and visual art to finally appropriate a multidisciplinary, hybrid and personal language that allows me to create bridges of meaning between the artistic action and the public, which stripped of its anonymous plurality becomes a witness. After years of work in theatre and performance I began to feel the need to overcome the temporal and physical limits of the stage and walls, pushing myself into the field of active participation and plastic action, in a space where the artist and the audience work together to define new paradigms and links that require an open and direct social and political awareness of art.



# Biography

Simona Sala is an artist that moves from the performative field and lands in multidisciplinary contexts where she blends her languages to create experiences of connection between the public and her work. Her background is Grotowskian and begins in 1996 in the field of theatrical anthropology, studying the physiological and socio-cultural behavior of man in a situation of representation. In 2006 she co-founds the performing arts company Sineglossa, which develops new languages of analogical experimentation on the themes of gender identity and the social construction of cultural instances.

In 2011 she begins to work at the Grotowski Institute in Wroclaw, Poland with Teatr Zar, a company characterized by work on polyphonic singing juxtaposed to strong physical work, performing in numerous European festivals. In 2011 she collaborates with Fundacja Jubilo through the project Unlocking, which saw her work for 3 years in the Wroclaw Penitentiary together with long sentenced prisoners. Between 2015 and 2018 she takes part in expeditionary trips to Salvador de Bhaia and southern Iran (Abadan) for the study and research of rituals of possession. In the same years she works on the creation of Witness Action, a new interactive and participatory approach to performance, with the aim of overcoming the artistic experience that proposes itself as an aesthetic act, with the aim of exploring a different approach linked to collective identity and dignity.

Between 2015 and 2017 she organizes conferences and public actions in which public and artists discuss how art and artists can become witnesses and act through a new rituality of participation in action. The actions are organized as open and informal discussions within performance spaces, with the aim of connecting the artistic experience and the active testimony of the spectator.



2019-2022  
salt and iron sculptures variable  
size installation photos by Alessio  
Ballerini

## Alètheia

With the work Alètheia the artist puts into dialogue the two main researches that have characterized his work up to now: the demolition of form to reveal the identity of what remains and cannot be erased and the active testimony of the spectator as consciousness and living memory.

The work can be understood through the Greek term Alètheia, which indicates the state of not being hidden, the state of being evident. In fact, the salt from which the heads are composed is a living material, which together with the iron incorporated in each mould gives rise to a physical mutation of the sculptures. What remains after the oxidation of the material is the identity, which can never be erased. The teeth in fact are the only indelible imprint we have, from which it is possible to extract DNA and which transforms bodies into individuals, salt heads into stories.

The work thus takes a specific position in the device it shows: to solicit the sleeping witness who lives in each spectator, to put him or her in front of the encounter with the other. An act that is first of all political and that emerges in a historical moment that requires a critical and sincere vision of reality.





# Witness Action

Witness Action tries to move outside the aesthetic categories towards ethical perspectives, using art as a vehicle to create a chain of witnesses, for example between performer/spectator, to activate reflections on identity and personal dignity.

Between 2015 and 2017, together with Jaroslaw Fret, director of the Grotowski Institute, this experimentation is applied to the same shows of the company Teatr Zar in which she is actress and set designer. She creates public actions, participatory installations and conferences in which witnesses and artists discuss how art can take on the complex task of testimony and how testimony can be translated into form, into action, into a new ritual of participation.



action by Daisuke Yoshimoto  
Wroclaw, Poland



2016  
performance of the Teatr Zar  
concept Simona Sala and Jarosław Fret  
performer Simona Sala  
photos by M.Zakrzewski

## Medeas. On Getting Across

In the play Medeas. On getting across the figure of Medea is not as an infanticide mother but as the saint patron of refugees, that is, of all those who are stuck in limbo where there is no turning back and no moving forward. We speak of the impossibility of crossing the border of oneself, created by our bodies between land and sea, between continents and people. Medeas is not political theatre, it is an intimate experience of borders and the experience of rejection.

With Medeas the concept of Witness Action is outlined, the value of art as a bridge between society and witness and how art can be a fundamental tool to communicate and touch different points of consciousness.

Premier within the Theater Olimpics program Wrocław  
2016 European Capital of Culture

Tournée

Thessaloniki - International Forest Festival,

Madrid - Naves Matadero Centro Internazionale de Artes  
Vivas,

Paris - Theatre Bouffes du Nord

Warsaw - Theatre Meeting





## My eyes is my country

Those who have decided to cross the sea to reach Europe have chosen the path of rejection. Those who drown in the sea and die are rejected. Those who arrive at the coast are rejected. Those who get passports, work, homes, are still rejected.

Within the installation the artist has organized conferences that tell about the experiences of people who have chosen to be active witnesses in their lives. Speakers: Ewa loKnowski, Pietro Bartolo, Efi Latsoudi, Filippo Furri.

Tournée

Thessaloniki - International Forest Festival

Madrid - Naves Matadero Centro Internazionale de Artes Vivas

Paris - Theatre Bouffes du Nord

Warsaw - Theatre Meeting



2016-2018  
installation created on the performance "Medeas. On Crossing" interactive work, video mapping, various materials  
photos by M.Zakrzewski





## Armine, sister

Armine, sister is a multidisciplinary project that includes the creation of a performance based on the facts of the Armenian genocide, publications (including a photo album), photo exhibitions, conferences and concerts. A work dedicated to memory, testimony and rejection. The aim of the performance is to address the issue of taboos and historical fakes, which deflect our individual and collective consciousness with regards to the sense of responsibility.

### Tournée

The Grotowski Institute - Wrocław, Nowy Teatr - Warsaw, Teatr Kana - Szczecin, Battersea Art Center - London, RedZone Festival - Oslo, Fabbrica Europa Festival - Florence, International Theatre Festival - San Francisco, International Festival - Sibiu, La Tempete Theatre - Paris, Teatro di Roma, Naves Matadero Centro Internacional de Artes Vivas - Madrid, Gulbekian Foundation - Lisbon, Forest Festival - Thessaloniki.



2013-2018  
performance of the Teatr Zar  
performer Simona Sala  
dramaturgy physical actions Simona Sala  
photos by M.Zakrzewski





2015-2018  
installation created on the performance "Armine, sister" photos by  
M.Zakrzewski

## Witness me

The work is part of the performance *Armine, sister* to lead the audience to become an unconscious witness of that experience. The end of the play reveals itself performatively and leads the spectator to be a witness and leave a trace before leaving. On leaving the play the audience is in a changed space in the foyer. The floor covered with sand as inside the scenic space with the last sequence of the play projected from above, the act of not finding a burial place, as not being able to escape from awareness. In the foyer, people are also invited to take a Polaroid that is collected in all performances and placed together to build *Armine's* gaze.

### Tournée

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2015-2018  
edited by Simona Sala, Agnieszka Bresler and Fundacja Jubilo photos by  
M.Zakrzewski

## Reflection

The artist in this project collaborates with Fundacja Jubilo within the Unlocking project, a 3-year theatre project in Wroclaw Penitentiary No. 1 with long sentenced inmates.

In 2015 the performance entitled Reflection was created starting from the condition of the prisoners, expressed by the word “Jestem” (I Am), to work on the consciousness of how the other/external maintains a strong judgement on categories. An important objective of the project is to react to the problem of exclusion and marginalisation of prisoners by society and to develop their artistic awareness and possibilities of expression.





# Sineglossa

In 2006 Simona Sala co-founded Sineglossa, a collective of 4 artists – a visual artist, a musician, a performer and a director – that investigates the relationship between contemporary languages and the social contexts in which the works are produced. The aim is to contribute to transform Culture into cultures: that is, to make everything that is still thought of as singular plural, with a strong attention to the dialogue between the producer and the audience.

Craftsmanship, an important trait of Sineglossa's work, is a way to reverse the trend of consumption of things and art, against the reproducibility of technique. It means being demiurges of one's own work by passing through the material, avoiding any depersonalization and verifying all the passages. All the plays are in characterized by an completely analogical and original approach to the stage effects.

The collective was born with the desire to build a dramaturgy that is not softened, not simplified, not rhetorical, that does not make those who are willing to see it feel at ease, in a consolatory way. But at the same time that, precisely because of its radicality, succeeds in affecting the perceptions of those who, abandoning themselves, give them confidence.





2012  
Heresy [white]  
photos by Monica Fagiani



2009  
Undo  
photos by Rosalia Filippetti



2009  
Pleura

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