

Taglit Blood Right

a documentary theater performance
by Winter Family



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Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne

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Taglit

Blood Right

Concept, research, documentary fieldwork, writing, direction,
dramaturgy, scenography

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produced by **Winter Family**

co-produced by

**Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, Les Halles de Schaerbeek Bruxelles,
Théâtre National Bretagne Rennes, Tandem Douai Arras,
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Taglit

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Having previously examined propaganda at the heart of Israeli society (Jerusalem Cast Lead – A Hallucinatory Trip in an Emotional Dictatorship, 2011) and its tragic consequences for the Palestinian population (H2 Hebron, 2018), we now turn to the Taglit-Birthright experience: the trips offered to young Jews from around the world in Israel, extracting the fuel required by the Zionist machinery in the name of Jewish blood right. Approximately 900,000 people have taken part in these trips since 1995, funded by the State of Israel and private foundations.

Our aim is to confront the Zionist narrative addressed to Jewish youth worldwide with reality, history, and the testimonies of Palestinian families who have been expelled, displaced, occupied, and massacred since 1948, and whose Right of Return continues to be denied by the Jewish supremacist project.

This documentary theatre work will allow us to immerse ourselves in the heart of post-7 October 2023 Israeli society, collapsed inward upon itself through the all-too-predictable fulfilment of an absolute sentimental fascism.



Taglit - Blood Right is the third chapter of a trilogy we have developed over the years around the Israeli-Palestinian question and, beyond it, around the ways in which a chosen History manufactures an identity, a memory, and a people ready to die—and to kill—in defense of its narrative.

Artistic Statement

The full name of these discovery trips offered to Jewish youth worldwide by Zionist organisations is "**Taglit – Birthright Israel**", meaning "Discovery – Birthright – Israel."

"**Birthright**" serves to remind Jews throughout the world that regardless of where they were born, they were born Jewish and therefore inherit, genetically and transcendentally, the Divine Right of their people to reside upon the land promised to them by God: the Land of Israel.

What is really at stake here is **Blood Right**, a concept that may be linked to Lebensraum ("living space"), developed by the German geopolitician Friedrich Ratzel, an important European intellectual figure and contemporary of Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism.

This is the founding axiom of Zionism, a political doctrine theorized at the end of the nineteenth century by the Viennese Jewish playwright and journalist Theodor Herzl, himself the target of antisemitic attacks in Vienna and a witness to the Dreyfus Affair in Paris, at a time when Europe was in the midst of nationalist, populist, socialist and colonial ferment.

Herzl and his companions sought urgently to find a refuge for European Jews who had been persecuted and massacred for centuries. Palestine soon appeared to the first Zionists as the most obvious option. It offered a means of convincing influential Jewish families in Europe and the United States to provide financial support for a large-scale settlement project in Israel, the Holy Land of Judaism, where a small Jewish community had remained rooted since Antiquity.

After numerous violent episodes, Zionism led to the founding of the State of Israel in 1948 on a land inhabited by a numerous population—urban and rural alike—culturally and linguistically coherent, organized, and fully conscious of its historical, territorial and symbolic roots: the Palestinians.

Palestinian history was almost entirely erased and rendered invisible by the Zionist colonial project, whose extraordinary vitality was reinforced by the urgent need felt by European Jews, supported by European states, to find a refuge after the Shoah (the Catastrophe). These new arrivals revitalized the project initiated by the first Jewish settlers established in Palestine at the end of the nineteenth century.

Within a few decades, Jewish settler-pioneers created a new culture, a revived language, a new society, and a new secular Jew—the fulfilment of Herzl's dream—who would never again be dependent upon the goodwill of other peoples.

The era of decolonisation subsequently brought significant Jewish migration from North Africa and the Middle East. Some of these populations had suffered discrimination or violence from local governments and societies; others were encouraged by Zionist organisations to settle in Israel. Successive waves of Aliyah ("ascent") followed, with new arrivals receiving support for settlement, particularly in colonized areas of the Palestinian territories in the West Bank, which were progressively reduced to a fragmented mosaic of isolated villages and urban enclaves under total Israeli control.

This Zionist colonial achievement unfolded through the systematic crushing of Palestinian culture, whose presence complicated the construction of the Israeli national narrative and the myth of a pioneering Jewish society united behind the Zionist slogan: "A land without a people for a people without a land."

Jewish colonisation in Palestine generated a succession of tragic events for Palestinians: the Nakba ("the Catastrophe") in 1948, marked by the destruction of hundreds of Palestinian villages, massacres, and the expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians into neighbouring countries; the Naksa in 1967, followed by military occupation and the establishment of military rule in the West Bank and Gaza; the repression of the Intifadas; the massive colonisation of the West Bank; ethnic cleansing in the occupied territories; apartheid; and genocide in Gaza.

The Zionist project must continuously find ways to win the demographic battle against the Palestinians and, more broadly, against the Muslim populations of neighbouring countries—a question regarded by the Israeli regime as fundamental to Jewish survival and an opinion widely shared within sections of the Jewish diaspora.

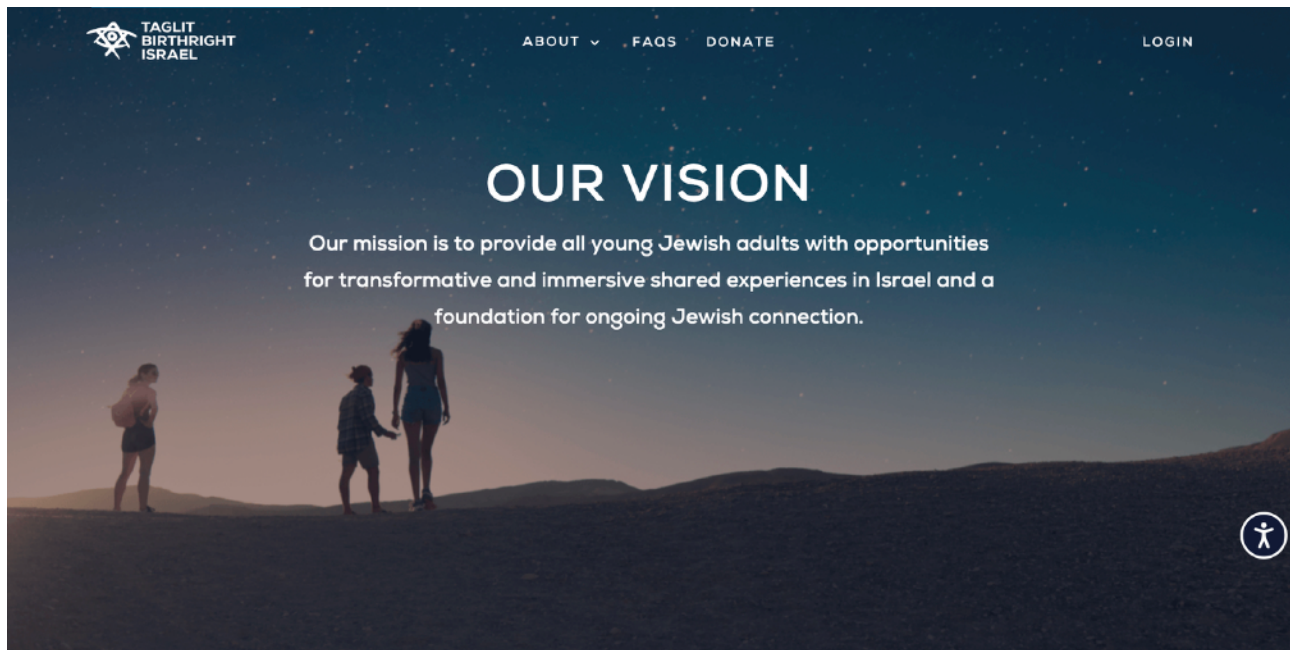
Different Jewish communities must therefore be persuaded to sustain the Zionist project through new waves of immigration, despite an increasingly violent and seemingly intractable conflict between the Israeli regime and a Palestinian population subjected to occupation, domination, humiliation, killings, and displacement.

Today, two irreconcilable narratives confront one another across the same territory: the Israeli narrative, nourished by a Jewish theocratic supremacist ideology that has transformed society into a highly technological military machine; and the Palestinian narrative, articulated around the demand for recognition of a sovereign and independent state, the Right of Return for refugees, and an end to colonisation—within a Palestinian society that has itself become increasingly radicalized through decades of unheard demands.

In order to sustain this perpetual demographic struggle and extract the fuel required by the infernal Zionist machinery, the organisation **Taglit–Birthright Israel** was founded in 1999 by American businessmen Charles Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt.

Supported by the Israeli government, private donors and the Jewish Agency, the organisation offers free trips to Israel for young Jews aged eighteen to twenty-six from around the world, with the stated aim of strengthening ties between Israel and the Jewish diaspora.

The figures vary, but between 350,000 and 1,000,000 young people from sixty-four countries are believed to have taken part in the programme since its creation.



For ten days, Taglit weaves a carefully constructed narrative, with a remarkably effective dramaturgy designed to make participants aware of a shared Jewish destiny that finds its fulfillment in Israel. The objective is for these young people to fall literally in love with the country—and with other young Jews—so that they may one day return and settle there, benefiting, through **Blood Right**, from the administrative, financial and property privileges necessary for successful integration.

The journey takes place in groups of around forty participants and begins with visits, under the escort of two armed guards, to some of the most significant and symbolic sites of ancient Jewish history. Whether in the biblical desert landscapes of the South or the lush scenery of the North, participants encounter a territory largely emptied of any visible Palestinian or Arab presence, apart from a few photogenic Bedouins and their camels: the Dead Sea, Masada, Safed, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, the Negev, and others.

Since 7 October 2023, kibbutzim devastated by the Hamas attacks have sometimes been added to the itinerary, often immediately before a visit to the Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem.

During this emotionally intense and highly patriotic journey, participants "ascend" to Jerusalem to visit the Kotel (Western Wall), Yad Vashem (the Holocaust Memorial Museum), and the National Military Cemetery. They are then invited to a Shabbat meal hosted by families associated with nationalist-religious movements. The trip concludes in Tel Aviv with celebrations, leisure time, and relaxation on the beach, always under the watchful eye of the two armed guards.

After this unique and entirely free experience, participants return home—or remain in Israel—and, as the programme's own literature promises, are forever transformed by a perfectly choreographed experience.

In *Taglit – Blood Right*, spectators will be invited to take part in a simulation of these Taglit discovery trips.

A series of workshops led by Ruth, acting as a Taglit guide, will take audiences on a journey by bus from Galilee to the Golan Heights, from the Dead Sea to Jerusalem, from the Holocaust Museum to the beaches of Tel Aviv.

The performance seeks to recreate the very essence of each stage of these journeys: to reproduce the narratives and gestures repeated by Taglit guides; to share the same emotions generated at each symbolic site of Judaism and Zionism; and ultimately to deconstruct the mechanisms of ideological conditioning directed at Jewish communities around the world.

At the same time, audiences will be immersed in post-7 October Israeli society through the broadcast of highly popular Israeli songs that have saturated the media landscape for nearly three years and which, in our view, illustrate the fulfillment of an absolute sentimental fascism into which Israel has collapsed.



Mayya Sanbar, an actress born in France into a Palestinian family, to whom the Israeli regime denies the possibility of settling on her family's land by refusing her **Right of Return**, will embody the Palestinian reality, history and narrative.

Drawing upon her family history, her personal experience, her journeys in Palestine, and the research conducted by the NGO Zochrot/Zakirat — which maps the Palestinian history erased by Israel — she will provide a counterpoint to Ruth's embodiment of Zionist colonialism and to the performance itself.

Standing both inside and outside the theatrical device, she will offer audiences an account of the tragedies that have marked Palestinian history at each location visited during the journey and will tell us of Palestine as it was transmitted to her and as she experiences it today.

Artists

Ruth Rosenthal is an Israeli artist and graduate of the Visual Theatre School of Jerusalem.

Xavier Klaine is a musician from Lorraine, France. A Gold Medal recipient in piano from the Conservatoire de Nancy, he also pursued postgraduate studies in political and cultural geography at Paris IV-Sorbonne University. They met in Jaffa, Israel, in 2004 and founded **Winter Family**. Together they perform a dark, minimalist and abrasive music sometimes described as Weird Wave. Winter Family has released several albums on acclaimed labels including Sub Rosa (Brussels), Alt.Vinyl (Newcastle), and Ici d'Ailleurs (Nancy), and has performed more than 600 concerts in churches, art galleries, museums, clubs and squats around the world.

They have collaborated with numerous theatre directors, choreographers, filmmakers and visual artists, including Arthur Nauzyciel, Paco Dècina, Damien Jalet, Sébastien Betbeder, Blaise Harrison, Ami Livne, Philippe Petit and Yossi Aviram. In 2011, extending a radio workshop produced for France Culture, they created the documentary theatre performance Jerusalem Cast Lead – A Hallucinatory Journey Through an Emotional Dictatorship, which won the Impatience Festival prize before being invited to the Festival d'Avignon and touring internationally. Between 2010 and 2012, thanks to the Villa Médicis Hors les Murs programme, they lived in Brooklyn, New York, where they developed No World / FPLL, their second theatre work. Premiered at Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne in 2015 and co-produced by Festival d'Avignon and CENTQUATRE-PARIS, the project led to the publication of No World, a book-CD released by Dis Voir Editions. During this period, Winter Family became associate artists at CENTQUATRE-PARIS. In 2016, together with artist Yael Perlman, they created Sodom for the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire du Judaïsme in Paris as part of Nuit Blanche.

They subsequently returned to Tel Aviv, where they recorded their third album, South From Here, released in February 2017 on the label Ici d'Ailleurs. They also conceived Celebration, a large-scale, wild and unauthorized public intervention consisting of intertwined Palestinian and Israeli flags installed throughout Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, in an attempt to normalize Palestinian iconography within the Israeli imagination. In 2018, they premiered H2-Hebron, their third documentary theatre production, based on more than 500 pages of testimonies collected during field research in occupied Palestine. The production was co-produced by Vooruit Ghent, Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, Nanterre-Amandiers, Théâtre National de Bretagne, MC93, CDN Orléans and ABC Centre Culturel La Chaux-de-Fonds.

In 2020, Winter Family released Chevaliers – Music for a Dance Piece by Paco Dècina on the Sub Rosa label. In 2022, they created Patriarchy: Living in Eternal Lockdown, a performance deconstructing the banality of patriarchal mechanisms through an investigation rooted in their own family history. The production was presented by MC93, ABC La Chaux-de-Fonds, CDN Orléans, Théâtre National de Bretagne and others. In 2024, the complete texts of their two most recent theatre works were published by L'Espace d'un Instant, with a foreword by Hortense Archambault. In October 2024, Winter Family released their fourth album, On Beautiful Days, on the labels Murailles Music and Sub Rosa.



Mayya Sanbar is a French actress and performer of Palestinian and Lebanese heritage. After completing a foundation year in art and design at ESAG Penninghen in Paris, she entered the Conservatoire of Paris's 10th arrondissement in 2007. Two years later she joined École du Jeu, from which she graduated in 2012. Following a year spent in Lebanon in 2013, she began collaborating with director Clara Hédouin on the project *Suspended Beirut*, an exploration of abandoned spaces in the Lebanese capital and the various experiences of exile that intersect there.

She subsequently trained with numerous artists, including Rachid Ouramdane, Caroline Guiela Nguyen, Stéphane Braunschweig and Chloé Réjon through the Premier Acte programme.

As an actress, she has appeared in a wide range of theatre productions and short films under the direction of Linda Dušková, Gwenaël Morin, Léna Paugam and Julie Bertin, among others. In 2016, together with Tamara Al Saadi, she co-founded La Base company and has since performed in three of its productions: *Place*, *Istiqlal* and *Taire*, which premiered in January 2025.

These productions are currently touring, alongside *Les Oiseaux ne se retournent pas*, a graphic-novel concert based on the work of Nadia Nakhlé, and *Adoniada*, an improvised musical reading inspired by *Adoniada*, the latest collection by the poet Adonis, performed with Ensemble EVA.



Selected Press

Jerusalem Cast Lead – a hallucinatory trip in an emotional dictatorship (2011)

"This theatrical gesture is a wager on the audience's intelligence—a gesture of remarkable freedom that dares to challenge the weight of convenient and immovable truths. [...] Here is a work that avoids the crude trap of provocation and instead illuminates reality from a singular point of view. Ruth Rosenthal and Xavier Klaine deliver a remarkable performance."

Marie-José Sirach — L'Humanité

"This deeply moving work, with its dry and radical form, is carried almost single-handedly by Ruth Rosenthal. [...] The artist reveals the permanent conditioning to which the population is subjected."

Marie Lechner — Libération

"This vision from within is a shock... Klaine and Rosenthal provide no answers, but instead pose the question through a stage language of devastating radicality."

Emmanuelle Bouchez — Télérama

"You might expect polemic from the subtitle but the work is more nuanced. Visually and acoustically, it pits a tiny, frail individual against gigantic representations of state machinery and symbols, removing the protective filter of family or community."

Clare Shine — Financial Times

H2 - Hebron (2018)

"H2 Hebron puts its fingers in the socket... Out of this cacophony of voices emerges the ghostly image of a paralysed landscape."

Joëlle Gayot — Le Monde

"What shifts the work from documentary into art is its choice of how testimony is transmitted. [...] The metaphor is both simple and beautiful: these voices coexist without ever being able to speak to one another; they may be irreconcilable, yet they still belong to the same body."

Eve Beauvallet — Libération

"Ruth Rosenthal gives voice to them all, like the terrifying echo of a deadly cycle of mimetic violence. A sharp and uncompromising portrait of a reality in which consensus exists only through conflict."

Fabienne Arvers — Les Inrockuptibles

"Winter Family do not claim to possess the solution. If they acknowledge their own powerlessness, it is only in order to resist it. This is necessary theatre, useful theatre—a theatre that helps us believe and dream, even when we feel disarmed."

Marie-José Sirach — L'Humanité

"This is not a play about the conflict; the conflict itself becomes the very heart of the narrative."

Bertille Bourdon — Toute la Culture

No World / FPLL (2015)

"Using resolutely contemporary tools, Winter Family détournes the language and codes of capitalism to invent a new form of political theatre, inviting audiences to reclaim their critical faculties. Salutary and invigorating."

Sophie Joubert — L'Humanité

"How do you say 'Life is beautiful' in French?" asks the English performer. Many spectators seemed to have answered—and so did we: 'Winter Family!'"

Yves Kafka — Inferno Magazine

"This presentation of the non-world offers neither instructions nor ready-made ideas. It simply confronts us with our dead ends, with our capacity still to be shocked, still to think, even as stimuli accelerate beyond control and we no longer know where to turn."

Aïnhua Jean-Palmettes — Mouvement

"Winter Family turns reality inside out like a soaked glove. Their hard-hitting performances leave audiences shaken, yet nourished. Whether political, economic or cultural, the reality they expose is never simplistic, and the remedies whose urgency they make us feel remain entirely to be invented."

M. Descombes — Hebdo.ch

Patriarcat, Living in Eternal Lockdown (2022)

"The political terrain has shifted into the intimate sphere, yet it remains no less explosive. If anything, it is downright incendiary."

Fabienne Darge — Le Monde

"The result is one of the most curious and fascinating assemblages imaginable, exploring both the violence of life as a couple and the effects of patriarchy."

Eve Beauvallet — Libération

"Ruth Rosenthal and Xavier Klaine push their documentary process even further, delivering with astonishing audacity a performance that is at once suffocating and oxygenating, burning and clamorous—a blaze consuming the old world in an abrasive apotheosis. One emerges disoriented and shaken, yet strangely purified and exhilarated."

Marie Plantin — Sceneweb

"Patriarchy fuels anger, fills us with a desire for action, and continues to do so long after the performance has ended."

Aïnhua Jean-Calmettes — Mouvement

"You must go and see this performance! An intense response to patriarchy. Thank you, Winter Family."

Julie Viers — Toute la Culture