Taglit
Blood Right

a documentary theater performance
by Winter Family



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Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne

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

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with **Mayya Sanbar** & **Ruth Rosenthal**

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Assistant Director **Amos Tiné-Pragier**

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archives **Walid Khalidi, Zochrot, Palquest, Revue d'Etudes Palestiniennes**

production managment, administration **Emmanuelle Ossena & Charlotte Pesle Beal - EPOC productions**

produced by **Winter Family**

co-produced by
Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, Les Halles de Schaerbeek Bruxelles, Théâtre National Bretagne Rennes, Tandem Douai Arras, Festival D'Automne, MC 93 Maison de la Culture de Seine-Saint-Denis, Centre de Culture ABC La Chaux-de-Fonds,
further partnerships currently in development

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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 1999, 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 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.



T***aglit - 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 transcendently, 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 the 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.

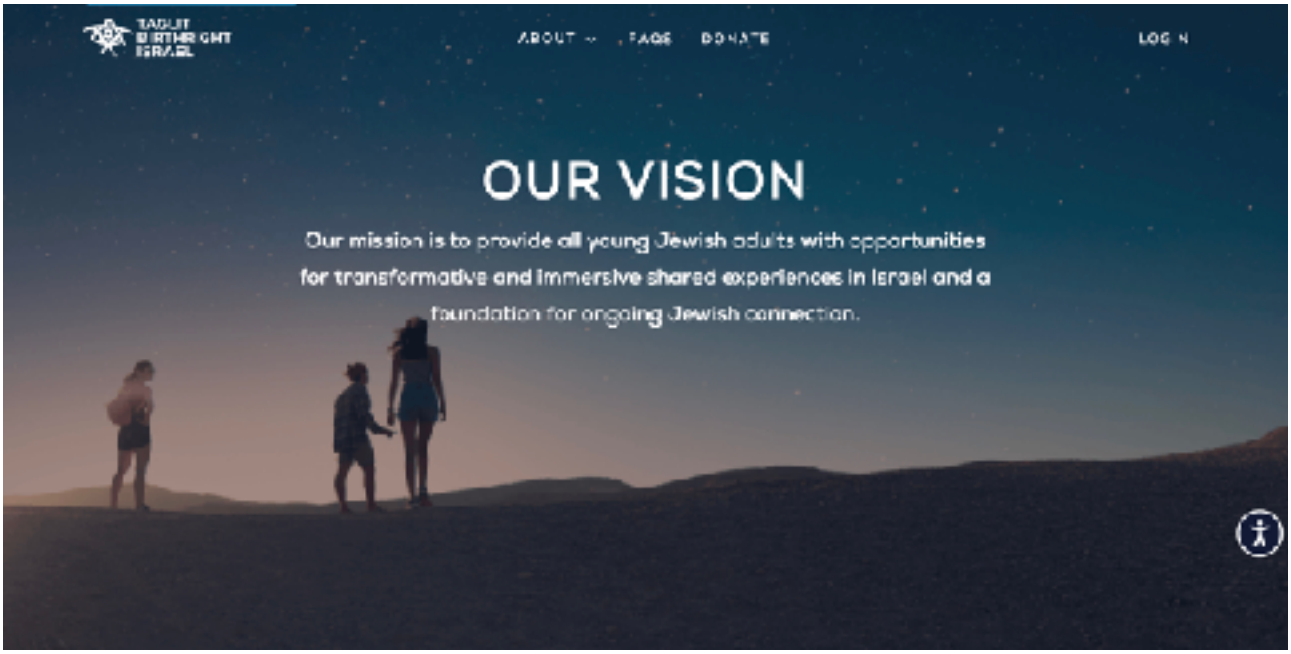
Different Jewish communities must therefore be persuaded to sustain the Zionist project through new waves of immigration, despite an increasingly violent and seemingly intractable conflict between the Israeli regime and a Palestinian population subjected to occupation, domination, humiliation, killings,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



Over the course of ten days, the Taglit organization weaves a carefully crafted narrative, with a remarkably effective dramatic structure, designed to make these young people aware of a shared Jewish destiny to be fulfilled in Israel. The aim is for them to fall quite literally in love with the country (and with other young Jewish people), so that they will eventually return to settle there. Thanks to **Birthright**, they will enjoy all the administrative, financial and property-related rights and privileges needed to make a successful new life there, far from their countries of origin, where they experience antisemitism that is both real and instrumentalized.

The trip takes place in groups of 40 young people and begins with visits, under the escort of two armed guards, to the most remarkable and symbolically significant sites in ancient Jewish history: amid the biblical desert landscapes of the south or the lush scenery of the north, far removed from any Palestinian or Arab presence, apart from a few Bedouins and their photogenic camels. The Dead Sea, Masada, Safed, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River, the Negev, and so on. Since October 7, 2023, the kibbutz devastated by Hamas have sometimes been added to the itinerary, on the day before the visit to Jerusalem's Holocaust museum.

During this intensely emotional and patriotic journey, which lasts ten days, the young participants "make their way up" to Jerusalem to visit the Kotel (Western Wall), Yad Vashem (the Holocaust memorial and museum), and the National Military Cemetery. They are then invited to a Shabbat dinner in the home of people affiliated with religious-nationalist movements. The trip concludes in Tel Aviv, with time set aside for partying, followed by a chance to relax on the beach, still under the watchful supervision of the two armed guards.

After this unique, free-of-charge experience, the young people return to their home countries — or stay, as the brochure puts it — forever transformed by an experience choreographed to perfection.

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

Through a series of workshops led by Ruth, who takes on the role of a Taglit guide, audiences embark on a bus journey from the 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 rehearsed and repeated by Taglit guides; to evoke the 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 are immersed in post–October 7 Israeli society through the broadcast of hugely popular Israeli songs that have saturated the media landscape for nearly three years and which, in our view, reveal the culmination of an all-encompassing form of sentimental fascism into which Israeli society has collapsed.



Mayya Sanbar, an actress born in France into a Palestinian family expelled from Palestine in 1948, is herself denied the right to settle on her family's ancestral land by the Israeli regime, which refuses to recognise her **Right of Return**. She will undertake this journey, taking on the task of bringing Palestinian reality, history and narrative to the fore. Drawing on her family history, personal experience and travels in Palestine, as well as the work of Walid Khalidi, the organisations Zochrot and PalQuest, and the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, she will draw on sources that document, compile and map Palestinian history and the Nakba — a history erased by Israel.
Both a witness to the Zionist colonialism embodied by Ruth and a participant in the performance itself, Mayya will offer audiences an account of the tragedies that have marked Palestinian history, recounting them at the very sites visited along the journey. She will tell the story of Palestine as it has been passed down to her and as she experiences it herself, before bringing the performance to its conclusion.

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. They are currently recording their next album between Detroit and Paris.



Mayya Sanbar is a French actress of Palestinian and Lebanese heritage.

After a year in an arts preparatory programme at ESAG-Penninghen, she joined the conservatory in Paris's 10th arrondissement in 2007. Two years later, she entered the École du Jeu, graduating in 2012. Following a year in Lebanon in 2013, she began collaborating with Clara Hédouin on the project *Suspended Beirut*. Together, they explored abandoned spaces in the Lebanese capital and the various forms of exile that run through the city.

She subsequently attended numerous workshops with artists including Rachid Ouramdane, Caroline Guiela Nguyen, Stéphane Braunschweig and Chloé Réjon, as part of the 1er Acte programme. She has performed in a range of theatre productions and short films, notably under the direction of Linda Duskova, Gwenaël Morin, Léna Paugam and Julie Bertin.

In 2016, she co-founded the theatre company La Base with Tamara Al Saadi and performed in three of its productions: *Place*, *Istiqlal* and *Taire*, which premiered in January 2025.

All three productions are currently touring, alongside *Les Oiseaux ne se retournent pas*, a graphic novel concert by Nadia Nakhlé, and *Adoniada*, an improvised musical reading inspired by *Adoniada*, the latest poetry collection by Adonis, performed by the EVA ensemble.



Selected Press

Taglit - Blood Right (2026)

“This new performance confirms that this device is far more than a mere gimmick. First, because the best way to show that the worst is unfolding is often to leave the instruments we use to measure it entirely unchanged. By contrast, the tremors shaking the world become all the more palpable. Second, because this time they give voice to the Palestinians through the words of actress Mayya Sanbar. For fifteen years now, Winter Family has been probing the political enigma of Israel. Having examined the politics of memory and its instrumentalisation, followed by colonisation in the West Bank, Ruth Rosenthal and Xavier Klaine now turn their attention to the propaganda orchestrated by the Taglit organisation in the aftermath of October 7 (...) The political indictment is unequivocal. All the more so because these geographical parallels are echoed along a historical axis. At regular intervals, the actresses are interrupted by videos — a Taglit advert, a Knesset promotional spot, a rap video — that reveal the advanced militarisation of Israeli society. The army is glamorised; calls for the annihilation of Gaza are normalised and aestheticised. Set within their broader historical context by the text delivered by Mayya Sanbar, these images speak less of the degeneration of a country governed by a fascistic far right than of the open, unapologetic implementation of a colonial state project founded on dispossession and mass extermination. Such a political reading is exceedingly rare on theatre stages. It comes at a cost, and it tastes of blood. If further proof were needed, it could be found in Ruth Rosenthal’s tear-filled eyes as the performers take their bows.”
Aïnhoa Jean-Palmettes - mouvement.net

“To close the evening, we return at last to Winter Family’s indispensable documentary theatre (...) On stage, Palestinian Mayya Sanbar and Israeli Ruth Rosenthal take turns presenting two irreconcilable versions of a documented history: the creation of the State of Israel in Palestine, the massacre of its population and the destruction of its homes. A history that flies in the face of the Zionist slogan of the movement’s pioneers: ‘A land without a people for a people without a land’ (...) The tension of the performance stems first and foremost from its narrative device, using shot and reverse shot to confront two contradictory accounts. Mayya Sanbar’s meticulous account of how Palestinians have been deprived of their rights and their land since 1948 dismantles, on stage, the narrative underpinning the Taglit-Birthright experience — a programme built around discovery and the notion of birthright. (...) Chilling clips and videos fuel an ideological contagion against which no safeguards appear to exist.”
Fabienne Arvers - Les Inrockuptibles

“Winter Family continues its deconstruction of Zionism with a new work that casts a sharp eye on the aftermath of October 7. (...) In 2005, shortly after meeting Xavier Klaine, Ruth Rosenthal left Israel, never to return, and settled in France. Yet she refuses to reduce her art to ‘a political manifesto’. Describing herself as ‘a radical humanist, seeking to speak to everyone’, she reveals that she severed ties with some people close to her who still live in Israel after October 7, confronted with ‘their radicalisation’.Harbouring virtually no illusions, she believes her performances ‘will change nothing’. So why create them? ‘Because I have no choice. It is my responsibility as an Israeli,’ she says. Mayya Sanbar, by contrast, holds on to hope: ‘If this performance changes the way a few people see things, that will already be something. Today, the situation in Palestine is catastrophic; the wound is wide open. But one day, we will be free. Hope is part of who I am.’”
Charlotte Gauthier - Le Temps

“Ruth Rosenthal’s documentary collage, weaving together video, music, text and song, casts a searing, bitterly ironic light on Israeli ultranationalism. Taglit — Blood Right was created in the aftermath of October 7, 2023. Ruth Rosenthal lays bare the rhetoric of Benjamin Netanyahu’s government and the triumphant patriotism that is eating away at people’s minds. The artist’s furious gaze speaks more eloquently than any speech.”
Joelle Gayot - Le Monde

“This is an artistic document, a damning piece of reportage and a work of theatre, forming part of a trilogy exploring the Israeli-Palestinian question. (...) The performance is deeply moving, but also deeply disturbing on several counts. It offers a striking picture of how deeply ingrained narratives take root in the minds of young Jewish people, alongside an authentic account of Palestine’s tragic and tormented history. One can only hope that more venues will host this performance. After the censorship and erasure to which various French media outlets have resorted, bringing fundamental realities about this ongoing genocide to light is one of the many strengths of this documentary and artistic work.”
Culturieuse.blog

Thierry Sartoretti - Swiss Radio and Television (RTS)

Listen to the RTS feature: *What Exactly Is Taglit?*

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."
Aïnhoa 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."
Aïnhoa Jean-Calmettes — Mouvement

"You must go and see this performance! An intense response to patriarchy. Thank you, Winter Family."
Julie Viers — Toute la Culture