

THE DYBBUK

UNDISCIPLINING THE ARCHIVE

25-26.4.2022



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Call for Papers

Habima's 1922 performance of Sh. An-sky's play, *The Dybbuk* or *Between Two Worlds*, directed by Evgeny Vakhtangov, epitomizes—perhaps more than any other Jewish performance — the transformation Jewish culture underwent during the 20th century. Written in the aftermath of An-sky's ethnographic expeditions, and translated into Hebrew by Ch. N. Bialik, Habima's performance combined elements from the east-European Jewish tradition with a modernist expression style. Displaying a broad repertoire of Jewish folklore practices, An-sky's play dramatized an archive in the making. Alternatively, the archive has also been the basis for cross-disciplinary historiographical accounts of the play, and for artistic explorations and manipulations of various dybbuk configurations. *The Dybbuk* resurfaces from the archive through multiple forms, sources and provocations.

The climax of Habima's performance transpired when Hanna Rovina, who played the role of the possessed bride Leah, manipulated her voice to lend it the low timbre of the dybbuk's voice. "You are not my bridegroom!" she cried loudly in a lingering dense replica. As she performed the trance, her body and voice became a theatrical archive that uncannily harbored and issued forth a male voice, obviously other than her own. Taking a cue from the figure of the dybbuk, a soul of dead body which transmigrated into a living body, this symposium seeks to facilitate an exploration of the dybbuk as archive, in the archive, and beyond. The figure of the dybbuk points towards the crossing of geographical, cultural and mental borders, and the breaking of the normative and the traditional. We are interested in the following questions:

- * When, how and why do performances of the dybbuk appear in the arts, the archive, in sacred or public spheres?
- * Embodied formations, interventions and manipulations of the archive.
- * Archives of *The Dybbuk* and dybbuks in the archive.
- * How do notions of possession transfigure historically?
- * How does the figure of the dybbuk manifests, aesthetically and socially, cultural change?
- * What can *The Dybbuk* teach us about contemporary Jewish art and performance?

Dybbuk studies involve transcultural and transdisciplinary issues and approaches, comprising a variety of research methods, among other: reenactment and performance-studies, mapping and place studies, gender and anthropological analysis, archival and historiography.

Researchers and artists are invited to submit an abstract (max. 350 words) for a 20 minutes long paper, as well as a short-bio. Presentations may be in English or in Hebrew.

The symposium will take place during April 25-26, 2022, in celebration of the 100th centennial of Habima's performance of *The Dybbuk*.

The symposium is co-organized by the Department of Theater Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in the frame of its 50th centennial, the ERC funded DYBBUK research-project, the Theatre Department at the University of Haifa, and in cooperation with the Israeli Center for the Documentation of the Performing Arts, the Cymbalista Jewish Heritage Center at Tel Aviv University and The Israel Goor Theatre Archives and Museum.

Application deadline: January 10, 2022 by email at: undisciplineddybbuk2022@gmail.com



50 Years
The Department of Theater Studies
Institute of the Arts
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem



Cover Photo: Batami Schneider as Leah together with Benno Schneider (c. 1926). By the courtesy of Dr. Nina Schneider.