

ELENI KAMMA **CASTING CALL: THE COLLECTOR OF PROVERBS, THE ANIMAL, THE FOOL, THE SELFIE-JUNKIE, THE INNOCENT, THE CHILD, THE DRUNK, THE...**

Casting Call (2017-ongoing) is a series of related attempts, events and manifestations. It investigates the notion of parrhesia, the courage to speak one’s mind, from a comedic and excessive perspective. In Casting Call Eleni Kamma employs performative strategies and appropriates theatrical tools to playfully ask serious questions about living well together and the role of public space and time in contemporary Europe.

Experiencing the humorous and sharply critical attitude of Gezi Park protesters speaking their minds in Istanbul in 2013 led Kamma to reevaluate her own artistic practice, which spans drawings, videos, installations and books. In Casting Call, her practice shifts focus from her as an individual artist (through drawings and objects), to dialogic collaborations (films, performative events, journals) and back again, by writing about it and further developing this practice with others. Within this circulation process concepts such as communication, dialogue, and listening are continuously performed and put to the test.

Casting Call is conceived as an ongoing rehearsal, attempting to generate parrhesia and question its role in contemporary art through collaborative developments in a performative framework. Kamma calls this process a parrhesiastic theater parade. The parade operates between a cultural allegory of contemporary Europe and an invocation of an old, comedic parrhesiastic community. It is an invented genre of theatricality whereby events, actions, performances are staged by twenty-five distinct characters-types, The Fool, The Animal, The

Drunk, The Angry, etc. They test the possibility of courageously voicing their opinions through scenes of excess and laughter. In doing so, they use texts and sketches commissioned by the artist on ‘disagreeable’ concepts: Democracy, Prosperity, Solidarity, Europe, Languages, Migration, Pluralism.

The parade evolves in a successive manner, through the augmentation of a heterogeneous collection of commissioned texts, characters, props, voices. The Characters are carriers of historical knowledge, invoking collective memory. The parade appropriates old entertainment strategies of bringing people together, not to re-enact an old parade, but rather to enable participants to ‘appear’ in common view: in Casting Call, a mix of professionals, extras, respondents, and accidental audience members (bystanders) were invited to speak their minds by using the Parade’s collection in playful ways. They joined improvised public mises en scène that functioned halfway between stages and filmsets.

Casting Call’s exhibits are both hosts (inviting the visitor to experience them) and testifiers (providing evidence of how Kamma’s circulation processes materialize). Among the exhibits, in a few short videos, humans wearing masks and puppets come together. The interactions between puppets and humans do things that would be outrageous in reality (i.e. setting a politician on fire). All this creates a weird, alienating effect, increasing its impact for the viewers. Using the imaginary and the artificial to be able to speak directly might be a better strategy for relating film as a construction to parrhesia.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Art Inside Out, Sweden; Beursschouwburg, Brussels; Centre d’Art Le Lait, Albi; Grensverleggers - de Buren; The Mondriaan Fund, The Netherlands; Playground Festival (STUK, & M-Museum), Leuven; Research Grant art/ recherche asbl, Belgium; Royal Academy of Arts, Brussels; Stichting De Zaaier, The Netherlands; Theater aan het Vrijthof, Maastricht; UGC, Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie, Brussels; Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Belgium; WAB (Wandering Arts Biennial), Brussels; Development Grant, Kunstendecreet, Belgium; Film Development Grant, VAF (Flanders Audiovisual Fund), Belgium; West Den Haag, The Netherlands and JUBILEE –platform for artistic research.

THIS EXHIBITION IS PART OF ELENI KAMMA’S DOCTORAL RESEARCH PROJECT AT PHDARTS. HER DISSERTATION CAN BE CONSULTED AT THE ALPHABETUM ON THE GROUND FLOOR.

26.11.2021 TILL 30.01.2022

ELENI KAMMA

CASTING CALL: THE COLLECTOR OF PROVERBS, THE ANIMAL, THE FOOL, THE SELFIE-JUNKIE, THE INNOCENT, THE CHILD, THE DRUNK, THE...

CHARACTERS PRESENT IN THE EXHIBITION:

- Character 1:

The Collector of Proverbs
- Character 2:

The Animal
- Caricature/Character 3 (Post-Internet):

The Selfie-Junkie
- Character 4:

The Fool
- Character 5:

The Innocent
- Character 6:

The Child
- Character 7:

The Drunk
- Character 9:

The Angry
- Character 10:

The Authorized Representative
(at Higher Powers' Command)
- Character 11:

The One that Brings the World Upside Down,
Moving Between Speech and the Irrational
- Character 12:

The Displaced
- Character 13:

The Disguised (MEGERA = Collective
Consciousness of Silenced Female Voices)
- Character 14:

The One Who Produces Burning Images
- Character 15:

The One Whose Words Penetrate Brains
- Character 16:

The One Who Negates and/or Contradicts as
a Necessary Counterweight to Human Vanity
- Character 18:

The Healer/Caretaker/Supermarket Shaman
- Character 19:

The One Who Is Out of Place and Out of Time
- Character 21:

The One Who Cannot Keep His Mouth Shut,
Challenging Common Sense

THE NARRATOR (META-CHARACTER)

- Character 22:

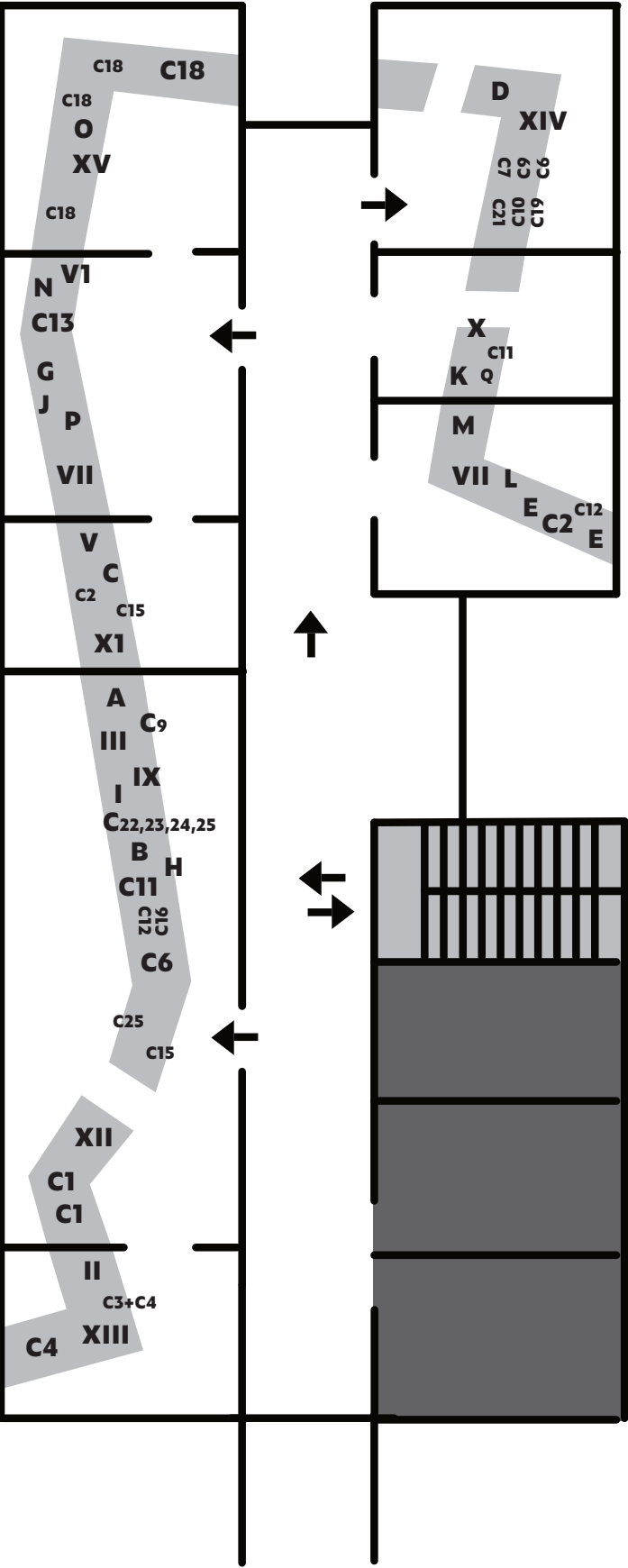
The Ghost
- Character 23:

The Glossary of Parrhesiastic Words
- Character 24:

The Academic/Philosopher
- Character 25:

The Engaged Artist

The Characters' drawings are conceived and created by Eleni Kamma. The Characters' costumes are made in close collaboration with Esther van de Pass. With the exception of Character 13: MEGERA’s head and the masks of the Anonymous MEGERA Disciples, all puppets and masks are conceived and created by Denise Castermans



ADDITIONAL OBJECTS-PROPS

- A**

ΠΑΡΟΙΚΕΩ issue No2, 2017

Research team: Eleana Alexandrou, Eleni Kamma, Elena Parpa, Evi Tselika. Journal with the participation of Dr Bonnie Honig, 12 pages, off-set printing, 42 x 29.7 cm, edition of 250.
- B**

ΠΑΡΟΙΚΕΩ issue No3, 2017

ΠΑΡΟΙΚΕΩ III – L’Intolerant Issue #10

Eleni Kamma in collaboration with Alexios Papazacharias and Woodstone Kugelblitz Editions, Rotterdam, October 2017.Edition of 120 unique issues. Stencil, 40 x 27 cm, 16 pages.
- C**

3d computer print of Sahra Huby’s head for the scepter of Character 4: The Fool, 2017
- D**

3d computer print of Eleni Kamma’s head shrunk by 30%, for The Narrator, 2018
- E**

Backpack with partial reproduction of Honoré Daumier’s lithography of 1832 ‘The London Conference’, 2019
- F**

Hammered brass text plates for Character 23: The Glossary of Parrhesiastic Words, created by AlmarOntwerpt, 2018
- G**

Character 13: ΜΕΓΕΡΑ’s head, by Jelle Spruyt, 2018
- H**

Green Horse for Character 11: The One that Brings the World Upside Down, Moving Between Speech and the Irrational, created by Ron Bernstein, Van Eyck Maastricht, 2019
- I**

Banner for Character 9: The Angry, created by Ron Bernstein, Van Eyck Maastricht, 2019
- J**

D’Haenens, Albert (ed.). 1989. Van toen naar morgen folklore in België, Tielt: Lanoo.
- K**

Anonymous ΜΕΓΕΡΑ Disciples Masks, created by Esther van de Pass
- L**

Paper masks used during the shooting of Migratie, 2019
- M**

Puppet-Volunteer, 2019
- N**

Photo documentation of Megera joining Maastricht Carnival, March 2019
- O**

Photo documentation of Time-Choir presented at the Cold Bath House of Varberg, September 2019
- P**

Reproduction of a drawing for The Disguised, 2018
- Q**

Three jokes on Migration, 2018

VIDEO-NOTES

- I**

THE ANIMAL

HD video, 0 min 31 sec, colour, stereo sound, 16:9, 2021

Performers: Sahra Huby, Jessica Van Rüschén; camera: Boris van Hoof. Shot at Villa Empain, Brussels in 2017.
- II**

THE COLLECTORS OF PROVERBS

HD video, 2 min 4 sec, colour, stereo sound, 16:9, English, French, German spoken, 2021

Performers: Sahra Huby, Jessica Van Rüschén; camera: Boris van Hoof. Shot at Gallery Bortier, Brussels in 2017.
- III**

THE ANGRY (HAND- CLOSE UP)

HD video, 1 min 52 sec, colour, stereo sound, 16:9, 2021

Performers Sahra Huby, Jessica Van Rüschén; camera Boris van Hoof. Shot at Eleni Kamma’s studio, Brussels in 2017.
- IV**

THE GLOSSARY

HD video, 1 min 48 sec, colour, stereo sound, 16:9, 2021

Performers Sahra Huby, Jessica Van Rüschén; camera Boris van Hoof. Shot at Villa Empain, Brussels in 2017.
- V**

THE SELFIE-JUNKIE AND THE FOOL

HD video, 5 min 29 sec, colour, stereo sound,16:9, 2018

Performers Sahra Huby, Jessica Van Rüschén; camera Boris van Hoof. Shot at Gallery Bortier, Brussels in 2017.
- VI**

THE DISGUISED

HD video, 0 min 41 sec, colour, stereo sound,16:9, 2021

Performers Sahra Huby, Jessica Van Rüschén; camera Boris van Hoof. Shot at Eleni Kamma’s studio, Brussels in 2017.
- VII**

RE-M-OMMEGANG

HD video, 12 min 29 sec, colour, stereo sound,16:9, 2021

Research, concept and direction: Eleni Kamma; performance and script developed in collaboration with Shila Anaraki; performer Shila Anaraki; camera Shila Anaraki, Ivo Neefjes, Faustine Cros. Shot during the homonymous performance which premiered at Playground Festival, M-Leuven in 2018.
- VIII**

MIGRATIE

HD video, 8 min 14 sec, colour, stereo sound,16:9, English spoken, 2021

Written by Dieter De Buysser*; performers: Joep Vossebeld, Shila Anaraki, Joost Bakker, Denise Castermans, Sahra Huby, Juliette Bastiaens, Simone Schuffelen, Peter Snellens, Sam van der Velden, Julie van der Velden; voice-over: Martin O’Shea; director’s assistant: Bernardo Zanotta; cinematographer: Vincent Pinckaers; sound recording & sound mix: Laszlo Umbreit; color grading: Miléna Trivier; voice over recorded by Harald Ansoerge at Irrklang. Shot at Flint Museum – The Eben-Ezer Tower in 2019.

- IX**

DEMOCRACY

HD video, 6 min 31 sec, colour, stereo sound,16:9, English spoken, 2021

Written by Pieter De Buysser*; performers: Shila Anaraki, Sahra Huby, Simone Schuffelen, Joep Vossebeld, Eleni Kamma; director’s assistant: Bernardo Zanotta; cinematographer: Vincent Pinckaers; sound recording & sound mix: Laszlo Umbreit; spoken by Shila Anaraki, Sahra Huby, Simone Schuffelen, Joep Vossebeld, Philippine Hoegen; color grading: Miléna Trivier. Shot along the bridge and in front of the Government office (Provincie Huis), Maastricht, Netherlands in 2019.
- X**

FORTRESS EUROPA / IMMIGRATION (Μετανάστευση)

HD video, 04 min 29 sec, colour, stereo sound,16:9, 2021

Written by Joep Vossebeld* (Fort Europa), Dimitris Dimopoulos* [Immigration (Μετανάστευση)]; performers: Joep Vossebeld, Shila Anaraki, Sahra Huby, Simone Schuffelen, Joost Bakker, Alejandro Perozo, Sam van der Velden, Julie van der Velden, Isa Goessens, Jeanine Tessers, Marjo van Knippenberg, Basiel de Gouw; director’s assistant: Bernardo Zanotta; cinematographer: Vincent Pinckaers; sound recording & sound mix: Laszlo Umbreit, color grading: Miléna Trivier. Shot in between the steel stars and columns of Maastricht’s Europe Stars Sculpture in 2019.
- XI**

LANGUAGE (CONNECT)

HD video, 07 min 41 sec, colour, stereo sound,16:9, 2021

Written by Dimitris Dimopoulos*; interpreters: Shila Anaraki, Gaetan Bulourde, Tarek Halaby, cinematographer: Vincent Pinckaers; sound recording & sound mix: Laszlo Umbreit; color grading: Miléna Trivier. Shot at Place de Jeu de Bal, Brussels in 2018.
- XII**

THE FOOL, THE CHILD, THE INNOCENTS

HD video, 04 min 43 sec, colour, stereo sound,16:9, 2021

Performers: Victoria Bardakou, Sahra Huby, Simone Schuffelen, Joep Vossebeld, Shila Anaraki; director’s assistant: Bernardo Zanotta; cinematographer: Vincent Pinckaers; sound recording & sound mix: Laszlo Umbreit; color grading: Miléna Trivier. Shot along Lage Weerd, Maastricht in 2019.
- XIII**

THE COLLECTORS OF PROVERBS/SOLIDARITY

HD video, 1 min 10 sec, colour, stereo sound,16:9, 2021

Written by Dimitris Dimopoulos*; director’s assistant: Bernardo Zanotta; cinematographer: Vincent Pinckaers; performers: Victoria Bardakou, Basiel de Gouw, Peter Out; voice-over: Dimitris Dimopoulos, Lina Kalpatzidou, sound recording & sound mix: Laszlo Umbreit; color grading: Miléna Trivier. Shot inside and outside of Centre Céramique, Maastricht in 2019.

- XIV**

MAASTRICHT THEATER SCENE

HD video, 07 min 27 sec, colour, stereo sound,16:9, 2021

Sahra Huby, Simone Schuffelen, Joep Vossebeld, Shila Anaraki, Eleni Kamma; director’s assistant: Bernardo Zanotta; cinematographer: Vincent Pinckaers; sound recording & sound mix: Laszlo Umbreit; color grading: Miléna Trivier. Shot at Theater aan het Vrijthof, Maas-tricht in 2019.

All videos were edited by Inneke Van Waeyenberghe.

AUDIO WORK

- XV**

Time-Choir, audio piece

5min 58 sec, loop, English spoken, 2019.

Spoken by: Davor Abazovic, Cecilia Gelin, Margareta Hjortsberg,Petra Johansson, Helena Persson, Krystallia Sakellariou, Katarina Sundberg; composition: Tina van Baren; sound & sound mix: Jeroen Leemans, Helena Persson; textual input by: Davor Abazovic, Henric Benesch, Cecilia Gelin, Petra Johansson, Ingrid Martins Holmberg, Elisabeth Punzi, Krystallia Sakellariou, Hugo Tham.
- * In 2018 Eleni Kamma commissioned Dimitris Dimopoulos, Joep Vossebeld, Pieter De Buysser, Margo Van De Linde to write texts, jokes and sketches on the following ‘disagreeable’ concepts: Democracy, Prosperity, Solidarity, Europe, Languages, Migration, Pluralism.

ELENI KAMMA

Kamma lives and works in Brussels and Maastricht. Her work has been presented at various exhibition venues, film and performance festivals worldwide, including, among others, the 10th International Istanbul Biennial; EMST National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens; NAK Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen; the 5th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Wiels, Brussels; Netwerk, Aalst; ARGOS Centre for Audiovisual Arts, Brussels; Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Bonn; the 1st Limburg Biennale, Marres, Maastricht; Centre d’art Le Lait, Albi; Casino Luxembourg, Luxembourg; Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht; DESTE Foundation, Athens; SALT, Istanbul; Dazibao, Montreal; Centre de la Gravure et de l’Image imprimée, La Louvière; Kristianstads konsthall, Kristianstad, GIBCA extended 2019, Gothenburg; Transmediale, Berlin; Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin and Playground Festival, Museum-M, Leuven.