

# ISLAND EUROPE

The conclusive meeting of the trans-European project *The City Ghettos of Today: Exploring the Memory and Present Day Reality of Migrant Communities in European Cities*, Europe Island will showcase material culled from a year of international artistic workshops, meetings and interviews in seven European cities.

At the heart of this project lies a desire to redefine and re-examine the concept 'ghetto' in the context of today's closed migrant districts. Through artistic creation and sociological research, we aim to create a space in which to examine and discuss the multiple stories emanating from migrant 'ghettos' of Europe. How do we talk about 'ghettos' today? Is it possible – and even necessary – to redefine the word in a manner that more accurately reflects the diverse realities that constitute our contemporary urban landscapes? What role do 'ghettos' play in constructing a European identity? What factors contribute to phenomena of 'ghettoization' in contemporary Europe? What are the dynamics that contribute to the implantation of migrant communities throughout Europe today and how do they connect to the collective memory of Europe's past?

*The City Ghettos of Today* entails a series of workshops open to local communities in different European cities – Warsaw, Paris, Bologna, Milan, Helsinki, Berlin and Antwerp. Run by artists and cultural actors, each workshop installment will conclude with an art installation and public debate on the project's themes in each of the cities listed above. This European collaboration will conclude in Warsaw in February 2015 with a large-scale installation-performance and debate that will bring together materials culled from each of the participating city workshops.

The project unites artists, cultural actors, academics and social workers in order to explore the broad themes of 'ghetto' and 'districts of migration' in participating European cities. *The City Ghettos of Today* reflects the interdisciplinary dimension of the Strefa Wolno-Słowa foundation, which crosses academic and theoretical methodologies with practices of artistic and cultural creation. Through artistic reflection and intellectual research, this collaborative project seeks to unravel the complex and problematical theme of 'migrant ghettos' in contemporary Europe, paying particular attention to various definitions and visions of ghettos within the contexts of Warsaw, Paris, Bologna, Milan, Helsinki, Berlin and Antwerp.

Conclusive event  
of *The City Ghettos*  
of Today in Paris

10 Feb. – 13 Feb. 2015

The conclusive and evaluation event of *The City Ghettos of Today* project in Paris will provide a synthetic overview of the project's residencies over the past year in Paris, Warsaw, Helsinki, Milan, Berlin, Bologna and Antwerp. During the event, Immigration History Museum will welcome artists, local researchers, and coordinators from all cities, all of whom took part in the project at some point during its year-long run.

Over the course of this three-day event, both foreign guests and Paris-based members of the public will have the opportunity to take part in an open discussion at the Immigration History Museum in Paris about the project artistic and research outcomes. Public will equally be invited to see the audiovisual materials connected with migrants and refugees issues emanating from the creative workshops in cities across Europe. Using artistic activities as a focal point project addressed the multiform ways in which migration has shaped Europe over the years as well as the different ways in which EU citizens have reacted to the presence of newcomers from Asia, Africa, Middle East and East. In this vein, *The City Ghettos of Today* used the language of art and of the theatre to explore different facets of immigration in Europe, ranging from personal testimonies to legal and administrative issues.

Inspired by testimonies culled from cities across Europe over the course of 2014, *Island Europe* will showcase personal histories, songs and short videos of migrants from Congo, Eritrea, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Vietnam, Palestine. This showcase will take the form of a presentation and an open discussion that will be held at Immigration History Museum on 11 January 2015.

Sponsor:



Organizer:



Local organizer:



Local partners:



International partners:



Media partners:



More info:  
[www.cityghettos.com](http://www.cityghettos.com)  
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During the meeting will be presented the audiovisual and textual material created during workshops and debates/meetings/interviews in all seven project cities:

## Open discussion and presentation of the The City Ghettos of Today project outcomes

when:  
**11 February,**  
**2.30 p.m.**

where:  
**Museum of Immigration History,**  
**293 avenue Daumesnil,**  
**75012 Paris**  
**Métro Porte Dorée**

The Museum of Immigration History together with the French Theatre Company Check Points and the International team of The City Ghettos of Today's project will welcome for the open-discussion visitors and all those who had taken part in the artistic process during the first project residence in Paris in March 2014: workshop participants from University Pais 8, young migrants from the French language association Atouts Cours, habitants of the Nanterre neighborhood Quartier du Parc, participants of the workshops of the Cie Check Points and the French Cultural center CENTQUATRE as well as all the French partners who had participated in the development of the project in Paris: Nanterre town council team, workers of the Social Center of Nanterre Parc'En Ciel and the Association Bel Agir, The Salle Saint Bruno in the Goutte d'Or.

### PARIS The City Ghettos of Today / Caliban's Voices March 2014

In order to lay the groundwork for the Paris edition of The City Ghettos of Today, Check Points Theatre Company together with the Museum of Immigration History (le Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration) organized and oversaw a preparatory workshop in artistic research, the overarching objective of which was to elaborate a 'ghetto dramaturgy'. This workshop brought together a heterogeneous group of participants from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from French and foreign university students (Chile, Colombia, Greece) to migrants from Mali, Algeria, Moldova and Romania. Within the framework of these weekly workshops, participants used their own personal experiences in Paris and fictional texts as the basis for a broader exploration of the theme of 'ghettos' in the context of urban Paris. Over the course of this preparatory period, participants compiled a diverse collection of personal traces and texts, historical and sociological documents, literary elements and journalistic material, the compilation of which served as an important resource for the international residency in March 2014, or the project's second phase. Similarly, this workshop period also enabled participants to explore one of the two neighborhoods that served as case studies for the project's Parisian residency: the Goutte d'Or in Paris, a neighborhood that is commonly referred to as an 'inner-city ghetto'. A neighborhood with a long history of European and African emigration, the Goutte d'Or's popular reputation is largely based on its contradictory status as a 'cosmopolitan and exotic' enclave and its reputation as a center for illicit activity (prostitution and drug traffic) and as a closed-in 'communitarian' enclave.

Whereas the preparatory workshops enabled participants to explore the Goutte d'Or neighborhood, the second-phase residency of the international artists and researchers concentrated on the Quartier du Parc in Nanterre, a suburb immediately north of Paris that served as the second case study in this Paris-based residency. In this phase of the project, members of the international team met with residents of the Cité Pablo Picasso in particular, an area of Nanterre's quartier du parc neighbourhood that is largely known for its 'cloud towers' constructed by architect Emile Aillaud in 1977. Commonly labeled as an 'extra-urban ghetto', this area is representative of suburban Parisian neighborhoods that have been stigmatized throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. This stigmatizing reputation reached an apex in French popular imagination during the 2005 riots. By exploring this neighborhood through the eyes of its residents, the fieldwork phase of the international residency enabled participants to gain an insider's perspective on this neighborhood whilst simultaneously examining differences and similarities between popular representations of the area in public arenas. Thanks to Nanterre's Parc'en Ciel Social Center, the international team was able to meet a variety of individuals comprising in the neighborhood's heterogeneous social sphere including: social workers, educators, young adults in reinsertion, retired individuals, high-school teachers, a former municipal employee, first-generation migrants enrolled in French language courses and retired Algerian migrant workers, all of whom enabled the international group to hear a range of different neighbourhood voices.

### WARSAW The City Ghettos of Today / Miranda Gazes Upon The Sea May 2014

Miranda gazes upon the sea situated the City Ghettos of Today in a Polish environment, using artistic exploration as a means of exploring the multiple meanings that the term 'ghetto' evokes in the context of contemporary Warsaw. Over the course of the event, participants and members of the public had the opportunity to take part in the numerous theatre, music, sound design and video workshops that made up the programme. Alongside these performance offerings, a parallel process of artistic research equally nourished this project. Led by members of the project team in collaboration with the State Ethnographical Museum in Warsaw as well as with the Refugee Centre in the Targowek district, this dimension of the project placed the voices of refugees and migrants at the heart of this process of artistic discovery. By conducting interviews and artistic workshops in groups, Miranda gazes upon the sea created a space in which to reflect upon the presence of immigrant minorities in Warsaw: do these immigrant populations form inaccessible enclaves? Or, on the contrary, do they form relationships with Polish nationals easily? This project considered also how Polish populations see foreigners and examined their reactions to the presence of migrant communities in Warsaw. As such, events taking place during the first stage of the residency equally provided a space in which both Ukrainian and Vietnamese, immigrants, minorities and refugee populations living in Warsaw were able to add their voices to this debate, namely, through participatory artistic workshops. The project's focus on questions of marginality included also theatre work with incarcerated individuals in the Śluzewiec Prison in Warsaw. Meetings with the prisoners became an inspiration for discussions regarding questions of isolation, closure and personal development whilst in seclusion. Underpinning these workshops was the desire to uncover and develop creative means for survival, taking initiative and finding the inspiration to create and to rebuild in whatever space one occupies.

Miranda, one of the characters from the Shakespeare's The Tempest became an inspiration for the artistic work and a metaphor for the theater creation in the Polish context. Miranda was only a child when she debarked on the island with her father, Prospero. She remembers little of her life before then, knowing only that they arrived by sea. A solitary child, she spent her youth playing alone and watching the sea, day in and day out. Over time, as she grew into the island's sole woman, she would come to know only two things: the island and the sea that separated her from the rest of the world. Then one day, out of this dark sea of the unknown, a Stranger arrived on the island. And it is upon this island that we rejoined Miranda on her journey. The island, our island, this circle of the familiar, surrounded by a deep and inscrutable sea; a sea that separates us from a world. And from this world, a Stranger arrives carrying with him all of the desires, the fears, and the ghosts that are wont to will themselves into existence during long days spent gazing upon the sea - Miranda in the artistic work during the project became a character symbolising Polish people who by the meeting with newcomers - today's immigrants and refugees from all over the world are discovering the Polish multicultural, regional and linguistic past.

### BOLOGNA The City Ghettos of Today The Island is full of noises June and July 2014

The Bologna residency focused on various forms of camps for migrants and political refugees located in Italy, Europe and Africa. Project interviews focused on an Afghan camp in Patras, a refugee camp on the borders of Sierra Leone, a center for identification and expulsion (C.I.E.) in Bologna, and on a prison in Libya. The methodological hypothesis was to listen to those who had lived in such contexts, and through the reflection and analysis of anthropologists, sociologists, political geographers in dialogue with artists, to deconstruct those structures into constituent elements, with particular attention to categories 'similar' to those of narratology (eg characters that act, typical dynamics, types of conflicts, structures of life experiences, objects). During the second week, participants and organisers used the key words emerged in such categories as stimulations for art workshops involving nearly 100 participants and embraced practices of writing, video, theater, illustration, and music. The final performance, which involved around fifty participants-actors from fourteen different countries, was titled An Island Full of Noises, which is a verse from Shakespeare's The Tempest. Viewed through this Shakespearean lens, the 'camp' signaled a form of isolation whilst simultaneously emphasizing a richness of possible voices and interpretive keys. The performance took place in the prestigious setting of the Cortile del Pozzo (Courtyard of the Well), the courtyard of the town hall of Bologna. On directorial level, it was divided into two distinct phases: an itinerant time where the public could 'explore the island', which included many small scenes based upon interviews that were written by the playwright Tomasz Gromadka; and a second more central time which, focusing on the clash between Prospero and Caliban, proposed choral and choreographic scenes that used music composed during the project's music workshops by the composer Alejandro Olarte.

### HELSINKI The City Ghettos of Today Prospero's Veils September 2014

Helsinki's approach to the theme 'ghetto' focused on knowledge, practices and skills that become marginalized when people emigrate from other countries to Finland. This triggers a process of searching for a group with whom it is possible to share the knowledge and values that are not recognized elsewhere in Finnish society. These non-spatial ghettos become often disregarded sources of hidden visions and skills. The process in Helsinki started with interviews with migrants actively involved in the Finnish society with backgrounds in Latin America, Iraq, Somalia, different countries of Africa and Russia. The interviews were prepared together with a project called Siivulo that works to improve the position of writers that write in foreign languages in Finland. Siivulo poets also created site-specific poetry that was placed in the digital map of the City Ghettos of Today-project. Heliinä Rautavaara Museum that focuses on the intangible heritage of non-European cultures, prepared an encounter with representatives of the Somali community, one of the biggest migrant groups in Finland. Pacunet ry organised a panel discussion with representatives of wider African community in Finland.

Based on the encounters, the participants' experiences and the local team's preparatory work, audio-visual content was developed in the workshops and incorporated into the installation structure. The content included sound samples and videos based on the stories written or told by the participants, including an animation. The installation also served as the scenography for experimental performances that were created in tandem with the installation. The first performance took place in Stoa, the main venue of the project in Helsinki, a cultural centre in a culturally rich area in Eastern part of Helsinki and the second one in shopping centre Forum in the centre of the city. Included in the programme there was a seminar, which presented the cases of the project's outcomes in participating European cities.

### MILAN The City Ghettos of Today/ Caliban's Cave October 2014

The Milan stage of the project involved a collaboration with the Teatro degli Incontri (Tdl), a group comprising twenty citizen-actors, including women, men, young, migrants. Working with the international artistic team, the Tdl group brought their individual contributions related to the theme of contemporary ghettos to fruition in a final installation and performance; the sum of a year's journey.

These individual contributions were rooted in on-the-ground investigations into low-income housing suburbs of Milan which took the form of a collection of interviews and audio-video impressions. The result was the production of the performance Chiusi Dentro (Locked Inside). Chiusi Dentro was performed during the Milan residency in the courtyard of a council building on the outskirts of Milan and was filmed by the City Ghettos international artistic team. The Tdl group also collaborated with City Ghettos to produce original writings, fragments of plays and songs. Continuing the project's exploration of Shakespeare's The Tempest, the Milan residency broached the subject of contemporary ghettos by focusing on the figure of Caliban: the charming stranger requiring education and taming. Explorations took place at the Paolo Pini in Milan.

Founded as an artistic group in 2010, Tdl is now a cultural association that creates theatre work under the artistic direction of Gigi Gherzi. At its core, Tdl is a point of contact between cultures, actors and audience, Italians and immigrants. The group includes social workers, teachers and artists. It is an encounter between 'classic' dramaturgy and fragmentary writings, theatrical acts and short theatrical events that take place in the territories of the city, between acting and performance, language of the actor and other forms of expression. Among the group's goals is the desire to find a new relationship with the spectator, who is asked to be an active part of the performance: to rebuild the public, create community.

### BERLIN The City Ghettos of Today / Uninhabited Island September 2014

Uninhabited Island situated The City Ghettos of Today in the Berlin site-specific context of a rapidly changing city, from the 'Cinderella' of European capitals back in the 1990s to the present 'place to be'. The focus was placed on the urban and social changes which are currently affecting the city, such as gentrification and the resulting displacement of low-income inhabitants, often including those with a 'migration background'. Former immigrant and poor districts often associated with the idea of 'ghetto', like Kreuzberg or Neukölln, have received unprecedented hype and developed into magnets for tourists and real estate investors during the last five years.

Over the course of this, these districts, once the furthest limits of West Berlin and now central districts in the reunified German capital, have been increasingly populated by a new wave of immigrants. These newcomers, primarily from comparatively rich Western countries, active in the creative industries and often using English, not German, as a working language stand in stark contrast both to the pre-war German residents of Kreuzberg and Neukölln as well as the first wave of post-war immigrants, coming primarily from Turkey.

The local partners OnElf Theater and Performance Collective and the English Theatre Berlin | International Performing Arts Center together with the international artistic team of The City Ghettos of Today invited, through an open call, an heterogeneous group of participants based in Berlin, 'old' and 'new' Berliners, from Germany and from beyond, to work and reflect on the changing living and social conditions in the city. Starting from the stories and biography of the participants as a representative 'sample' of contemporary Berliners and in a provocative relation with one another, a collective, controversial and lively portrait of the city was created.

### ANTWERP The City Ghettos of Today Under Sail January/February 2015

In Under Sail The City Ghettos of Today project explores many nationalities living together in a limited territory. The project team used the metaphor of a ship to ask questions about the relationship between the inhabitants and their city and the interrelationship between the nationalities. How did they feel entering the ship, how did they feel during the journey and where should the ship sail to?

Antwerp is a city with 'super-diversity'. Multiple nationalities live together in different areas in the city. Some areas are known to be the arrival areas, areas where newcomers arrive and have to start a new life, together with people who have lived there for years and generations. The ship resembles the city as a crowded entity that has to sail in the direction the passengers decided to.

The local organizer kunstZ has an academy where people of Antwerp from different origins have the chance to get an education in theatre and performance. The students of this academy were the passengers of this metaphorical ship whose journey and future was explored by the public of the final performances. The performances took place on the 8th floor of 'MAS' a museum that looks over the city and the port of Antwerp.