

Zurich 22 August 2015

## **Press release**

# **ZKB Patronage Prize and ZKB Acknowledgement Prize 2015**

Today, on the occasion of the Zürcher Theater Spektakel, the ZKB Patronage Prize and the ZKB Acknowledgement Prize were awarded by Zurich city mayor Corine Mauch and Dr. János Blum, presidium member of the Zürcher Kantonalbank. After long, controversial discussions lasting until the small hours the jury has decided: The ZKB Patronage Prize of 30 000 Swiss Francs goes to 600 HIGHWAYMEN from Brooklyn for their production «Employee of the Year». «Will we remember seeing this play when we are 60?» the jury members wonder in their statement picking up a sentence from the show. Their answer: «Probably yes. The image of these five strong young girls will remain with us for a long time.» They were particularly convinced by the «clear artistic decisions, honesty and the ability to captivate the audience».

The ZKB Acknowledgement Prize of 5000 Swiss Francs is awarded to the Indian performer and actress Mallika Taneja for her Short Piece «Thoda Dhyan Se (Be careful)». The jury praised the very effective, engaged and at the same time funny way in which the young artists wraps up the disastrous, well-intended codes of conduct for women to protect themselves against rape.

*(Find the detailed statements of the jury at the end of this press release.)*

The nominated productions

### **Nominees for the ZKB Patronage Prize 2015:**

- Hillel Kogan ISRAEL: We Love Arabs
- Firma für Zwischenbereiche SWITZERLAND: The Camouflage Project
- 600 HIGHWAYMEN USA: Employee of the Year
- Eko Supriyanto & EkosDance Company INDONESIA: Cry Jailolo
- Alice Ripoll BRAZIL: Suave

### **For the ZKB Acknowledgement Prize 2015 all of the works presented in Short Pieces were nominated:**

- Choy Ka Fai SINGAPORE, INDONESIA: SoftMachine: Rianto
- Alexandre Paulikevitch LEBANON: Elgha'
- Ja Ha Koo SOUTH COREA, NETHERLANDS: Lolling and Rolling
- Venuri Perera SRI LANKA: Traitriot
- Victoriya Myronyuk UKRAINE, BELGIUM: Spells for a Foreign Groom
- Cie. Désir Collectif BURKINA FASO: LEGS seule en scène
- Mallika Taneja INDIA: Thoda Dhyan Se (Be careful)
- Dana Michel CANADA: Uncanny Valley Stuff

## The jury

The members of the jury were: Mohammad Al Attar (35), playwright and dramaturge from Syria, Nicoleta Esinencu (37), playwright and director from Moldova, Daniel Hellmann (30), dancer, actor, singer and performer from Zurich, Myriam Prongué, head of theatre at the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, and Makiko Yamaguchi (50), head of performing arts at the Asia Center of the Japan Foundation from Tokyo.

## Statements of the jury

### **ZKB Patronage Prize 2015: 600 HIGHWAYMEN USA «Employee of the Year»**

Will we remember seeing this play when we are 60? Probably yes. The image of these five strong young girls will remain with us for a long time.

We are happy to award the ZKB Patronage Prize to 600 HIGHWAYMEN from Brooklyn for giving us a unique theatrical experience. Together with their five wonderful performers Abigail Browde and Michael Silverstone take us on a journey that embraces a whole life time built and reconstructed by memories, voids and an ongoing chain of words and gestures that pour out of these girls' mouths and bodies.

A white square carpet becomes the playground to unfold the story of J.'s lifelong quest for her mother from her early childhood till her eighties – a journey of tragic losses, moments of joy and explorations. The narration of this life evolves in a constant flow of words, leaving behind a past that still has to become the performers' future, thus creating an irritating distance between the emotionality of the text and the formalized physical presence of the girls.

«Employee of the Year» is the proof of the unlimited potential of the empty space to tell about our lives, fears and the irrevocability of time.

In this year's Theater Spektakel we saw works of choreographers and directors who worked passionately with young people eager to express themselves on stage. We saw dance and theatre pieces from Jailolo (East Indonesia), Rio, Tel Aviv, Basel and Brooklyn. After a long and controversial discussion we have decided to give the prize to 600 HIGHWAYMEN as they convinced us in «Employee of the Year» with clear artistic decisions, honesty and the ability to captivate the audience.

### **ZKB Acknowledgement Prize 2015: Mallika Taneja INDIA: «Thoda Dhyan Se (Be careful)»**

The Short Pieces program of the Zürcher Theater Spektakel was a very strong selection of eight new works by young artists. In this showcase we were convinced by «Thoda Dhyan Se (Be careful)» by the Indian performer Mallika Taneja.

A young woman stands naked in front of the audience. For a long time. Calm, serious and then suddenly with a bright smile on her face. Her look directed at the spectators. And then she begins to say: «You have to be a bit careful.» Good-humored, without pronouncing the word «rape», she shows how a society teaches the young girls to be cautious, to confine themselves and to restrain their freedom of movements, of living and of thinking.

«Unfortunately, however, rape culture gets you coming and going. It is precisely about fear, about creating a culture where women are afraid to participate in public life as men do. A life lived in fear of sexual violence, a life where you cannot take the risk that men take without anticipating physical attack or, worse still, being attacked and then blamed for it, is not a life lived freely.» This quotation by the British journalist, blogger and feminist Laurie Penny resumes the cause of Mallika Taneja.

In hardly 15 minutes Mallika Taneja wraps herself up to the ears and brings this absurdity and this disastrous, well-intended confinement to the point: «You have to be a bit careful. And if something happens at least you can say it was not your fault.» Her performance is very effective, engaged and even funny. She intends to play it everywhere, not only in India, in theaters and in schools, everywhere.

Mallika, we respect your courage but please be a bit careful!

*Should you have questions or need further information please contact us.  
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*Pictures of the award-winning productions as well as of the award ceremony you find on  
[www.theaterspektakel.ch](http://www.theaterspektakel.ch) >presse*

We thank you for your interest.  
With kind regards

Esther Schmid  
*Head of communication*