



**HOPE IN ACTION**  
**Theatre - Women - Will**  
**12-23 June 2019**

*Dedicated to Lika Mutal*

In 2006 I was invited to a festival in Lima by the actresses of the Yuyachkani theatre group. One day they took all the guests to the memorial monument El ojo que llora (The eye that cries) by Lika Mutal, a labyrinth leading to a stone sculpture at the centre. As I entered the labyrinth, I looked down: beside the track there were thousands of stones laid in order, one for each victim of the war that had lasted for twenty years between the Peruvian army and Sendero Luminoso. Some of the stones disclosed the name and date of birth and of disappearance or death of a person. Looking down and remembering all the other wars and massacres, I was seized by anguish and a sense of impotence. Searching for comfort, I looked for a long time at the sculpture washed by a continuous ripple of water representing the tears of the Pachamama (Mother Earth). Then I walked all the way back. The stones were in the opposite direction and I could no longer read the inscriptions. Automatically I raised my eyes and head, and my erect body regained energy. The simple obligation of placing one foot in front of the other changed my attitude. I understood then that what we can and must do is to keep on walking. The action of walking decides and where we look determines the direction and the spirit of where we are going.

Today, in a time when government leaders and the people who have elected them no longer seem to acknowledge the simple basic value of human rights, I desperately need to be accompanied by hope. Not the hope that sits back waiting for something to happen, nor the hope as a form of prayer to others, but the active determination to transmit a message of energy through the practice of my craft, theatre. A craft based on the know-how of creating relationships.

The last two Transit festivals were permeated by themes of violence against women and the possible ways of reacting. The choice of Hope in Action - Theatre, Women, Will as a theme for the 9th Transit comes from a need to move on. I use 'will' in the double meaning of resolution and legacy. Without forgetting the necessity and responsibility of denouncing and reacting, I wish to regain confidence in a communication that refuses idle words and passes through body contact, self-assurance, love, spirit of adventure and belief in the future. The older I get, the more experience I have, the more AI, algorithms and robots take over the human capacity of having feelings and intelligence, the more I need beauty, poetry, song, music, children, movement and nature. Nature has a power of being that I would like to give to my actions in theatre. Nature transmits messages of energy and life, and is an inspiration for my work.

Every time I am confronted with despair and sickness, misery and rage, my advice has been to take time to breathe, go for a walk, be out in nature, by the sea or in the woods, where nothing is mechanic, orderly, symmetric, boring, and everything is changing all the time. The horizon can be cloudy, but the distance and space give a sense of proportion and longing. Preparing the image for the festival, Dorthe Kærgaard reminded me of a Danish saying, "you should not sit inside, when all hope is out". Many women have been invited to Transit 9 Festival to contribute with their experience regarding its theme through performances, work demonstrations, workshops and talks. The programme wants to take the women 'out' to be nourished, energised and inspired, enhancing a sense of hope for the future of our craft and of this world, and the belief that in a time of crisis, disillusionment, corruption, autocracy and war, the voice of women can contribute an alternative point of view. This requires engagement and responsibility. Of course, inside or outside, struggling in despair or singing with joy, screaming out loud or in a persistent silence, we have to do our work well. It is the only weapon at our disposal. Theatre is a shared space for reflection, but it can also be a time for hope in action.