

# **SOMALI MEMOIRS**

## **SNOWFLAKES AND CHERRY FLOWERS**

**A COMMUNITY PLAY**





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Theatre embraces all  
of humanity





# SOMALISKE ERINDRINGER

20. & 21. FEBRUAR KL. 19:00 PÅ EUTOPIA STAGE



## SNEFNUG OG KIRSEBÆRBLOMSTER

Poesien går hånd i hånd, med virkelige fortællinger i EUTOPIAs nyeste Community Play. Her vil helt almindelige mennesker med somalisk herkomst stå på scenen og dele deres erindringer. Om savnet, minderne, duftene og om den rejse, de har måttet tage. Om det blå hav. Om drømmene, de har med.

HANAAN YUSUF • SAKARIE IBRAHIM • FATIMA YUSUF ABDI  
SAID MOHAMED • SALEBAN AIDEED • ILHAAM MOHAMED ALI • KADRA M. ALI

ISCENESÆTTELSE & KONCEPT BRIGITTE CHRISTENSEN SCENOGRAF CATIA HAUBERG  
MUSIKALSK KONSULENT NIKOLA DIKLIĆ LYSDSIGN ERNST STEEN HANSEN  
INSTRUKTORASSISTENTER STINE NIELSEN & SOFIE JØRGENSEN  
FOTO RASMUS BRUUN JØRGENSEN  
PRODUKTION NAJMA A. MOHAMMOUD, SØREN HØJGAARD & MATHILDE SPATH

Skabt i samarbejde med Gobaad Kultur Forening og støttet af Gellerup Kulturmidler



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AARHUS-2017  
KULTURHovedstad  
i Danmark

# **SOMALI MEMOIRS**

## **SNOWFLAKES AND CHERRY FLOWERS**

Poetry and real stories go hand in hand, as ordinary people of Somali origin, for the first time on stage, share their memoirs. About the war, the fleeing, the fear, the loss. About sensations and smells. About the travel they had to make. About the blue ocean. About the dreams they carry with them. About snowflakes and cherry flowers.

The community play SOMALI MEMOIRS was created and first performed at EUTOPIA Stage in the winter of 2018. EUTOPIA Stage lies in Gellerup, in the Danish city of Aarhus. Gellerup is officially called "Denmark's largest ghetto", and the district houses people from all over the world. The word EUTOPIA is Greek and means a beautiful, lovely place.

SOMALI MEMOIRS is EUTOPIA's second own production, directed by the artistic manager of EUTOPIA, Brigitte Christensen. In this book you can read about the play and the participants, the process and the way it came to life. You will find excerpts from stories of a people who most of us come across in our everyday life, but few of us really get to know. A people met with prejudice. In every moment of their lives. A people from a land with a proud and ancient culture. People from Somalia.



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# THE PLAY

Darkness.

Silence in the room.

The light comes.

Sound fills the air.

Stories begin.

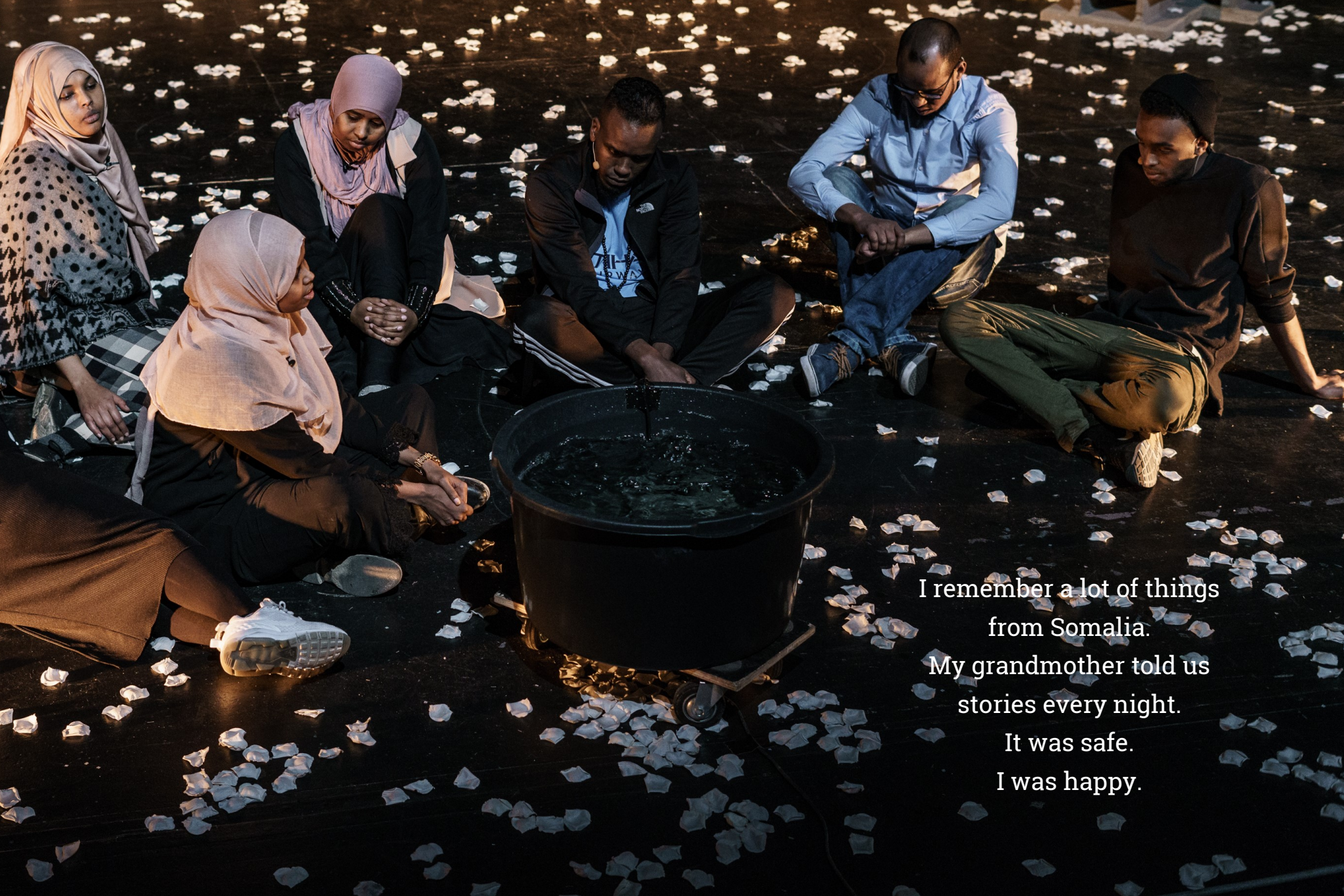
War, fleeing, fear, loss.

Dreams and hope.

Memoirs.







I remember a lot of things  
from Somalia.  
My grandmother told us  
stories every night.  
It was safe.  
I was happy.





My name is Said.  
I was brought here in nineteen ninety-four  
on a tiny propeller airplane.  
I love it when the sun is shining.  
I hate it when it's dark and cold  
and I dream of owning a boat  
so that I could go wherever I want.  
Right now I live here.  
In Denmark.  
In Aarhus.  
Right in the ghetto.

REVID-2





And for  
those who  
do not know  
– this is Somalia.







I am tired of history repeating itself over and over again.  
I am tired that everyday, somewhere in the world a mother must cry for the loss of her child.  
A father must bury his son.  
I am tired. I am tired of war.







Sakarie is a child of war. He was born in conflict.

Kadra was separated from her mother. She forgot her face.

Said remembers the red sand of Yemen. Growing up on the run.

Hanaan never experienced the war. When they started shooting she thought it was fun.

Ilhaam got scared of the sound of the airplane toilet fleeing to Denmark.

Saleban is longing for his savanna. He dreams of climbing Mount Everest.

Fatima escaped the bombs with her mother. Walking. Her feet hurt. She cried.





My name is Fatima.  
When I first came to Denmark  
I was placed in the city of Esbjerg.  
Now, when people ask me,  
I don't know what to answer  
Am I from Somalia or from Esbjerg?  
I don't know,  
but I do remember the day.  
That day.  
When I got my passport.  
Beetroot red.  
A Danish one.  
Finally, I was a Dane.  
A real Dane.  
Or was I?  
What does the Danes do?  
Bread.  
They buy bread, I thought.  
So I went to the baker.











My name is Hanaan.  
I dream of peace.







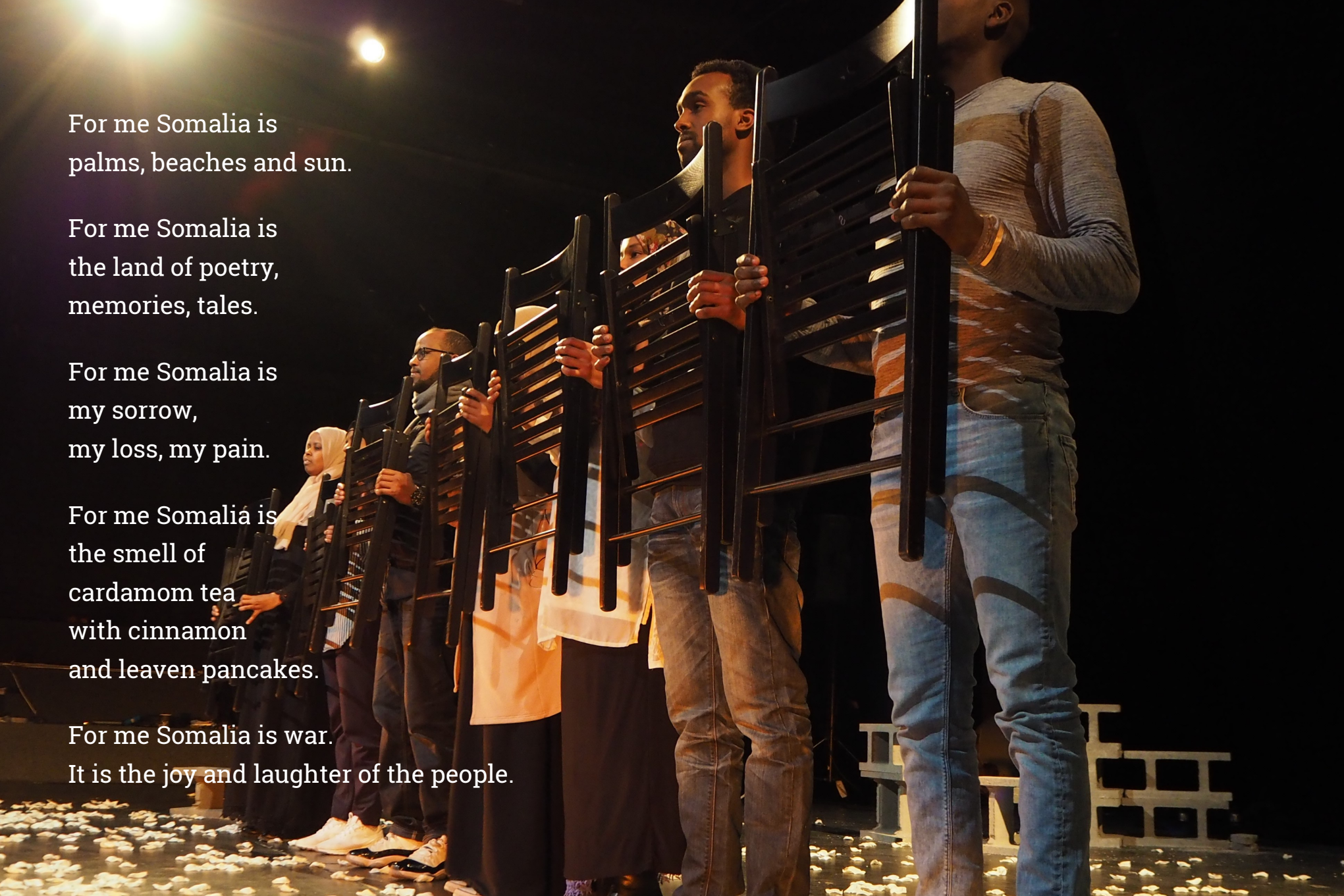
For me Somalia is  
palms, beaches and sun.

For me Somalia is  
the land of poetry,  
memories, tales.

For me Somalia is  
my sorrow,  
my loss, my pain.

For me Somalia is  
the smell of  
cardamom tea  
with cinnamon  
and leaven pancakes.

For me Somalia is war.  
It is the joy and laughter of the people.





I was standing at my balcony  
when all of a sudden  
white powder came from the sky.

I remember thinking:

Is this my upstairs neighbour?

Is he cleaning carpets again?

I was only a boy  
and I had never  
seen snow before.









Bombs fell over Mogadishu.

The ground was trembling in the night.

Some left on foot. Others in cars, on planes or boats.

Adults would bring food, a small girl her doll.

Some fled to the South.

Some towards The North.


New life began.

In a faraway land.



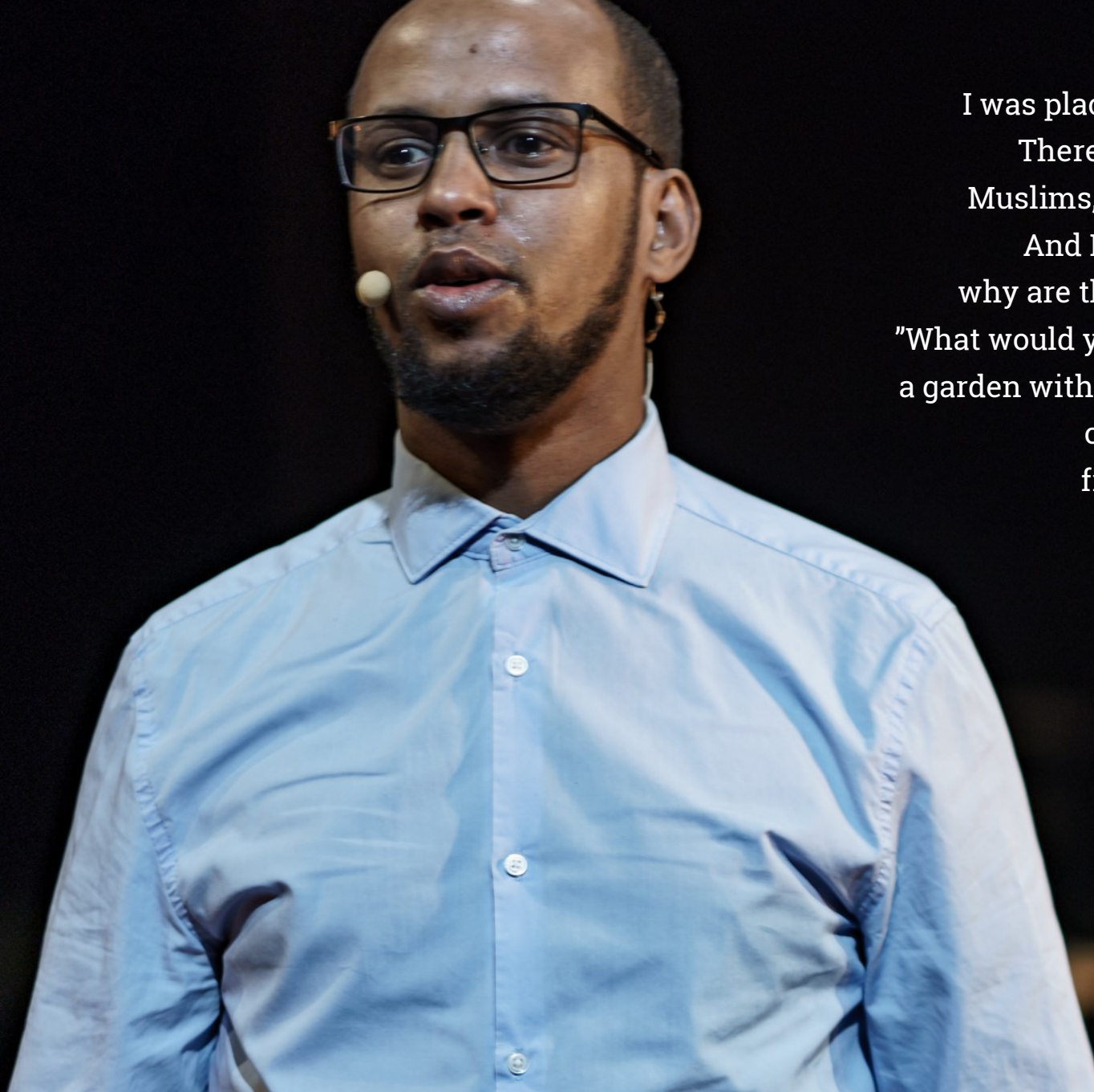






My brother thought it was a cherry tree.  
Like the ones that grow in Somalia.  
He saw the leaves of cherry  
flowers, falling slowly,  
and we ran  
outside.  
But it  
was  
cold  
and  
wet.  
A few  
days later  
we agreed:  
It was snow.  
It must have been.





I was placed in a reception class.

There I met Christians, Jews,  
Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists.

And I asked my mother why,  
why are there so many religions?  
"What would you rather have, my son,  
a garden with only one kind of flower  
or a garden with flowers  
from all over the world?"

My mother asked me  
this question in return  
and through it  
I met the world.



If only we could remember  
how we fought  
the invasion.  
How we fought for our country.  
How we stood as one.  
My dream is that  
we remember  
who we are.







Travelling through lands and deserts.

Walking through memories.

Fragments of lives.

Shoulder by shoulder.

Together.

Standing up for dignity.

For humanity.











To those who can hear me, I say – do not despair.  
The misery that is now upon us  
is but the passing of greed, the bitterness of men who fear  
the way of human progress. The hate of men will pass, and dictators die,  
and the power they took from the people  
will return to the people. And so long as men die, liberty will never perish.  
Soldiers! Don't give yourselves to brutes,  
men who despise you, enslave you, who regiment your lives,  
tell you what to do, what to think and what to feel!  
Who drill you, diet you, treat you like cattle, use you as cannon fodder.  
Don't give yourselves to these unnatural men – machine men  
with machine minds and machine hearts!  
You are not machines! You are not cattle! You are men!  
You have the love of humanity in your hearts!  
You don't hate! Only the unloved hate, the unloved and the unnatural!  
Soldiers! Don't fight for slavery!  
Fight for liberty!











Maanta maanta maanta waa maalin weyne maanta  
Maanta maanta maanta madaxeen banaane maanta

Maanta maanta waa mahad ilaahey maanta  
maanta maanta maanta dadkii midowye maanta

Maanta maanta maanta waa maalin weyne maanta  
Maanta maanta maanta madaxeen banaane maanta

Maanta maanta maanta markii dhulkeeni maanta  
maanta maanta maanta lama madhihikaraaye maanta

Maanta maanta maanta waa maalin weyne maanta  
Maanta maanta maanta madaxeen banaane maanta

Maanta maanta manata maandeeq hasheeni maanta  
maanta maanta maanta caanihihi kalaale maanta

Maanta maanta maanta waa maalin weyne maanta  
Maanta maanta maanta madaxeen banaane maanta

Somali Hymn to Independence and Liberty



# REACTIONS



## BORGERTEATER

**GELLERUP** Syv almindelige mennesker går på scenen i Gellerup, når Eutopia Stage har urpremiere på borgerspillet 'Somaliske erindringer' 20. og 21. februar kl. 19.

De fire kvinder og tre mænd er alle af somalisk herkomst og de fleste flygtninge. De sætter egne erfaringer og historier på spil i en forestilling om Somalia og menneskene derfra.

De går på scenen helt uden skuespillerfaring men med

instruktion fra kunstneris leder Brigitte Christensen.

Eutopia 2017 udspringer af den omfattende fysiske udvikling med projektet Helhedsplan Gellerup, og supplerer byggeriet med kunst og kultur.

Du er her: Forside / Brænd / Kultur / På tirsdag står de på scenen for første gang

### På tirsdag står de på scenen for første gang

16. FEBRUAR 2018 AF PETER FROM JACOBSEN



På tirsdag og onsdag går det løs for disse syv somalisk-danskere, som alle står på scenen for første gang. Sakarie Ibrahim står som nummer to fra venstre.

Når Eutopia Stage i Gellerup i næste uge inviterer til forestillingen Somaliske Erindringer, får de syv medvirkende deres debut som skuespillere. De har alle somaliske rødder og har sagt ja til at medvirke i forestillingen, hvor de fortæller om sig selv og deres drømme.



## Somaliske historier på scenen

Jesper i  
Civilingeni  
for Byudvik  
båret om  
cyklistie  
Blåens i

**P1 DR**  
Eutopia Stage i Gellerup: Teater fortæller historier fra poesien og erindringens land

Erindringer" – her med Hanaan Yusuf i forrest på scenen – Eutopia Stage i Gellerup den 20. og 21. februar 2018. (Foto: Rasmus Bruun)

lieres historier om skønhed, sorg, savn og  
gt til at bygge bro mellem mennesker og  
ers sjældent mødes. Det sker på Eutopia  
vor borgernes fortællinger. Nøjt kunstner

Måske ro  
Henrik i  
ganske sv  
castrum d  
hævet a

us. lokale

Rasmus Bruun

altur-  
dyfot-  
dheds-  
under-  
get lang  
ale struk-  
nråde, og  
ten måske  
å vej.  
at kunstn  
lerupparkens  
løse alle om-  
mer som så  
tro, at det kan  
rikkerne.



I had never done anything like this,  
and standing in front of so many people was  
something I had never dared dream of...

I met all these friends and gained  
self-confidence!

– Saleban

I was so proud. And happy!

– Hanaan

I stepped out of my comfort zone.

We all did.

But we were in safe hands,  
and we found something together.

– Ilhaam

It meant so much to be able to tell  
my story. Not just to a person or  
two, but to hundreds, and through  
the means of theatre.

– Said

I took a lot with me from the work, which I use every day.  
On stage I felt natural, I felt real. And I actually think  
I got to know myself in a whole new way.

– Kadra

To be able to share who we are,  
as Somali and as Danes,  
it meant the world to me.  
It gave me energy!

– Sakarie

To participate gave me a lot. I've been very shy,  
I've had difficulty speaking my mind,  
even though there is so much that I want to say.  
Working like this has given me courage.

– Fatima



# THE PROCESS



CHAOTIC-DIVER  
CHAOTIC-DIVERSITY | AUSSENAU-ALLOUANG | CHAOTIC-DIVER





A process is created, as in a professional production. All phases must be gone through, a group must be created, everyone working towards a common goal: the show. Performance anxiety, adrenaline pumping, tiredness, the joy, the sense of responsibility for one's self and for others, the wholeness, the goal. The unique experience of lifting together. Being part of a larger whole.

– **Brigitte Christensen**  
director

Distance. Worlds apart.  
Mystery. Peoples lives. Our lives.

Stage. Pictures bringing smells.  
You listen to the sound. Souls.

Warmth from the eyes.  
We are closer.  
A touch.  
We perceive.  
There is no there or here.  
There is no us or them.  
Sounds flowing, souls talk.  
We listen.  
There is a life in our hearts.

– Nikola Diklic  
composer









One particularly great achievement of this Community Play  
is a unity of stage design, movements, sounds, voices, stories  
One big Tale

– Nikola





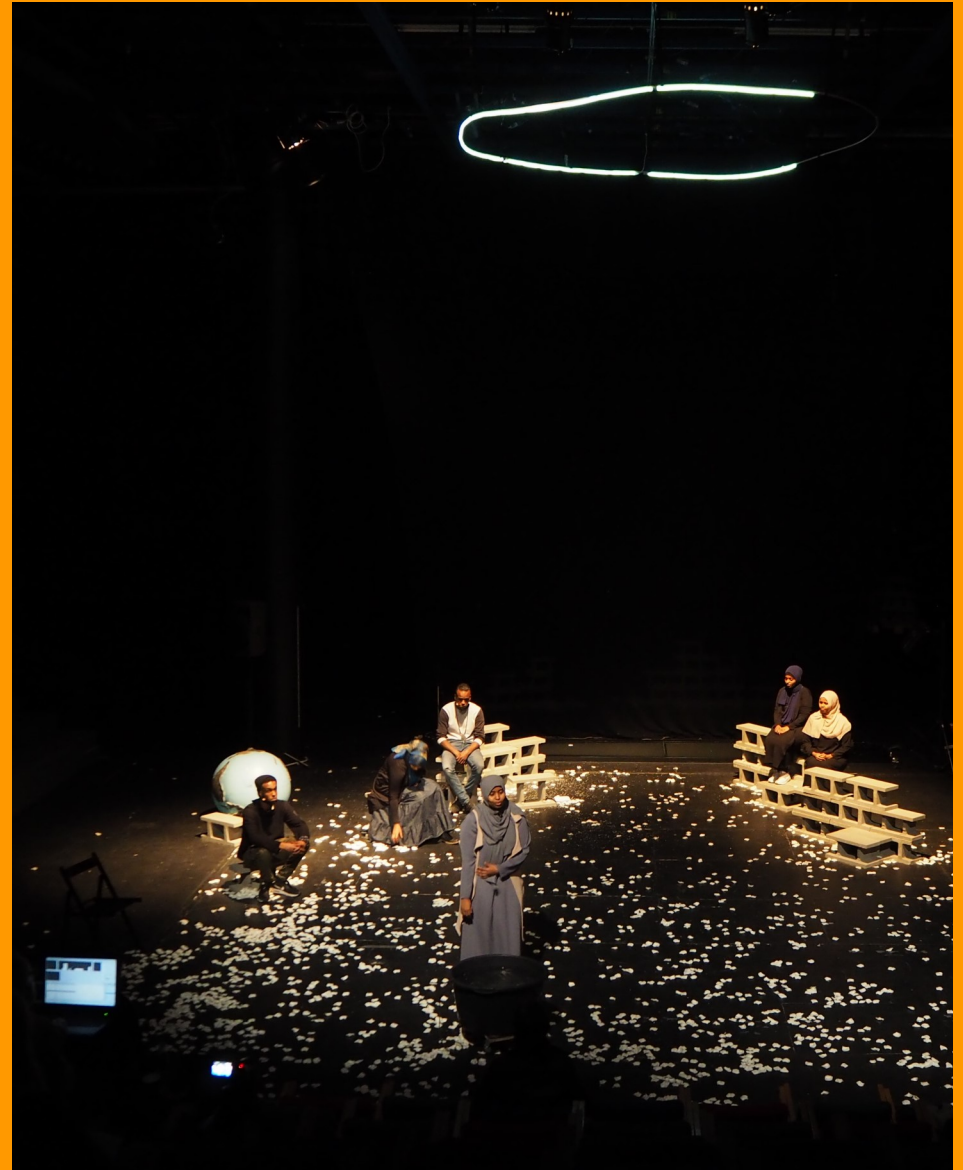


Working with Somali Memoirs has been an eye-opening experience. Everyone learned a lot. Sharing was a great part. A unique atmosphere was created. Between all present in the room. Professionals, amateurs, helpers, volunteers. Something greater was growing. Something intimate and very important. And all were part of it. Ready to give. Ready to share.

In a Community Play the process and the result cannot be divided. The way the performance is created, the different energies are mirrored directly in the result, especially as the performers are ordinary people with no previous theatre experience. If love and warmth have been integrated in the work, that will be the very soul of what the audience will experience. Sometimes even more true and without filters, than if professional actors are on stage. This is the great challenge of working with amateurs. No filters. Lots of humanity and fragility. If the right stream of trust arrives in the process a unique power can be created in the performance.

We started up meeting twice a week. Then the last period, every day. Practicing how to speak, to walk, to move in space, on stage. Practicing how to tell a story. Searching deep inside the memoirs of each participant. Those stories became part of the final play.

The personal material was put into a professional frame. By the director and others: the composer Nikola Diklic gave musical strength and rhythm to the performance, the set designer Catia Hauberg created the visual universe, the production team and all the helpers created the fundamental welcoming atmosphere during rehearsals. All this together created Somali Memoirs.







After having followed a community play at first hand, it became clear to me what the method can do. It has social elements but it is much more. It's about taking part, but also about giving. You give your here and now, your time and your presence in the moment. To the work. To this space with these people. To create. Even though it's hard. And as is often the case, you get back what you put in. The now, the moment, becomes yours. Also in the future. You'll always be able to look back and say yes, I contributed, I created this moment in time, this presence. It will be yours forever.

– **Søren Højgaard**  
production assistant

The cold rain  
Runs down the concrete

The yellow light  
In the wet asphalt

The soft glances  
In the dark winter

– **Catia Hauberg**  
production designer



**Communication** has become somewhat of a mantra for me. Life, freedom, democracy, every relationship needs communication. **Human exchange.** Collective experiences create **identity**. Without relations and shared emotions, the road to angst, self-satisfaction and small-mindedness is short. **Minorities are perceived as threats** to our security created behind our walls of loneliness. Pettiness becomes the weapon of the self-righteous. **The world becomes smaller.** People meet each other less and less. It is theatre's sworn duty to be that public space, where **emotions, ideas** and **opinions** can be exchanged. A creative forum, a place where innovation and provocation can disturb our complacency. Where poetry, beauty, the dark side of the mind can be **freely displayed**. Theatre is a unique, live experience. Theatre is now, unrepeatable. Theatre is continual exchange of energy between all people present. Theatre is body and soul. **Theatre embraces all of humanity.**

– Brigitte Christensen  
director





**Cast members:** Hanaan Yusuf, Sakarie Ibrahim, Fatima Yusuf Abdi, Said Mohamed, Saleban Aideed, Ilhaam Mohamed Ali, Kadra M. Ali

**Director and concept:** Brigitte Christensen

**Scenography:** Catia Hauberg

**Music:** Nikola Diklic

**Light design:** Ernst Steen Hansen

**Assistant directors:** Stine Nielsen, Sofie Jørgensen

**Organization:** Najma A. Mohamoud, Søren Højgaard, Mathilde Späth

**Photos:** Rasmus Bruun Jørgensen, Per Pedersen

Words at page 36 by Charlie Chaplin

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AARHUS  
KOMMUNE



Gellerup  
Kulturmidler

AARHUS-2017  
EUROPEAN CAPITAL  
OF CULTURE

Gobaad  
KULTUR FORENING





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People from Somalia.