

Annet Henneman
LETTER TO THE SOMALI WOMEN
OF «REFUGEES...»,
THE SEMINAR/THEATRE
REPORTAGE PERFORMANCE

Dear Zara, Fardus, Abda, «Layla della Somalia» (and Iskhak, Apo, Erfan, and...),

in front of my computer I see the effects of the bomb that exploded in Kirkuk (Iraq) and where so many people died... I went to their collective funeral... and I cry...

I can still hear your words, your singing, I can still see your tears, mothers who lost their children, husbands, parents, in one of the many wars that never end... Mogadishu... You escaped in buses, were herded onto boats like beasts, you showed us how you were made to sit on that boat, men on one side, women on the other, squashed into a tiny space, the man trying to bail out the water out of the boat...

In this part of the world we only talk about the journeys, about the horrible journeys of «illegals» trying to get into Europe by boat. We talk little about the fact that the people who make these journeys, already come from hell, that they still have the sound of explosions ringing in their ears, the image of their dead children burned into the back of their eyes... the smell of burning human flesh, blood, in their noses, images of parts of exploded bodies in their minds...

In how many countries, for how many people is this reality part of life. Then you come here and while you keep Ramadan, and follow the rules and habits of your culture, we Westerners observe your behavior and judge you as women who are not independent women, saying that we could never live like that...

I held your hand in mine, I cried with you and don't know what else to do... Our performance in that empty prison in Castiadas was a great success, one that maybe you will understand one day. Right now you don't speak Italian, you still are full of pain, the desperation of missing your children who remained in Somalia... the memories...

What can I say to you? What can I do? Whatever we do, whatever

er you do, you cannot escape your story, it is inside you... I hope, I wish for you, that you will be able to live with your past and create a new future... But most of all I hope – maybe it is a childish hope – that one day war will stop, that poverty will end... Everyone, everyone has the right to live a good life...

I send you my love

Annet

Thank you for sharing some days of your life with us, for sharing memories of your past with us...

Thank you also to all those who created such a warm and welcoming atmosphere for this festival...

Special thanks to: Gianni, Valentina, Maria Luisa, Michele, Silvia, Giuseppe, Antonello, Tore.

Annet