



Discovering the inner self via performance art

Performance artist Clarina Bezzola will perform her piece 'Inside-Out' at Istanbul's Gallery Zilberman April 11. After the exclusive show the gallery will also display an exhibit of her videos and photography work



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Performance artist Clarina Bezzola is at her best when she is performing. Visiting Istanbul to perform at Gallery Zilberman, Bezzola once again hopes to wow the audience with her unique costumes and style.

Her performance in Turkey will be a preview of a piece titled "Inside-Out," which is headed to Art Basel 2012, the piece is based on the idea of the body as a vessel that houses our true emotions and spontaneous expression, our true self. "In our very rationality-driven society I feel the need to illustrate the despair of an individual whose connection with the true self has been cut," Bezzola said in an interview. Any uncensored or truly spontaneous expression can seem inappropriate in our society, Bezzola says.

The character in "Inside-Out," while singing a sad and desperate requiem, drops her protective walls. Emotions, formerly withheld and experienced as a heavy burden, blossom into colorful sculptures like beautiful flowers and spill out of her plump and bulging body to fall at the feet of the audience. After complete liberation from censorship and full self-acknowledgement, she has nothing left to hide.

Bezzola's performances rely heavily on costumes, but "costume" is a misleading term for her "wearable sculptures," which is the artist's preferred term for them, "Because they are extensions of my body that illustrate something that would otherwise be of a more intangible nature."

Bezzola says the core of her inspiration is her personal experience as a human being and a member of society. Her wearable sculptures also reflect this idea. She creates them to illustrate the magical process of transformation that any person can go through in real life to find their

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own true self.

If people surrender to whatever happens in the moment, they can experience amazing breakthrough discoveries about their true selves, Bezzola says. "Any art-form which deals with the ever-changing uncontrollable moment is closest to real life." This does not exclude painting or sculpture, because they also deal with the spontaneous moment. However, in contrast to painting and sculpture, which generally happen in the privacy of an artist's secluded studio, performance happens in unprotected and open public space."

Singer at the age of 15

Bezzola started her studies as a singer at the age of 15. "The art of singing and performing to me is extremely terrifying, as it happens in the spontaneous and unprotected open moment in which there are no chances for corrections or revisions," she said, adding that this also made it the most rewarding.

"During a performance, I am everywhere and nowhere simultaneously. [I'm] like a cloud that you see from afar, but when you get closer, it seems to dissolve into a mere sensation, [as it's] inside of you as well as all around you." Bezzola is interested in the relationship between



human consciousness and the subconscious. "It seems to me that the subconscious is the world of the immeasurable. We constantly want to categorize and measure things," she said. "My core practice is to express what comes to me uncensored from my subconscious. Be it with my voice, my techniques in sculpting, drawing, painting or even just with my interactions with people, I open myself to whatever wants to take shape in our mutual experience," she said.

"While I perform, I am not self-aware. I am completely in the flow. I don't think or judge. The awareness of stardom is a trap which kills any true inspiration."

Art transcends categories, according to Bezzola. "We need categories to communicate, but in using them, we shall never forget that it is only a tool to describe something, that has its own nature and might appear completely different for one person or another."

Turkish performance artists

Bezzola knows Şükran Moral and Nezaket Ekici as leading performance artists in Turkey. "They are both wonderful artists doing very important work. I am very excited about my first visit to Istanbul. Besides getting a chance to enter a dialogue with the local community through my work, it will be an amazing opportunity to learn more about the buzzing Turkish art world of which many of my friends and peers have raved about."

There are still controversial thoughts and discussions about performance art, but Bezzola answers that with an example.

"When you Google the definition of art you get 'the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form,' or you get 'works produced by such skill and imagination,'" she said. ● HDS