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DAH Theater Research Center for Culture and Social Change; Institute for Modern Dance, Belgrade

DAH Theater Research Centre for Culture and Social Change

DAH Theater Research Centre for Culture and Social Change is a contemporary artistic collective that examines social issues built on the principle of social action and excellence in arts production and projects. The mission is to provoke, inspire, and incite personal and social transformation, both locally and globally, through engaging art and culture.

DAH was co-founded in Belgrade, Serbia, in 1991 by theatre directors Jadranka Anđelić and Dijana Milošević.

“In the contemporary world, destruction and violence can only be opposed by the creation of sense” is the founding and continuing motto of DAH Theatre.

The theater’s vision is to contribute to the creation of a more just, peaceful, and sustainable society.

Throughout its more than three-decade-long history, DAH Theatre has always worked with and been committed to protecting the most vulnerable groups, including children, youth, women, LGBTQ+ individuals, disabled, senior citizens, migrants, war veterans, victims of human trafficking, and many other distinctly sensitive groups. The work of DAH Theater is highly socially aware, consistently raising issues related to human rights and equity, and more recently, environmental protection. Principles of equality, respect for human rights, tolerance, collaborative work, justice, and the right to ongoing personal growth guide it.

DAH Theater Research Centre for Culture and Social Change is a genuine pioneer in Serbia regarding peace building, theatre, and arts whose goal is to create conditions for community members – artists, experts, different organizations and initiatives, women and activist groups, youth, and audiences – to meet in safe surroundings and create bridges across all divisions. Through cooperative participation (projects, performances, meetings), DAH Theatre’s goal is to create contact between individuals from opposing sides. By developing creative youth programs, a foundation for the future that nurtures young people living together would be established.

The goal is to link the arts to civil society, active citizenship and politics, celebrating and promoting dignity and respect for all people equally through a series of activities such as performances/productions, work demonstrations, workshops, lectures, programs for youth, festival and meetings (bi-annual International Festival

“Arts and Human Rights” founded in 2020), networks, educational programs (Inside of Laboratory, International School for Actors and Directors, Artist in Residence) and tours – local and international.

DAH Theatre has maintained a continuous thread of resistance since 1991 to the present day. Throughout its three-decade-long history, DAH Theatre has collaborated with feminist activist organizations, including Women in Black and ACT Women. Together, using theatre tools, they made visible the nonviolent resistance to militarism, war, sexism, and nationalism. They carried out numerous street actions and protests, theatre performances, and toured the region with various events, including conferences, meetings, workshops, and talks for and with women.

I watched their performances that celebrate life. I think of courage, dignity, perseverance, artistic finesse and dark matter that transcend the boundaries of art. [...] They were, and remain, butterflies. Like a mystery, I watch them dream, how, flying out the window, they soar straight into History. – Eugenio Barba, director of the ODIN Theater, Denmark.

DAH Theater is one of the most successful and innovative theater troupes in modern history. What makes DAH so remarkable? Their passion and creativity go far beyond pure performance. – Dennis Barnett, professor of drama and theater, COE College, USA.

With more than 45 theatre productions, 25 European projects, 20 international collaborations, and 17 organized festivals, DAH Theatre is one of the most enduring and successful theatre companies in the region and beyond.

Over the years, DAH Theater has received numerous national and international awards for its work and significant contributions to the cultural landscape. DAH Theater made a substantial contribution to the development of contemporary theater in Serbia and beyond.

DAH Theater has been featured in numerous professional books and articles. PhD dissertations, Master's theses, graduate theses, strategic analyses, and project evaluations have been defended on the subject of work and poetics of DAH Theater at various universities locally and around the world.

DAH Theatre is a member of many national and international networks: Asitej – Center for Drama in Education and Art – ITI [International Theatrical Institute] – The Independent Cultural Scene in Serbia (NKSS) – Theatre Without Borders – The Magdalena Project (International Network of Women in Theatre) – EURORESO – International Association for Science and Education – IMPACT (The Platform for Art, Culture and Conflict Transformation).

The first book about DAH Theatre was published in 2016. The title of the edition was *DAH Theatre, A Sourcebook* – edited by Dennis Barnett and published by Lexington Books.

DAH Theatre is included in the book *The Twenty-First Century Performance Reader*, edited by Noel Witts, published by Routledge, 2019.

DAH Theatre's work is based on a devised theatre form that connects theatre, dance, and visual arts. The themes through which DAH Theatre expresses its poetics are always connected to the individual's position in society and history.

DAH Theatre's team consists of nine dedicated women as core members with more than 50 collaborators (artists, technicians, designers, musicians, scholars, etc.).

<https://en.dahteatarcentar.com>



Figure #1: ONE. *Ispred svog vremena* (SHE. *Ahead of Her Time*). Photo: Nata Korenovskaia



Figure #2: *Drveće pleše (Dancing Trees)*. Photo: Đorđe Tomić



Figure #3: *Drveće pleše (Dancing Trees)*. Photo: Nata Korenovskaia



Figure #4: *Zagonetka revolucije (The Conundrum of Revolution)*. Photo: Đorđe Tomić



Figure #5: *Za tvoje dobro (For Your Own Good)*. Photo: Đorđe Tomić



Figure #6: *Za tvoje dobro* (For Your Own Good). Photo: Đorđe Tomić



Figure #7: DAH Theatre Team with associates. Photo: Nata Korenovskaia