

L.O.V.E.

(LIMITED OPERATIONS OF VERBAL EMOTIONS)

Eine Produktion von toxic dreams
In Koproduktion mit Theater am Werk
Uraufführung
Inszenierung: Yosi Wanunu
Premiere am 23.04.2026

L.O.V.E. ist ein formales Sprachexperiment über die Unmöglichkeit, vom Lieben zu sprechen. Entlang der vier Wortbuchstaben steigen vier Spieler*innen in vier Runden und vier wechselnden Paarkonstellationen in einen Boxring der Worte – mathematisch, tragisch und komisch zugleich.

Was als poetische Übung beginnt, entfaltet sich allmählich zu einer Anatomie der Kommunikation: Körper, gefangen in der Syntax, die darum kämpfen, frei zu sprechen innerhalb eines Systems, das Bedeutung verspricht, aber nur Echo liefert. Durch Wiederholung, Bruch und Erschöpfung der Form zeigen die Beteiligten, wie Sprache Emotionen diszipliniert, wie Liebe, ähnlich wie Text, von Bearbeitung, Zögern und Löschen abhängt.

toxic dreams wurde 1997 von Kornelia Kilga (Produzentin) und Yosi Wanunu (Regisseur und Autor) gegründet. Seither hat die Gruppe mehr als 90 Eigenproduktionen realisiert. toxic dreams erarbeitet in kollaborativen Verfahren im Rahmen von mehrjährigen Arbeitszyklen ästhetisch und formal sehr variantenreiche Formate. Der aktuelle Rashomon-Zyklus widmet sich dem vielstimmigen und widersprüchlichen Prozess von Wahrheitsfindung anhand von Falldarlegungen. I Was an Elephant Once in Cambodia, The Chosen One und Unwalling the Wall waren am Theater am Werk zu sehen.



Theater am Werk

Text und Inszenierung:
Yosi Wanunu

Produktion:
Kornelia Kilga, Camilla Henrich

Sound:
Michael Strohmann

Mit:
Susanne Gschwendtner,
Tobias Resch, Anat Stainberg,
Florian Tröbinger

In englischer Sprache

Aufführungsdauer:
ca. 60 Minuten, keine Pause

MOST OF WHAT WE CALL INTIMACY IS BORROWED LANGUAGE.

3 Questions to Yosi Wanunu

Your latest production, L.O.V.E., explores the interplay between love and language – how did you come up with this theme?

The piece emerged from thinking about love not as a purely emotional state, but as something mediated by language and cultural forms. We tend to imagine love as authentic and spontaneous, but in reality, it is highly structured by narrative conventions, by genres, by available vocabularies. I was interested in making those structures visible. The constraint-based approach, inspired by the literary movement Oulipo, allowed us to foreground language as a system, and to ask how desire operates within and against that system.

Most of us quote others when we talk about love, films, songs, therapy, and even Instagram captions. I wanted to see what happens if you push that to the extreme and turn language itself into the main character. The constraints came in as a kind of game, but also as a way to reveal how trapped, and how creative, we are within the words we have.

What did you discover in this regard whilst writing and rehearsing?

One of the key discoveries was that constraint doesn't reduce emotional complexity; it redistributes it. When language becomes limited, rhythm, pauses, and repetition start carrying more meaning. At the same time, certain clichés become almost unavoidable, revealing how deeply embedded cultural scripts are in the way we articulate love.



We realized that even with very little language, the same patterns emerge. People still circle around things, repeat themselves, and misunderstand each other. The constraint didn't restrict expression; it exposed its limits. What surprised us was how quickly something genuinely emotional could appear, even within a very artificial rule. At the same time, you could feel how often the language fell short. That tension, between real feeling and limited expression, became central to the work.

L.O.V.E. is the penultimate part of your Rashomon cycle. The Rashomon effect refers to a phenomenon in which several people perceive and recount the same event in completely different ways – and each version seems credible in itself, yet contradicts the others. How does this production fit into that framework in terms?

In *L.O.V.E.*, the Rashomon principle shifts from 'what happened' to 'how love is framed'. Instead of presenting contradictory versions of a single event, we present different genres through which love becomes legible: documentary, screwball comedy, sitcom, and romantic comedy.

Each of these formats produces its own version of truth. The same relationship can appear sincere, absurd, repetitive, or resolved, depending on the frame. So the contradiction doesn't lie in the facts, but in the structures that organize how we understand them.

In that sense, the piece suggests that we don't just disagree about love, we inhabit different narrative systems that make different kinds of love possible.

It pushes Rashomon away from memory and toward the ideology of form. Again, the question is no longer „what really happened?“ but „which version of reality is this genre allowing us to believe?“

Each genre, documentary, screwball comedy, sitcom, rom-com, doesn't describe love. It manufactures it. It decides in advance whether love is tragic, funny, repetitive, or resolved.

So the contradiction, the Rashomon of versions, is not between perspectives. The contradiction lies between systems that are equally convincing and equally constructed. The disturbing part is that we move between them without noticing, and call it reality.

We are not inventing artificial love; we are exposing how formatted real love already is. We work with the assumption that authenticity is already heavily scripted. Most of what we call intimacy is borrowed language.

Questions by Hannah Lioba Egenolf.