

Companion, *noun*.

From the Latin *com-*, together with & *panis*, bread

This publication is a companion to *with bread*, a performance where the History of bread meets personal histories of migration. Over the course of the live performance, audience members take part in making flatbreads which are served, along with a seasonal stew, at the end of the evening.

The story told in *with bread* traces the journey of this staple and heavily symbolic food from prehistory to Brexit Britain, via biblical times and the Arab Spring.

with bread is in turn a poetic history lesson, an opportunity to listen to voices from the margins, and a baking class. *with bread* is an attempt to explore what it means to share a culture, to make community and to belong in an ever-changing and globalised world.

In the context of heated debates around identity politics, *with bread* brings people together in a joyous celebration of diversity and difference.

"Along with his co-performers, Leo tells stories personal and historical that delicately tease out themes of migration and friendship, as we collectively make bread. Then we break and eat the bread together. It's elegant and satisfying, and although we made flatbread, it's still rising"

Daniel Bye

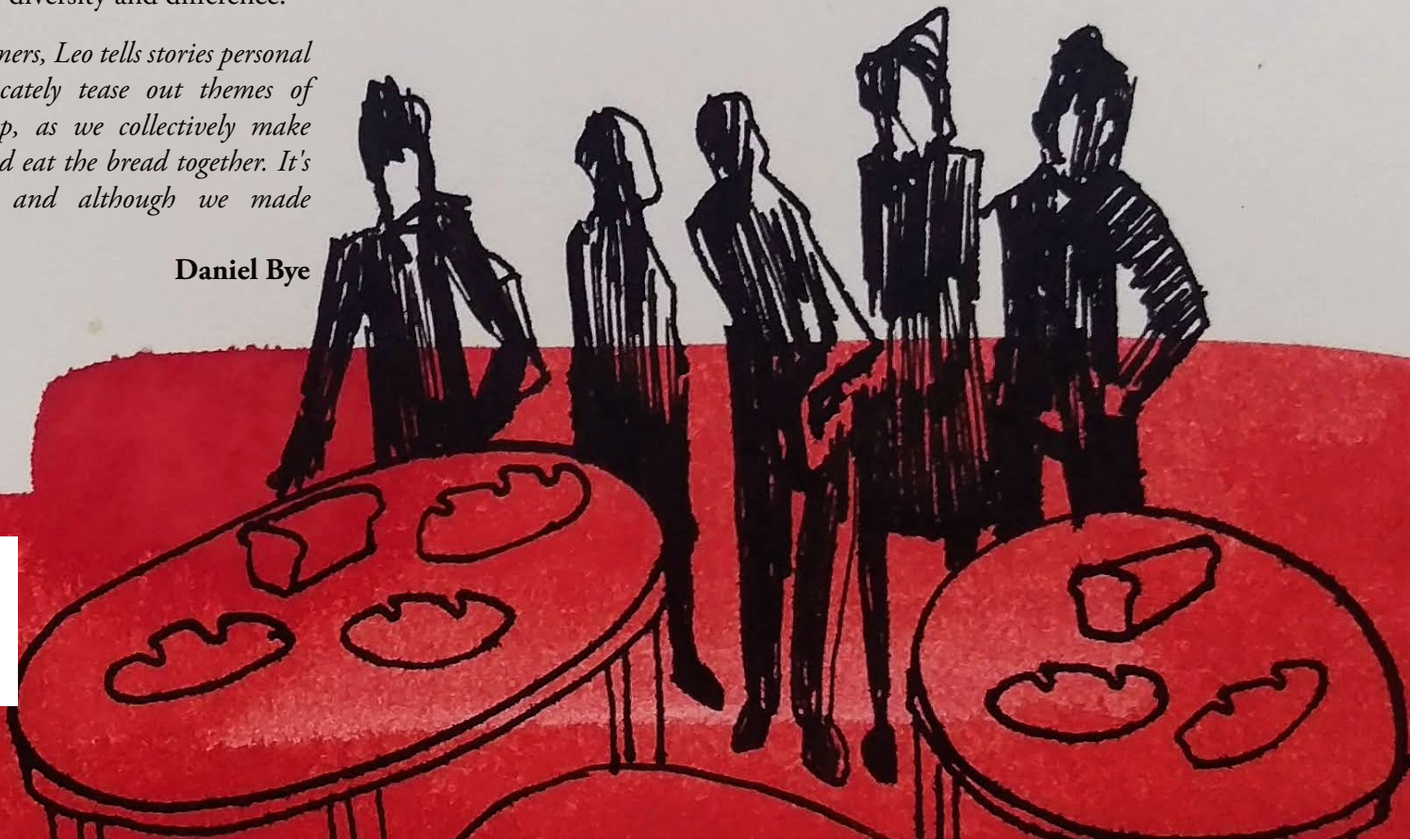
with bread

we are the people with whom we eat

Leo Burtin
and guests



www.leoburtin.eu



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Leo Burtin
and guests

with a foreword by Dr Laura Seddon
ink drawings by Katherina Radeva
production photographs by Garry Cook

The consumption of a shared meal functions as a sign, which communicates the idea that the diners belong to a group and are differentiated from those who do not share the same meal. Accordingly, we are not only what we eat; we are also the people with whom we eat.

(Giacoman, 2016: 461)

To those prepared to offer a seat at the table

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Creative Team

Leo Burtin – Artistic Director, Writer, Performer

Leo is an artist, writer and creative producer. Since 2012, he has been developing pieces which gently, poetically and playfully disrupt the overtly familiar act of sharing food. As a writer, he has contributed to publications such as *The Guardian* and *the Sick of the Fringe*. He is co-Artistic Director of Making Room: a producing agency which has worked in collaboration with HOME, BAC, Chisenhale Dance Space among others. Leo is currently a postgraduate researcher at the University of Leeds, investigating the intersection of performance and food studies.

Aliki Chapple – Performer, Collaborator

Aliki is an actor, writer, and translator. Her version of Lena Kitsopoulou's *M.A.I.R.O.U.L.A.* (dir.: Stella Duffy) is published by Oberon. Her smaller-scale experimental work has been seen at Emergency and other festivals. In 2019, she is touring *666 Comments* (dir.: Daniel Bye), a show she devised based on an Internet comment thread.

Garry Cook – Production Photographer

Garry Cook is a photojournalist who specialises in documenting arts events and performance. His wider photography work has covered diverse social-issues projects on subjects ranging from religion and people at leisure to war and how we judge others. He also works as an arts producer and is the creator of Lancashire Fringe Festival and Lancashire Photography Festival.

Hannah Crawford – Production Manager (Touring)

Hannah Crawford is an emerging producer and entrepreneur. She currently produces comedy duo Ladylikes and has recently joined Chol International Arts as General Manager. She has previously worked with independent artists including Louise Orwin and Mark Maughan and held positions in a range of cultural organisations including Soho Theatre, Lyric Hammersmith and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Louise Cross – Producer, Collaborator

Louise is an emerging artist, dramaturg and producer. She is a founding member of award-winning company Theatre 42, has worked on large scale festival Light Up Lancaster. She has worked as an administrator for Litfest and has recently completed an MA with the University of Amsterdam.

Adam York Gregory – Book Production

Adam is a visual artist and maker. He's a long term collaborator of Proto-type Theater and has a durational live art practice with Gillian Jane Lees.

Michael Norton – Production Manager, Lighting Designer, Collaborator

Michael is a coach and dramaturg, working alongside organisations, artists and creatives in Europe and the USA. He's originally from the Midwest of the United States but has lived and worked in Europe since 2011 where in addition to his support work he makes his own performance work. He is also a producer at Artsadmin, building programmes to support artists across the UK.

Katherina Radeva – Designer, Performer, Collaborator

Katherina Radeva is a theatre maker, visual artist and a set and costume designer. Born in Bulgaria, Katherina has lived in the UK for over 20 years as a first-generation migrant. Her visual artwork has been exhibited across Europe and the United States. Her multi award winning designs have been seen on all continents and her practice as a theatre maker and co-artistic director of Two Destination Language tours extensively in the UK and internationally. She is a vocal campaigner for inclusion and diversity and fair pay for arts and cultural workers.

with bread was also made with additional support from:

Alister Lownie & Ali Matthews – Outside Eyes.

Dr Jenny Lawson, Dr Joslin McKinney & Dr Anna Fenemore – Research Supervisors.

Charlotte Mountford & Julie Brown – Producers (Fundraising).

with bread featured guest performers (in order of appearance):

Jane Bizimana, Manel Zouabi, Araz Khdir (Stockton-on-Tees).

Dionysia Bouzioti, Benedetta D’Ettorre, Ashish Sifar (Leeds).

Leentje Van De Cruys, Ali Matthews, Shahireh Sharif (Salford).

Performance Dates

The shows that were:

20th March 2019 – ARC Stockton Arts Centre [Première]

24th + 25th October 2019 – Stage @ Leeds

4th March 2020 – New Adelphi Theatre, Salford

The shows that weren't to be:

20th March 2020 – Nonsuch Studios, Nottingham

6th June 2020 – Lancaster Arts

9th June 2020 – The Gulbenkian, Canterbury

11th + 12th June 2020 – Theatre in the Mill, Bradford

24th June 2020 – The Blue Room, Lincoln

2nd August 2020 – Settle Stories

Foreword

Dr Laura Seddon

*“with bread
com panis
companions”*

I am writing from an unusually sunny Manchester in late February, as Spring is starting to shyly peek over the winter gloom of what seems an interminable Covid lockdown. It is the morning after a performance of *Eat the Archives* on Zoom, where Leo Burtin and I brought together audiences from across the country to connect over their kitchen tables and eat the same dish in the same moment. The craving for commensality (eating together) is palpable.

Leo has been my culinary guide for the past 3 years since I arrived in Manchester from the south, taking the position of Creative Producer at Manchester Jewish Museum. Our journey started even further north, at an Edinburgh Festival Fringe showing of *The Midnight Soup* where Leo opened a window into his grandmother's life through her diary entries while the audience sat together, made, and ate soup. In the process we had surprisingly intimate conversations about grandparents, death and hope. We audience members were instant companions for an evening and those intense conversations with strangers have stayed with me. From then on, Leo has encouraged this reluctant cook to try her hand at recipes as a new way to access story and meaning.

For museums, bringing archival stories alive through food and hosting communal eating experiences where strangers, who would not normally meet, make nuanced and meaningful connections is ground-breaking. Seemingly simple acts such as making bread together teases out stories of beginnings, childhood recollections, and nostalgia for other lands and eras, by powerfully tapping into collective memory. Leo and I have worked in our museum, in community centres and in private homes bringing with us objects from the museum's collection. Following this, a year of lockdowns

and restrictions has heightened my own realisation of the importance of Leo's works, such as *with bread*. At the start of the Covid crisis we saw a craze for sourdough starters and the sharing of recipes. In the Jewish communities, for example, we have seen digital versions of Shabbat (Friday night) dinners and major festivals such as Passover, including schemes across the world for those in isolation to eat together online. Therefore, creating a space, even a new sense of ritual, as Leo has done in *with bread*, which allows common ground between those of different cultural and religious backgrounds to be discovered, is a vital service which the arts and heritage sector should provide.

I invite you the reader, to delve joyfully into the tactile experience that is *with bread*. You may recognise Leo's excitement, growing up in Lorraine, at the first time he was given a coin and the responsibility to buy his family's daily bread. For me it brought visceral images of being on holiday in France and going with my father to buy bread daily – something that is rarely experienced by those growing up in the UK. You may recognise the figure of Kat's grandmother sending her recipes whose proportions will feed an entire street or Alik's descriptions of pilfering bits of bread in the back of the car on the way back from the bakery in Greece.

I hope you find a universality from these enticing snippets of experiences and most importantly find a companion near or far to break bread with and eat together.

Preface

Leo Burtin

with bread is a piece which begins again and again. You have already read a *foreword*, which has now turned into a *preface*. When this performance-inside-of-a-book begins, there will be an *Entrance*, a *Prelude* and finally, a *Beginning*. A slow and gentle process of arriving which leads to the sharing of a meal.

As with all of my shows, *with bread* always begins with an invitation and always ends with a celebration. Specifically, when you arrive to a performance of *with bread*, you are invited by a host to join their table. As the piece unfolds, further invitations take place, to exchange names, to have a go at making flour from grain, to make bread and eventually, to break bread.

In between each of these invitations, I tell a poetic history of bread into which personal stories of migration are woven – plaited as challah might be. None of the stories you hear in the show are quite finished, they point to a sense of time always in motion. They are told by people always in motion. Still, there comes a point where we, the company of hosts, let words make room for food.

Through shared eating, through the coming together around tables where no one can sit at the head, we celebrate all that makes us different, and all that makes us the same.

This book, for the most part, reproduces the text spoken in the performance version of the show. One crucial exception to this is our *Show & Tell* chapter, which I will introduce in more detail when you arrive at that page.

I do not wish to be too prescriptive about how you might read this book, but I would like to leave you with an invitation. If you can, read our words out loud, while sitting around a table and take pauses to prepare some food to enjoy alongside your reading. If you can, do this with others.

The book will suggest moments to pause, which are the moments in the show where we teach the audience a simple bread recipe. We have also provided recipes for the foods we shared during our travels and which you might enjoy trying your hand at.

with bread emerged from a painful yearning for community, and I look forward to meeting you in between the lines that follow, dear Stranger, dear Friend.

Entrance

We might not live by bread alone

But has there really been a thing greater than sliced bread?

You followed a breadcrumb trail towards us

On a mangé plus d'un pain

Which feels to us like you've cast your bread upon the waters

You can count on us to know which side our bread is buttered on.

Breaking bread with you is our bread and butter

Il n'y a nul pain sans peine, et nous avons du pain sur la planche

Et puisque le pain d'autrui est amer

And that bread is the staff of life

We'll just have to hope this time, it doesn't fall on the buttered side...

Good evening and welcome to *with bread*. This performance will involve handling food – mostly flour and a few spices. If you haven't had the chance to, now is a good time to wash your hands. This performance will involve some conversation, but you won't have to speak if you don't want to. You are more than welcome to chat to your table mates as we wait for everyone to settle, and all the way through the performance, you will be welcome to come in and out of the space as you wish.



Prelude

Aliki, standing up

In one hour and forty-five minutes this performance will end. You will leave through these doors. After you leave, we will take a short break. Then, we will begin tidying up, washing up and packing away.

We will be thinking of you. Our brains will be running at full speed. We will be wondering what you made of it all, what you made of us. We will be thinking about all the things that could have gone differently.

While you are here you will not be an audience. Not a group silently sitting in the dark and whose only purpose is to listen. Here you will not be a spectator. Not an individual seeking entertainment to unfold before their very eyes. Here you will be one of us.

Kat Here you will be us.

Leo Here we will be one of you.

Aliki Here we will be you.

Kat Here, together, we begin.

Leo Here, together, we begin to change.

Aliki Here, together, we begin to transform.

Leo We are the people with whom we eat.



Beginning

Leo, from a music stand at the centre of the room

My name is Leo Burtin, and I have recently discovered that the title that may fit me the best at present is that of theatre chef.

Bonsoir, merci d'être ici avec nous ce soir.

Let me try this on, then:

Good evening, my name is Leo Burtin and I am a theatre chef.

Yes, it seems to fit.

The main job of a regular chef is to create nutritious and delicious food for their patrons. A TV chef is all about making things look good for the camera. As a theatre chef, I use food as a means to share stories and ideas, and to provoke conversations.

What will happen this evening is just that, we will share stories, ideas, conversations and we will have food.

This evening is about a group of people gathered in [location] on [date].

This evening is about Alikì.

Alikì Καλησπέρα, καλώς ήρθατε, χαίρομαι που σας γνωρίζω. This evening is about Kat.

Kat Добър вечер, радвам се да се запознаем. This evening is also about Michael.

Michael (in American) Good evening, it's nice to meet you. This evening is about [Guest 1].

Guest 1 (in mother tongue) Good evening, it's nice to meet you. This evening is about [Guest 2]

Guest 2 (in mother tongue) Good evening, it's nice to meet you. This evening is about [Guest 3]

Guest 3 (in mother tongue) Good evening, it's nice to meet you. This evening is about Louise.

Louise Good evening, it's nice to meet you.

Aliki This evening is about [Audience Member[†]]. I'm glad you're here, thank you for coming.

Kat This evening is about [Audience Member]. I'm glad you're here, thank you for coming.

Guest 1 This evening is about [Audience Member]. I'm glad you're here, thank you for coming.

Guest 2 This evening is about [Audience Member]. I'm glad you're here, thank you for coming.

Guest 3 This evening is about [Audience Member]. I'm glad you're here, thank you for coming.

Leo This evening is also about Ali, Alister, Argenis, Maja, Moujan, Yvonne. I wish you were here.

At this point, we'd like to invite you to take a moment to introduce yourselves to your table if you haven't had the chance to already. We also have some name tags, so you needn't worry about remembering everyone's names.

[†] At this point, each table host names one of their audience-guests.

Leo Thank you. I hope this is beginning to feel like we are getting to know each other a little bit better, that we have a sense of who is in the room. This evening, we are going to share a few stories with you.

Aliki You could think of these as origin stories. They begin to provide clues for how we – those of us standing on this stage this evening – came to be here.

Leo They begin to provide clues as to how bread rose to such prominence in our shared culture.

Kat We hope that they might begin to provide clues for what might happen next.

Leo We will take a few breaks as our stories unfold, and we will teach you a recipe for a kind of flat bread that means the world to me.





History

Kat Our story tonight is History. It begins in the 1990s in a small town in the northeast of France.

Leo Our story begins when my grandmother presses a small leather wallet into the palm of my hand. As I unzip it to reveal its contents, I find two small silver keys attached to a black hoop, and a lonesome 5 francs piece.

Heads. La semeuse. A woman in a phrygian cap sowing seeds. The Republic at dawn.

Tails. An olive branch for peace. An oak leaf for strength. A poppy flower for remembrance, and for dreams. Ears of wheat for prosperity.

I flip the coin into the air.

Heads or tails?

Keys in hand, richer by five francs, my journey begins. It is a journey of trust, a step closer to adulthood. Today, I am given the opportunity to provide for the family, to play my part. I am not 10 years old yet. I run down the stairs from the apartment, not stopping once to catch my breath, not careful to tread lightly so as to not bother the downstairs neighbour, and before you know it, I am standing on the pavement, ready to cross the road. Looking left, then right, carefully stepping onto the zebra crossing and across the road to the *boulangerie*.

Une baguette et demie, s'il vous plaît! I ask politely, and proudly, when my turn comes. Behind the counter, the baker has no doubt recognised me. She has seen me enough times to know my order before I even say it. She knew to wait, and to let me speak. If it had

been my grandfather, she would have barely looked up and simply checked: *comme d'habitude*?

Granddad would have nodded. Yes, the usual. But today... today is different. Today, for the first time, I am the bringer of bread. Not quite the same as the bread winner, not quite the same as the bread maker, but all the same, it is a step in the right direction.



Aliki Measuring Flour

In order to make bread, we're going to start with flour. The first thing we're going to ask you to do is to measure out half a cup of flour. Your hosts will bring to the table a measuring cup and a bowl for each of you.



Kat I am seven and I am head queuer in my family. It is the late 80's in Sofia, Bulgaria. The only vehicles on the streets are the UN's trucks. The Berlin Wall has just burst open and everything has stopped. Literally. The city is still busy, but everyone is quiet, unsure.

My mum and dad have only one child: me. So the responsibility for queuing falls on me. Whenever they see a shop that's open, a shop where there might be food, I am the one sent to queue.

As a family, we're lucky. We are allowed three loaves of bread a month. In our predominantly student area of the city, kids are unusual. I am sent, because I will be told to go to the front of the queue. That's why my job is to queue. I will get the bread. I will get all three loaves of bread. And they must last us the month.

Of course, bread doesn't last like that, it goes mouldy after a few days. So each day, my dad scrapes the layer of mould off, cuts a slice of bread and toasts it for me. Once it's been toasted, you can't really taste the mould. Another day and another layer of mould gets scraped off, and another, and another, so by the time the end of the month comes, it doesn't matter how much you toast it: the bread all tastes of mould.

Just a couple of years later, I am now nine, and things are different. We have eggs and we have bread and my great grandmother, Mametu, once again has enough sugar to make jam to put on the toast.

Leo *Adding Flavour*

Now that we have measured flour, we can flavour our bread. There are pots of salt on your tables, and I would recommend you add a generous pinch of it to your flour and mix through the flour. If you want, there are also a few herbs and spices on your table. Let your nose guide you and add a pinch of any of those if you would like.

Kat They didn't have car seats in the 1970s in Greece, Aliki just sat in the back.



Aliki My mother would drive to the village in the morning to pick up bread.

On the way home, the fragrant bread, wrapped in brown paper, was entrusted to me, still warm. There was always somewhere on the crust to get started, some curled up edge begging to be broken off. Watching my mother in the rear-view mirror, I chewed only when her eyes were on the road. That was a rule. Another rule was that only one opening could be made into the soft crumb, only one intrusion in the crust. Any bread beyond the first surreptitious bite had to be excavated from that initial opening, mined for. When we got home, my mother would say "A mouse has been at the bread!" We would pretend to look for the mouse. I knew that she knew I was eating the bread in the back seat. She knew that I knew that she knew.

The village had two bakers. You bought your bread from the one or the other. There was no changing your mind. Your baker was like your football team. Inherited, irrationally adhered to, requiring loyalty. If you went to a different baker, he would not sell you bread. For one thing, he knew precisely how many loaves he'd need each day – to give you a loaf would be to stint one of his regulars. For another thing, you were not his customer. You played for a different team.

The two bakers in the village were rivals, maybe even enemies. One was called Hector, the other Achilles. I am not making this up. The bakers in the village were known to dislike each other – Achilles and Hector, Hector and Achilles. I am not being funny. Those were their names.

We bought our bread from Hector. Hector's bread was the best.

I have never tasted the bread made by Achilles.

Hector did not use sourdough starter; he assured my mother. Nor did the electric oven he bought in the 80s to replace the olivewood burning oven his father had used before him affect the flavour of the bread. The secret, he said, was to let it rise. First in the bowl, then after you'd shaped the loaves, let them rise again. A long time, he said. Much longer than they tell you to. There was nothing special about the flour, the oven, the yeast. The secret was time.

Leo *Adding water*

We're now going to turn our dry mix of flour and spices into a dough. Your hosts will get you a measuring jug and you will need approximately 50 ml of water. If you accidentally put a little too much water, we can add a little flour. If your dough needs a little more water, go ahead and add it little by little.

Gently mix the flour and water until it comes together into a dough.

Knead lightly until the dough comes away from your fingers and from the sides of the bowl. Be careful not to overwork the dough, leave it to rest once the dough has come together and is soft and lightly springy to the touch.

Kat And now we go back in time, in the decade before Alik and her mother were looking for the mouse that had been at the bread, and a little further south, a little further east to Turkey, or what some people call Northern Kurdistan.

Welcome to the province of Diyarbakir.



Leo All around you, the volcanic hills we have come to know as the Black Mountains. At their foot, you meet a man... you take him to be in his late forties, early fifties.

You meet Jack R. Harlan.
Jack Rodney Harlan.
Botanist, and time-travelling explorer to be.

You are both surrounded by tall, wild grass.

Wild einkorn
Emmer
Goatgrass

Here, at the foot of the mountain, the land is dense with these ancient plants that we had barely even given a thought to.

It's morning, late August, and the heat is still gentle on your skin. Jack Harlan reaches into the pocket of his vest and pulls out a silver watch on a chain (because that's how scientists kept time in this version of history). You don't have long until the sun is at its peak and the heat not so gentle anymore.

You have half an hour.

In one hand, you hold a brown paper bag. With the other, as you walk, you run your fingers through the grass, stripping the ripe seeds along the way.

Kat And in that moment, you travel some twelve thousand years earlier.

Leo Your hands are red and raw, but your bag is full, at the risk of tearing even. The archaeobotanist and plant explorer Jack Harlan adjusts his glasses (because that's how scientists thought in this version of history) and examines a fistful of your harvest. Einkorn, mostly. Some overripe, some still green, but most, about half, he tells you is clean grain, fit for consumption.

Aliki With half an hour and without any tools other than your own bare hands, you could, perhaps a little uncomfortably, gather 2 pounds worth of raw cereal.

Leo Yes. Now imagine there are five of you – your family, say – and that instead of a paper bag, you are using the skin of a pre-historic animal. Let's say that beforehand you spent some time making flint sickles to help you along with your harvest. A kilo soon becomes 5, soon becomes 10 and you gather enough food to last you through the winter months.

Aliki In the centre of each table, you will find a small pile of grain. This is modern wheat. Take a single grain in between and pinch it between your index finger and thumb. See if it is easy to break it down. What if you were to use a rolling pin? Try to roll it over the grain. See if you can crush it with your rolling pin.

Leo Wild Einkorn is much tougher than the wheat you have on your tables, and you would still need to process it to make it fit for human consumption. You have to help it along the way with a kind of ancient transformative magic, one that most of us practice every day and think of as banal... cooking.

From his own kitchen experiments, Jack Harlan tells us that wild einkorn doesn't mill or bake very well, however... so no bread for our twelve-thousand-year-old ancestors just yet.

What our expeditions with Professor Harlan tell us though, is that as far back as twelve thousand years ago, hunter gatherers could harvest wild cereals quickly and easily. Aliko, take it away.

Aliko, as Jack Harlan

"We cannot with certainty reconstruct the whole story of wheat domestication, but the fact is that tame wheats were developed from wild ones. Someone must have made a start by harvesting wild cereals." Harlan, 1967

Leo And with this, we come to understand that as hundreds and thousands of years come to pass, we learn to tame these cereals, and that in doing so, we begin to settle. We begin to build our entire lives, to gather our families, to grow our communities where the wild grasses are. For survival and for comfort, we stake a claim in nature, and we stay close to our own kind. What was there for any and all is now there for us, we are taking control.

Each hosting performer cups the grain mound at the centre of the table and slowly pulls it towards them.

Leo I could end our story here. I could tell that it is all there, written in the stones of History. I could tell you that we are what we eat, and that there, right there in History, right there in the natural order of things, it says so – it says that to settle and to keep to one place is and has always been the key to comfort and survival.

Aliko Rolling

In order to roll our flatbread out, we will need to dust the surface of our table with flour. When you're ready, divide your dough into 2–3 balls and roll each one out into a disk.

Show & Tell

When *with bread* is a performance outside of this book, the audience sit around one of five large tables. At each table, there is a host. Performers Alik and Kat are two of those hosts, always.

In each village, town or city the show is performed, we seek to meet local migrants, to become hosts to the three remaining tables. We search for people who enjoy meeting new people, sharing stories and who enjoy lively conversations over good food. Beyond this, we do not ask for anything in particular. People may have experience of performing or it may be their first time on stage.

Once people have responded to our call, we invite them to meet us for a workshop, where we make some bread, have some conversations and do a little bit of creative writing together. At this stage, people who might become hosts are getting to know us. They are invited to consider whether they think becoming a host at a *with bread* table is something they would like to do.

If they decide this is the case, we meet them again to tell them everything they need to know about this role. I should add that at that point, they become a member of the company, and are such are provided with remuneration for their time, and any expenses they may incur as a result of their membership of the company are taken care of.

We also let each of our guest hosts know there is a moment in time and space, within the performance that will be theirs. You might think about it like a guitar solo, or a while on top of a small soap box. We invite each of our guest hosts to take centre stage to do whatever they might like to do.

To help them think about what this could be, we ask them three questions:

- How did you get here?
- What have you brought with you?
- What are you taking away?

They are at liberty to answer these questions as they wish, according to their own interpretations of their meaning. They can also choose to ignore them entirely. We have a stage, a microphone, lighting and an audience and for a moment (for which we do not prescribe a length of time), they can do whatever they would like.

Our guest performers have variously, chosen to answer our questions directly; to be interviewed by other members of the company; to teach the audience a song; to share a photo album; to read something they had written; to promote an event they were involved in and a few other things.

In the pages that follow, we re-iterated the invitation to each of our guest performers. Only this time, rather than a moment on a stage, we offered them pages in a book.

Some of our guest hosts have reproduced elements of their original contribution to the show, while others have preferred to share new material...

Joining them is also Michael Norton, who collaborated in the creation of *with bread* as a Production Manager and Lighting Designer as well as to the overall devising of the piece.

I will now leave you in their care.



Jane Bizimana

How did you get here?

Well, I'm going to talk about how I got into this theatre, right? Yeah. So, um, I've been trying to challenge myself to speak in a public place, because before I had my daughter, I used to be very quiet.

And English is my second language, so I don't find it easy to communicate in many words. So, once I started talking in English, I cut my sentences short.

And, um, but the reason why I challenged myself to come here is: when Emma was a baby, I used to be very quiet in the house. So, if you're my neighbour, all you could hear is a baby crying. Yeah. And she'll be, you know, maybe when she's hungry or whatever, I will just touch her but not communicate because I didn't know. I didn't I didn't know how to do it.

And then a friend of mine once came and visited me and she observed how I was communicating with Emma. And she just told me to stop whatever I was doing.

I had to talk.

She told me what you're doing, it's wrong. You cannot be in the house by yourself with a child and not talk. So, I realised that I had to start slowly. But at the moment this is like my highest. I'm trying to challenge myself to speak in a public place, and this is why I ended up in this theatre with you.

What have you brought with you?

Well, I brought my baby girl, Emma.

What will you be taking away?

The confidence of speaking in a public place and the pleasure of meeting everybody here. That's what I'll be taking with me.

Is there anything else you'd like to say?

Yes, uh, it's about bread. So, I just realised when we were rehearsing yesterday that in the part of the world I grew up from, we don't have wheat... It's not common. So, wheat was kind of imported. It's not something that we grew.

So, we don't have that kind of, um, connection with wheat as something that you make bread with.

But we have other things that we share as a community as part of East Africa. That is maize, maize flour. So, we just make the maize and make... It's called sadza or ugali in Swahili. And then we eat it with maybe tea or spiced tea or something like that.

Manel Zouabi

Part 1

Over a wooden table full of flour containers, water jugs, salt and spice tins, old friends, and new companions, colourful stories about our lives had come out spontaneously with the flow of our little friendly chats. We spoke about our favourite dishes, hobbies and communities when the way that we ended up meeting over bread at ARC was brought up.

Oh! How did I end up in Stockton-on-Tees and then over this table with bread? I asked myself...

Stockton-on-Tees? I never heard about this town before getting a letter instructing me to move there! By that time, cities became mere names to me. For instance, I had already moved three times in two weeks. The sound of packing suitcases, all the banging of stuff and buzzing of packers no longer scared me as it used to do before...

This time, I felt that I needed to give myself a chance of thriving somehow- some way in one of these towns that I passed by as a 'short-time stayer', and it was Stockton-on-Tees. I wondered if I could pause not only my suitcase but also my thoughts about what my next station would be. Why not make friends even if we were going to part? Why not create things even if they were to stay behind?

All started there, and then here I am participating in with bread and enjoying making bread, making friends, sharing food and stories about our lives.

I attempted to remember what I brought with me to this town...

Certainly, my small black suitcase. It was meant for short trips. It contained my 'must-have' clothes, a bundle of colourful pieces; the way I like my clothes to be. The suitcase also contained my best books, several of which (if not all!) were about women struggling all over the place.

I had a cheese gift box. An unusual gift that I dared to carry all the way from down south. It got rotten on the way, such a shame! I thought that the trip

was short enough and that the weather was cool enough for the gift to survive. Alas! I was wrong: time and circumstances were not OK.

And what will I take with me? I wondered...

Certainly, my suitcase again. It is still the same small black one: as practical as a suitcase needs to be for a traveller like me. But I have more to carry this time!

The one thing that I say to myself now: 'Do not be deceived by the smallness of a town for big stories happen in small towns'. The community at Stockton-on-Tees is deceptively large, multicultural and have loads of warmth and support to offer to newcomers. One good example is ARC, where we met. Such an unbelievable venue for entertainment, learning, mingling and engaging with the community. I will always cherish and carry with me, among other things, the memories of performances I attended and enjoyed, projects I had the pleasure of being part of and little chats I had and friends I made there.

Part 2 Waiting for Bread

I was the youngest of sisters: an unfortunate ranking for someone like my old-young self who disliked nothing in the old days more than these never-ending, rather daily, light shopping trips to and back from the market...and all the hustle that came with crossing through a curious place such as 'our' market where all smells, goods, loud crowds, dust, humidity and sun intertwine everyday...

I was told that I was light and fast and therefore sent to queue in the only bakery in town for a mere couple of baguettes and a small mbeess every single day often for long hours... A small child in pink school dress with all sorts of pen and chalk marks surrounded by these tall impatient men waiting for bread...

They all looked like my father, but unlike them, my father could not queue, and I understood that...

My bread, now in my hands, smelled fresh and was steaming hot like every time...too hot that it would burn my yet small fingers... It was only then that I realized that I forgot my bag for bread and all at home were too busy... too mindless to remind me of my bag... After all, waiting for bread was my task alone...

Should I just get rid of my bread in order to save my fingers? No way for this was said to be among the worst of human sins. Bread is a holy bless from heavens; this is what adults kept repeating in our town. Whoever mishandles bread ends up exiled in the moon or disfigured into a monster from fairy tales. At that time, I did not think that I would love to dwell in the moon...

One of the tall impatient men in the queue would approach me:

– ‘Child!’, he would first address me...

The man releases me of my burdening bread, his enormous hands holding together my baguettes and mbessess as if it were not steaming hot. He puts my bread in his own woven grey bag and hands it back to me with a faint, rather reproaching, smile...Was that really the shadow of smile?

Me, embarrassed more than grateful, I would say:

– ‘Thank you, Sir...Uncle Man... Thank you...I am sorry...But what about you?’

The man ignores me...Wordless, he would head back to his place in the queue. Men in my childhood town, unlike women, were meant to be stern and wordless. Men, and unlike women, were also meant to queue for bread...and unlike me, men in our town were meant not to get their fingers burnt...



Araz Khdir

Seeking sanctuary or asylum is not an easy option. Obviously, it's a kind of force, escaping and fleeing from your country of origin then finally settling down in another country. There are so many reasons behind it: political, social, religion and economic.

The journey from your **own country** to the second country is full of catastrophic disasters due to experiencing incursion, family separation, killing, human trafficking, and dying due to a lack of food or water. In order to arrive at a safe shelter (another country), we have to pass through several countries dependent on brutal agents (smugglers), never knowing your final destination. However, staying in jungles and hiding in lorries, and then the last step, being under the control of the agents, arriving at the pre-determined area. On arrival in the UK, we found numerous examples of love, compassion, sympathy, embracement, hospitality and welcoming, which is hugely appreciated. On the other hand, we are facing racist views, harsh political rhetoric and stereotyped ideas about migrants. For instance, seeing us as beggars and thieves, looting this country. Instead of this, let us join and make a positive contribution with you all, in all aspects of life, such as: engaging and integrating with your culture, language, work and academic institutions.

Furthermore, I am a migrant and qualified social worker. I have brought my skills, experience, and qualifications offering my best to this country beside all of you indiscriminately. The three years waiting for my asylum appeal to be heard have been spent volunteering with several charities in different ways, for instance: interpreting.

I'll be taking away new ways of working, exploring new skills and experience, dealing with diversity, independence, memories which thrill me with kindness and tolerance from people, charities, churches and loving animals. In summary, living away from your family, relatives and friends is not easy and simply can't be explained. It takes so much effort and we face so many challenges, and some of us can't cope facing different types of mental, then physical issues. I hope everyone can at least understand, how frustrating it is, managing to get used to a new culture, language and lifestyle.



Dionysia Bouzioti

Welcome (Home?)

My memory is reluctant to shed a light on the words I put together for Leo Burtin's show on the two bready evenings of the 24th and 25th October 2019. I will greet and leave you with a prose instead, written almost a year ago in the first lockdown Easter. I was a foreigner in a ghost city isolated from any familiar human trace and unable to go back. From those evenings *with bread*, I can only recollect a few analogies that portray my fermentation during life's attempt to ruin my romance.

This town is a train station or even, a harbour. People come and go with their suitcases, they never stay. Relationships are wasted in an ephemeral temporality just like a theatrical performance. That's beautiful and sad. Years of concentrated 'Hi!'s and 'Goodbye!'s. Leeds is the lover whom I want to get married to, but he wants to remain a casual.

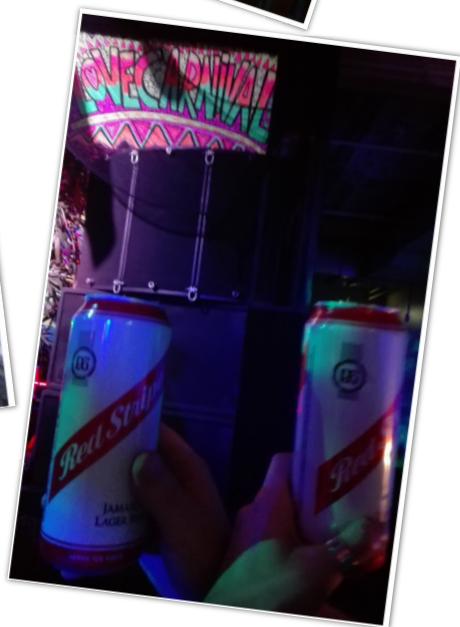
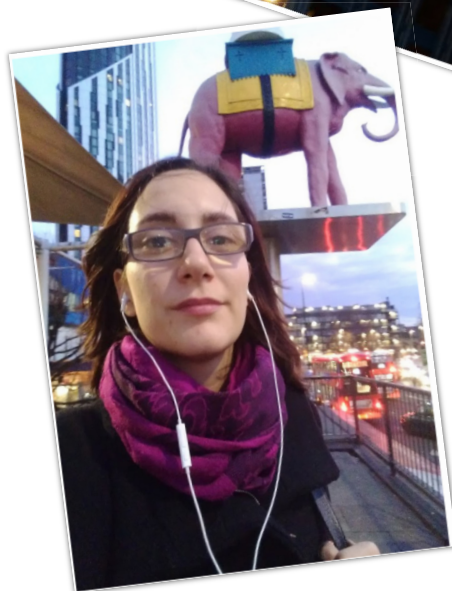
Indeed, life is a journey. It is a performance, a love affair and for some a quest to finding our own home. Once you cross the borders of your birthplace you suspend; you are torn and free.

Traces of Salt

*I miss you
Sometimes I blame it to the distance
A distance most craved in my young imagination
Repelled by the grey colour of your skin
The dryness of your hair
still waving
in a subtle memory of olive's scent
The lockdown.
It's watering the weak lips of desire
The Prohibition
sticks a sting in nostalgia's bee
incessantly tracing quantum orbits around my body
I am the nucleus of a forgotten individuality
Outside the window it is snowing white almond petals or something similar
They dance unorthodoxly in an Orthodox sunshine
Sometimes, I cry secretly
from myself
in the reflections of your memory
I saw your concrete body dressed up in the lights of the night
and in the silent entropy of my daemons
my knees bent
Like my sister's baby
as it strives to stand on his illiterate feet
holding her thumbs
Almost.
A minute in its wholeness.
A Caryatid, my sister,
wavy hair
and marble -makes her essence-
withstanding
time, eras and people,
Pain.*

*I miss you
And I change
My chest petrifies inwardly
Keeping another sprout in its soft heart
What we are living now is nothing.
Only a pause.
A silence heard by your skin, your immaterial bones and heavy mind
She screams,
for you never sat and listened
What we are living now is not.
A thing.
Others lived through worse.
Others. Still. Live
Worse
Eyes with pupils melting while anchored in rusty wires
Hands nourishing rust and mud with tears that have lost their salt
Emaciated
Like bread that dries out in an unfriendly sun of another Land
Extinguished Passions
Above those clouds,
the sky is always blue and waiting
I miss you
Umbilical ghosts
Traces of a barefoot father uniting two lands
A mother's mother wrapped up in a carpet in '22
secretly thrown in a Turkish hold*

*The bee is tightly trapped among my fingers
Its buzz exhausts me
My tears
Rare
Saving the sea salt you gave me at birth*



Benedetta d'Ettorre

When I was a child, I moved around my home country quite a bit, so my accent does not really match expectations in my native language. I belong here and I have assimilated the culture, I even think in English, but I do not want to make an effort to change my accent; I became similar but I remain different. That's ok. Actually, it could not be better. Since I present this mix of languages and disperse sense of belonging, I came up in English with – what I think is – a clever way to answer the question “where are you from?”: I was born in Rome, I was raised in Milan, I grew up in London. There is a lot more, but I can tell you more about me when we're going meet somewhere in the world.





Ashish Kumar Sharma

The human race has been moving, settling, unsettling and moving again from one place to another for years. Wars, conflicts, money, disasters, performances are some of the reasons which make humans move and migrate. Nonetheless, Bread is what matters at the beginning, middle and end of every good or bad story. We all need to move our bodies to get that piece of bread for us which is essential for living.

Well, I moved because of theatre or I would say theatre moved me so much that I decided to travel for more than 4000 miles to a different culture altogether to learn and explore my creative design skills. Theatre is my Bread and Butter which brought me to Leeds. I was fascinated by one of my previous dissertation supervisors' (who is a University of Leeds alumnus) creative work in the field of performance and that's how I got to choose the same place to study. Within 20 days of my arrival, an invitation to be a part of a performance in which Bread played the protagonist got me to the performance space of *with bread*.

This Bread was not a stranger to me. It was, in fact, the same round bread which I had been eating and making it in that way for a long time now. We call it *Roti* or *Chapati* in India. Other than my experience of making that round bread I brought a small local Indian perfume bottle and my socio-cultural past with me to Leeds and to the performance space which helped my guests in performance to make a nice dough out of flour. I brought some strangers with me to the performance space who were my guests on my table to share thoughts, emotions, vibes and most importantly the 'Bread'. This time the performance and the Bread became the mediator which made all of us get settled for some time and then we moved again.

The performance ended with a nice supper which all of us had together. I took away some leftover breads with me and a ring which one of my classmates gave to me when she was preparing dough for the bread. The usual Uni life got started again before the pandemic hit the world. It made humans not to move unnecessarily. Even in such a circumstance, people had to move

for some or the other reasons and so did I. I came back to where it all started from. I took away some sweet and sour memories of Leeds, cards (given by my friends on Christmas), the ring which I had with me since the performance and a large Hearth Bread (a friend of mine gave it to me to have it during my journey from Leeds station to London airport so that I won't die starving). Didn't I tell you; it is all about Bread.

Leentje Van de Cruys

The deadline to write this chapter has passed now. And I've missed it. On purpose.

It was on the 25th of March, which was a few days too early for me. I wanted to write these words today – the 27th of March, precisely 15 years after my arrival here.

On this day 15 years ago, my boyfriend drove me all the way from Belgium to England in a campervan, together with a new-born baby, a big blue fluffy hippo and my vast collection of shoes. Only the essentials – leaving all the rest behind.

We'd only just met, but somehow it felt like the right thing to do (oh yes, and we'd had a child together, that too).

We arrived very early in the morning at my boyfriend's flat. I'd visited him there once when it was his 30th birthday. We carried the baby upstairs, and the bags of shoes, and had a coffee. Then my boyfriend handed me two keys – one to the flat and one to the front door of the building, in case I wanted to go out and explore the town. I'll be back around six, he said. Then he went to work.

Some days I wake up thinking – how on earth did I end up here, playing this part in someone else's life?

Fifteen years later, I am still here, with more babies and less shoes. I'm fine with that.

I've been busy here – I've lived in 6 different houses in 2 different cities, cleaned, tidied, washed, ironed, cooked, sat on benches in parks, talking, stood in silence in playgrounds, pushed swings, sang songs, read stories, ran for miles, danced for hours, taught dozens of students in 3 different universities, worked with some of my favourite UK based theatre companies,

made my own shows, dressed numerous customers in Manchester's finest clothes shop, wrote book chapters and monologues and contracts and receipts and shopping- and to do lists and instructions for babysitters and notes for the postman and the window cleaner and birthday cards and thank you notes and letters to Belgium that said –

How are you?
When will I see you again?
Will I see you again?
I miss you

I've missed hundreds of friends back home, but I also made a thousand new ones – imagine if I hadn't come here, I often think, and then list in my head the names of all the people I would never have met. Crazy stuff.

When I first lived here my English wasn't very good.

When I met new people, their first question would always be – where are you from?

And I'd say – I'm from Belgium.

Then they would ask – why are you here?

And I'd say – for sex. I didn't mean it like that. What I meant was – because of sex.

As in: I had sex, then I got pregnant, the father is English, now I'm here.

Crazy stuff.

I came here because of love. And by accident. And I stayed.

And today we decided to leave. Soon. I'll miss it here.

Ali Matthews

I got here on a plane from Boston Logan airport to London Heathrow. I got here on a winding train to West Wales, hopelessly naïve, carrying two suitcases. I got here on a boat from Dublin port, clutching the same suitcases, over and over again. I got here on a Ryanair flight, and I got here on my rusty 1980s bicycle. I got here on foot, slowly, looking at the daffodils as they sing through the soil. I am so happy to be here, to share a table with you, to offer you what's mine and welcome what's yours.

I brought a song with me. My grandparents taught me a lot about opening your home and arms to people from across the world, about generosity, about patience and kindness and the power of a shared meal. They are Christian, but not in a particularly bible-thumping way – more in a way that prioritises social action and quiet compassion. Though I am personally not Christian, I often think back to sitting around the long dinner table in their lakeside summer cabin in rural New Hampshire, surrounded by pine trees and a dirt road and the sound of boats puttering on the water. I think of that table as brimming with arguments and mirth, with boiled lobsters and hot bread rolls, with blueberry buckle (a Southern specialty from my Virginia-born grandmother) and freshly shucked corn. Tables are not always one thing – they are stubbornly pluralistic. They can hold the weight of everything from strife to celebration.

Every night at dinner, without fail, we sang this song before eating. Now that my grandparents no longer come to the summer house, I realize that the song stays with *them* wherever they go, meal to meal, table to table, but as a child I thought of the table, the meal, the house and the song as one thing, really. The song is in that table.

We're going to change a few lyrics tonight to make the song more secular and inclusive.

Evening is here, the board is spread
Thanks be to God [or whatever it is]
That gives us bread.

Amen [And I thought instead, together, we could sing 'Oooven']

Thanks for singing that with me. From our time together *with bread*, I take away renewed pleasure in shared fellowship. I take away the satisfaction of brushing off someone else's crumbs from the table into my hand, of clearing their plate. I have welcomed them into my home, and they have welcomed me into theirs, both of us, on this transient and beautiful table-island.

Dr Shahireh Sharif

I am an orange dot

Spring:

Blossoms set in chain

Rows of wounded men in pain

Hate is all they gain

Summer:

Feverishly hot

Eyes speak for lips a lot

Corpses left to rot

Autumn:

Conkers in a fight

Sky rains deadly gifts at night

Hope's rationed for sight

Winter:

Trees in cold sleep

Kids' voices already deep

Nightmare's theirs to keep

I started life as a human. Back then I believed that the missing fifth season will eventually catch up and with its arrival, life would no longer be a burden. But the smell of oil, the twinkle of diamond, the prospect of owning someone else's underground wealth provokes the normally subdued beastly nature of humans. When the beast is aroused, it needs to be feed. Its food: oppression, suppression and repression.

This is how tangled red and white sirens replace the chirping of birds and life reduces to a collection of rushing in and dragging yourself out of underground shelters only to deal with the guilt. The guilt of not being fast enough, not being strong enough to help everyone unable to walk themselves to the shelter on time. But advances in science and technology have helped.

You see, shelters no longer provide immunity against more advanced missiles or chemical weapons. Yippee! No need to rush out to shelters anymore. This is good news for us, no?

Where were we? ... Yes, when the beast is awakened!

When the beast awakes words carry blades that rip open the inner layers of your throat and saturates your memory with the taste of blood. When the beast awakes the horizon is no longer a line but a wall that is built as high as the sky and too close. When the beast awakes even vultures are too scared to fly over the wretched bodies dangling from the hanging ropes. When the beast awakes, the only time you are considered as human is next to traffickers. When the beast awakes you must run.

RUN! Run to the end of the road and beyond. Run to the ocean. There are still unclaimed spaces there. Unclaimed because not that many people remember to tell you to go back where you come from.

There is a greater chance of survival in deep blue. Sure, there is a chance that it all ends in water, too. But a new life is also a possibility even where your unauthorized and unregulated heart beats are not tolerated, after all these are desperate times. The pandemic of political insanity strips every one of their most basic human rights, freedom, democracy and love. Demanding human rights is a punishable crime. In some places it is punished by torture and death and in more civilized places by acts such as suspending the parliament!

Wondering on the surface of the cold, heavy, deep blue is scary, but it is also liberating following a lifetime of forced fed lies, forced to dress in a particular way, forced to think uniformly and come to the same and only permitted conclusion. Your loved ones and belongings are left behind. You feel venerable yet light. You close your eyes and remember when your father pretended to be a horse and let you ride on his back, when your mother rocked you in her arms; now in their absent the ocean takes over.

As a child I sat in many history lessons, but I now chose to ignore the most important lesson that history can teach: It is easier to lie down and die than to live ... I might be too greedy I am not sure; you tell me. Is failing to let go of life greed? Lying down and dying doesn't work, I have tried.

Oh look! Dolphins swimming next to our boat. Everyone says 'THERE!' in their own language and points. Despite not understanding each other's words, we all look in that direction and even surprise ourselves by realising that we still are carrying our smile. Yes, we are still hanging to our smiles and hopes and despite having nothing we still can sincerely share our moment of joy.

No, I couldn't just give up and die. I chose the path that many had taken before, not all made it, and for those who have made it although the pain eventually goes away, its marks remain visible in their nightmare.

The ocean is a way out. Maybe because death in water usually remains unaccounted and unannounced, but there are lots of lifeless bodies hanging on to their torn orange life vests even long after life has been brutally rubbed away from them,

Small orange dots on the surface of the vast blue ocean are orange pixels that long after the sun draws back its rays, courage shrinks and willpower dampens they still shine. As long as the ownership of human suffering rests with no one, more and more clusters of orange dots cover the surface of this blue planet. Maybe that is what Hafez saw, as about 700 years ago he wrote:

بیا تا گل برافشانیم و می در ساغر اندازیم
فلک را سقف بشکافیم و طرحی نو در اندازیم

Let's sprinkle flowers and pour wine in goblets
Let's tear up the heavenly sky and make a new destiny

It is cold and scary on the surface of cold blue. This tailor-made faith that politicians are mass producing is too tight, it cuts the blood supplies and burns but won't keep you warm. I won't be wearing it any more. Somewhere, someday this ocean will join to a land. Then I can stand tall, I can stand proud, and I can change my destiny.

I started life as a human and became an orange dot only to remain human.



Michael Norton

How did I get here?

The sound for 'with bread' should feel like it is coming from everywhere and nowhere, much like the experience of migration.[†]

I started working with Leo in 2018, touring Midnight Soup and developing *with bread*. I was around for most of the development, working to manage a show which, at first glance, was a simple technical production.

During the production I kept asking myself 'how did I get here?'. I was an American performer, freshly in London via Berlin, who had never run tech outside of a few technician-by-default positions and the odd heated dispute about fog machines and colour gels with German technicians. I didn't know Leo very well and we worked mostly in The North, far from my home in London.

When I left Home in America, I felt disoriented and disillusioned. It was only in leaving that I could see there was a force, a kind of current, that most Americans think is The Truth about how to live a life, what to care about, what to ignore. And I started noticing that same current in other people who hadn't moved from one place to another.

Migration is a way of being more human. It is the grief as we let go of one identity and assemble another in a new place.

So, suddenly, I was the tech guy. And I was great with that.

What have you brought with you?

The difficulty for this piece is that it will be presented in a multitude of spaces that will not be able to accomplish all of the design elements. This is acknowledged with the fact that the design appears very simple and can be shifted in slight ways to accommodate the presentation space. To this end there is an ideal setting for the lighting but also an acknowledgement that it all might not be possible.

[†] All italics are from Michael's technical notes for *with bread*.

I brought my migrant's energy to a project. I have worked on projects with very little, with no community, with no network of support, with no audience, no understanding of where to get supplies, and with no space. But usually, at least in the beginning, I had lots of time.

Being time rich allows me to see, investigate and dream. And sometimes, it was only through time that I realised I could let perfection go. Leo often said, 'I don't really care about how it is lit,' but I did.

Eventually, I learned to listen. The show's beauty is in its flexibility, like a good dough, and that means sometimes, the lights aren't that important.

What are you taking away?

The lighting concept for With Bread is that of celebration, subtlety and precision. The piece itself deals with the personal and the academic in a very lively setting. There is no distinction between the performance area and the audience area.

Today I'm locked down at home during a pandemic and making and performing any show is slipping into abstract memory, like an old favourite recipe long forgotten. It's been over a year since I've worked on a show. Today, I take away that this show existed, that at one time there was 'no distinction between the performance area and the audience area' and that it's possible to just gather people, generate ideas, and make things. So many areas are distinct these days: barricaded cues at the supermarket, distance markers on sidewalks, my home, my 2-metre circle of safety. I'm taking away that 'no distinction' was more radical than any of us knew.

The audience lighting/house lighting should always be low enough that the space surrounding the performance area disappears.

Old Crumbs

Kat History spends most of its time re-writing itself. Long after Jack Harlan had suggested that our ancestors had begun to settle so that they may harvest grains from which to craft a reliable food source, just a few months ago, in fact, what we know of the history of bread was written once over.

In the Black Desert of Northeast Jordan, last July, a group of archaeologists found tiny charred breadcrumbs. They weren't so different to what you can find at the bottom of your toaster only they are about 14,000 years old.



Leo What this tells us, is that we began to make flatbreads long before what we know as the establishment of agriculture. Grinding and baking came long before farming, owning, settling. We had bread, but we travelled with our bread.

The bread we have been making is a fast bread. It is a bread that travels well and that doesn't need all that much of your time or effort.

You can call it pain azyme, chapati, or tortilla depending on your choice of flour, liquid and fat... This simple bread also stands as the foundation of the culture we share here... It was also the first bread I ever made myself, from start to finish, under my grandmother's watchful eye.

Kat I remember years ago, not that many though, it must have been 2011 or 2012 calling my great grandma, who passed away last year at the age of 97 to ask her for her recipe of Easter Bread. Kunka was her name, but we used to call her Mametu, which vaguely translates as older mother, or the mother of the extended family.

Easter Bread in Bulgaria is a sweet dough, and you can put jam inside it, or some raisins or simply make a nice crispy top with crushed walnuts on it.

So, anyway, I called Mametu and she gave me her recipe. I followed it strictly, down to the detail and half way through me kneading this crazy amount of flour she had told me to use, I realized that actually, she was making Kuzunac – Easter bread – for the whole street and I was making Easter Bread for me and my partner. Needless to say I ended up making new friends along my street by trying to desperately distribute this insane amount of delicious Easter Bread I had made.

Pain Azyme

Leo There is one story that many of you know. Whether or not you believe this story to be true does not matter.

It is a great story, the foundation of a common culture in a large part of the world. This story features a group of people, not unlike us, in many ways.

We might call them a people – a people who shared a land, a language and traditions.

Recipes, also, until the day that their land, their beloved home ceased to provide them with what they needed. Nothing would grow anymore. No cereal, no flour, no bread...

They had heard of the abundance in a neighbouring land; a fertile promise.

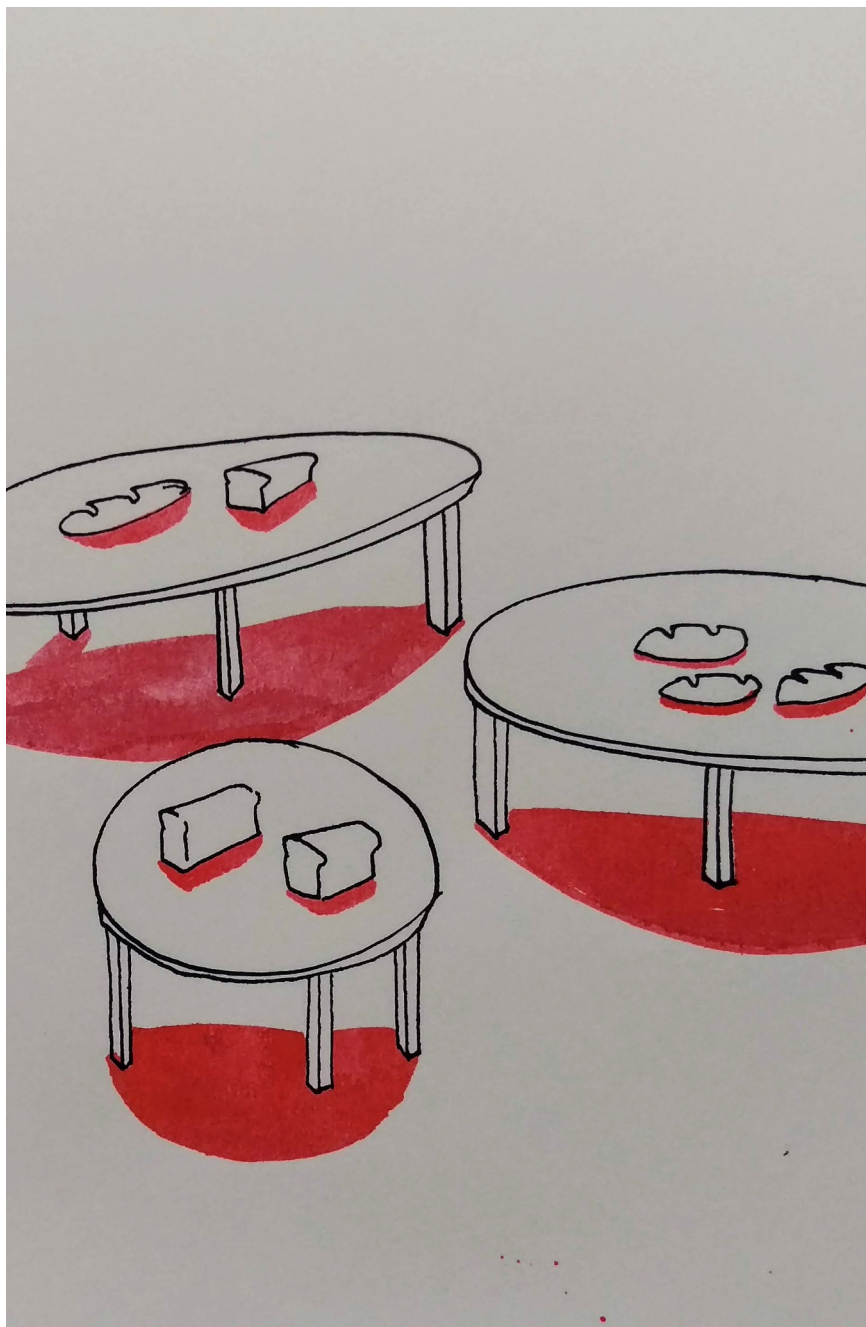
They began travelling until indeed, they found an abundance of food.

Its price, however, was their freedom and for centuries they lived as slaves and on little more than bread and water.

For them, just like for us. Each of us whose voices you hear, their journeys were propelled by promise... by the hope to find a place to settle, to rest, with others, alike.

The bread of exile was bitter and so they made their own.

Together they folded the water into the flour, a sprinkling of salt and the oil from sun ripened olives... This time, their bread did not have the proper time to rise before they had to begin walking again.



This story continues for centuries.

For centuries to come, we up and go, we walk and go.

For centuries the accidents of life make our daily bread rise or fall...

Recipe for Pain Azyme, reconstructed

Ingredients

½ cup or 70 grams plain flour
1 pinch of salt
Herbs and spices, to taste
50 ml. approx. water
A drizzle of olive oil, to taste

Method

Mix together the flour, salt and spices in a bowl.

Create a well in the middle of the bowl and pour the water.

Mix the flour and water until it comes together as a dough.

Add a drizzle of olive oil, if desired and knead lightly.

Once the dough comes away from the sides of the ball and is soft and springy to the touch, let it rest for a few minutes.

Divide the dough into 2-3 equal balls and roll them out on a floured surface using a rolling pin into thin disks.

Cook in a frying pan over a high heat. You will know to flip your pain azyme when bubbles start to form on one side and a nice lightly golden colour is visible on the other.



Bread & Circuses

Leo We are almost back, back to here and now.

There is one more journey for us to take, one more story for us to tell. Let us call it Bread & Circuses. In part this story is about chaos theory, about the butterfly effect. About how a small change can snowball into having grave consequences. The change in question is nothing small, however.

Kat We are in the northeast. The northeast much, much further east than here. Welcome to China



Leo It is Autumn, and you can already feel the chill that announces the turn to a harsh Winter will come soon.

You are surrounded by dry, barren land.

The harvest should have begun, there should be tall grass all around you. You should be able to run your fingers through the field, and collect the seeds which will feed you, your family and countless others through the winter months.

You should be hearing the hubbub of machinery getting closer as production begins, and this grain is sorted, weighed and packed to be sent away. Because you live in a land of abundance, you have plenty, plenty enough to send some of your harvest away.

Or you would but it is 2010 and you are experiencing the worst drought in your lifetime... We could stay right here in China, and I could tell you this story ends less than a year later, with artificial clouds and then natural floods. I could tell you that with time, strong will and resilience, you and your family recover. That things slowly go back to normal.

If I did, I wouldn't be lying. I would only be telling you one side of the story.

Kat Because you see, miles away from here, in North Africa, we rely on your grain for sustenance, too. Welcome to Egypt.



Leo Here, the bread we make is called *aish*. Here *aish* also means life.

This is the fertile crescent, this is the cradle of agriculture, this is the birthplace of bread.

As the price of wheat rises faster than dough ever could, so does the heat of social and political tension. This is the eve of what we will come to know as the Arab Spring.

This is a story of now, a story that barely feels like History... and yet...

Take it away Alik.

Alik, as an Ancient Roman

“Already long ago, from when we sold our vote to no man, the People have abdicated our duties; for the People who once upon a time handed out military command, high civil office, legions — everything, now restrains itself and anxiously hopes for just two things: bread and circuses.”

Leo These words were written in 140 BC, and they resonate today louder than any bell could.



Now

Leo So here we are. Here we all are. On [date], in [location].

Together we have travelled from my native France, to Kat's motherland of Bulgaria, to Alik's fatherland of Greece, to Turkey, to Egypt, to China and to Egypt again and now we find ourselves in [location], among strangers and among friends.

Together, we've made and will share the bread of exile, the bread of travellers, the fast-paced bread you can take with you wherever you go.

In the following section, each performer takes a moment to tell the audience what they will do next, where they might go, or what they might be looking forward to. The lines below change with every performance.

Alik In a little while, this performance will end. I will...

Kat Next, I will...

Leo I will be going to...

Guest Performers ...

Leo When this performance began, we had some flour, some water. A few other ingredients. A few things to say.

In the time we spent together, there was a transformation... from grain, to flour, to food. From next to nothing, we are now *with bread*.

Com panis.
Companions.

This kind of transformation calls for celebration.



After words

As I pronounce the word *celebration*, the very last word in the formal part of the show, music begins to play: The joyful trumpets of *Algo está pasando* by La Pegatina and Rozalén. Soon we hear the chorus:

*Algo está pasando en mi interior y no sé
Qué yo! se va y qué yo! se queda
Hago de trizas corazón y en cada rincón
Aprendo a ser como quiera*

As the music resonates, coming from every corner of the theatre, Louise and Katherina carry to the back of the stage two gigantic pots of food. One always filled to the brim with Mairi's chickpea casserole, the other with a dish made with local and seasonal produce. Eating seasons and geographies as we tour.

To me, this is when the show really starts. I sometimes think about this moment as Act II, or as another show starting.

This show sees us lay the tables with a mismatching set of bowl and cutlery as we take turn sharing out the food we had prepared earlier and as people begin to eat together.

Sometimes, this eating happens in silence. Sometimes, we all excitedly talk over each other. Almost every time, I regret not choosing to play another song by La Pegatina.

*No som d'aquí, no volem anar a dormir
Ens ha atrapat la màgia del camí*

I'll break my own rule just this once to offer you a translation of this refrain.

*We're not from here, we don't want to go to sleep
We've been caught by the magic of the road*



Recipes

Documenting live performance is always a challenge, and although I love discovering shows inside of books, and love making books about shows, they can sometimes feel a little bit trapped.

The words might seem a little bit too fixed, a little bit too written. In some ways, this book is a performance of *with bread* in its own right. One flavoured by your thoughts and interpretations, dear reader. I wonder what my voice might sound like in your head.

If this book is a performance of *with bread*, then it ought to end with spending time sharing food with others.

In the pages that follow, we have provided recipes for dishes we cooked for the audience in the show, as well as some bread recipes which we mentioned in the performance.

I hope that you will enjoy trying them. As you taste each of these dishes, you will notice the stories that have seasoned them...

I have not been told the secret ingredients for every recipe provided here, but I suspect that they all share one.

Bon appétit!

Mairi's Chickpea Casserole

A chickpea dish from Sifnos by way of Boston

By Cali Doxiadis (Alikì's mother)

Whenever people compare cooking to love, my mind is drawn to the suburbs of Boston and to the warm, sun-filled embrace of Mairi's kitchen. No Greek student can have attended any of the city's multiple universities without being nourished by her hospitality and the apparently endless supply of wonderful Greek meals. I hesitate to call it a culinary experience, because in the end, the food was only the means; no matter how delicious it was, what lingers in the mind is the warmth and abundance of love.

Mairi is one of those rare women who really did manage it all: She raised four children, all grown into wonderful adults, she reached the top of her profession, teaching at a prestigious university, training dedicated teachers in Greece and the United States, she has had a long, challenging, and happy marriage with my cousin Dimitris, a prominent academic and a charming if difficult man.

Her house is always open to everyone, not only at the unforgettable Greek Carnival costume parties, but weekends and every day. It's always a hub of conversation and laughter, music and dance, always with something simmering on the stovetop or roasting in the oven, filling the house with its fragrance. And there she is, talking to you about Garcia Marquez and the achievements of her grandchildren, and the latest sale at Filene's as she hand-folds three hundred *dolmades*.

From her beloved Sifnos, the island where she and her family have spent their holidays for the past fifty summers, she brings back and hands out clay cooking pots and traditional recipes. This Sifnos chickpea dish which I've been making for years and my friends love so much is one I've never tasted on Sifnos... only in Boston.

Ingredients

1 lb dry chickpeas
3–4 tbsp Bicarbonate of Soda
5–6 large onions, thinly sliced (it sounds like too many, but it's just right)
1 cup olive oil
Sea salt and freshly ground pepper to taste.

Method

Soak the chickpeas overnight in 2 quarts of water in which the soda has been dissolved. Choose a deep bowl as the chickpeas will double in volume. Four hours before serving, preheat the oven to 200°C/390°F. Rinse the chickpeas thoroughly in plenty of running water, drain and put them in a lidded casserole dish, preferably ceramic. Stir in salt and pepper to taste. Add enough water that the chickpeas are 2–3 cm below the surface.

Spread the sliced onions on top, they should form a layer 4–5 cm deep. Add the olive oil. It should cover the onions completely. Cover with the lid and cook for 15 minutes at 200°C, then lower the temperature to 160°C/320°F. In about 2 and a half hours, lift the lid to see what's going on. Every oven has its own peculiarities, so it's a good idea to check.

Most of the liquid should be gone and the surface beginning to brown. If there is still a lot of water, raise the temperature and finish cooking at 175°C/345°F. If the water has all evaporated, add half a cup of boiling water. Cook for another hour. It is done when the onions form a caramelized crust and there is only a bit of liquid left. Goes well with a sharp, acidic salad, such as cabbage and carrot, on the same plate.

Also highly suitable for a slow cooker or cast iron stove.

Mint & Pea Stew

Ingredients

1–2 tbsp olive oil
1 large onion, thinly sliced
2 large cloves garlic, thinly sliced
800 grams green peas (podded or frozen)
100 ml water (or stock)
30 grams fresh mint leaves, finely chopped
30 grams curly leaf parsley, finely chopped
Juice of half a lemon
Salt and pepper, to taste

Method

Soften the sliced onion in the olive oil, in a large pot on medium heat. Take care they do not take too much colour.

Meanwhile finely chop the mint and parsley. Add the garlic to the pot and cook for a minute or two.

Once the onion is translucent, add the peas and season. Pour in 100 ml of water and lower the heat to simmer for about 5 mins, or until the peas are cooked through but retain some bite.

Off the heat, stir through the freshly chopped herbs. Squeeze in the lemon juice and adjust the seasoning.

This is best served immediately and will feed 4–6 people as a generous side.

Ladislav's Mushroom Paprikash

Ingredients

200g oyster mushrooms
1 medium onion, diced
Salt and black pepper, to taste
2–3 tbsp paprika
1 medium potato, peeled and diced
Water, to cover

Method

Soften the diced onion in a little olive oil, on a medium heat. Roughly chop the mushrooms into bite sized pieces.

Once they are translucent, season cracked black pepper.

Add the paprika and stir to coat. Do not overcook the paprika or it will risk becoming bitter.

Quickly add the mushrooms and stir to coat with a generous pinch of salt.

As the mushrooms begin to soften, add enough water to cover.

Add the peeled and diced potato and simmer on a low heat until the potato has softened.

Serve with sourdough bread and sour cream, to taste.

Mametu's Kozunak

Ingredients

1 kg flour
1 cube of live yeast
6 eggs
250 grams of sugar
300 ml milk
1 lemon and its zest
Pinch of salt
Half a mug of oil
125 grams of butter

Method

All the ingredients must be room temperature or lukewarm.

Mix the yeast with the milk (the milk must be lukewarm) a little bit of flour and sugar.

Mix the eggs with the sugar, lemon zest and lemon juice. Add the oil slowly, bit by bit.

After you mix the ingredients, make a dough that feels nice on the hands, knead the dough and throw the dough 100 times on the table.

Leave to rest until it rises, then split the dough in two and make two long plaits.

Leave one egg yolk to brush the kozunak before you bake it. Sprinkle with sugar and walnut chunks.

Bake for the first 10 mins at 190 degrees, then the rest of time about 20 mins at 170 degrees.

Jane's Ugali

Ingredients

4 cups water
2–3 cups maize flour

Method

Bring the water to a boil in a saucepan and gradually sprinkle the maize flour, stirring continuously with a wooden spoon.

After two and half cups of maize flour, the mix will thicken to the consistency of mashed potatoes.

Continue stirring for 3 minutes

Cover and lower the heat. Let the ugali simmer for 4–5 minutes.



Acknowledgements

with bread is a project which had a slow and sometimes complicated gestation period. It is also a project which was born out of both friendship and community. A great many people contributed to making it possible in a myriad of different ways and for this I am ever so grateful.

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References

with bread is a performance as well as the book you are holding now. *with bread* is also a Practice as Research project which forms part of a PhD thesis which I am currently developing at the University of Leeds, under the supervision of Dr Jenny Lawson, Dr Joslin McKinney and Dr Anna Fenemore. As such, a wide range of sources have inspired and guided the development of the piece in indirect ways.

As you will have noticed, the text you have just read takes a poetic approach to the recounting of historical events related to bread. Below, you will find a list of sources which have directly influenced the writing of *with bread* or which are cited within the performance text. Additionally, these sources make for excellent starting points should you wish to delve further into the rich and delicious history of bread.

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