

## Realia

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**Realia** (subRahova, 2012 and CNDB, 2013) is the title of a recent performance staged by Farid Fairuz. *Farewell! (or about the discrete oversights of the limbic system) – extra-sensorial fairy show* (CNDB, 2010, with Maria Baroncea, Alexandra Pirici, Carmen Coțofană and Mădălina Dan), and prior to this performance, Farid Fairuz kept showing up in different performative situations, only that they always occurred in the shared public space and not on stage, a space reserved exclusively to art in capital letters. Certainly, this exclusiveness was rejected during the 20<sup>th</sup> century by artists belonging to somewhat more radical movements, in particular among the historical avant-garde, but beyond its aesthetic purpose, stage space remains to the day, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a privilege of the institutional legislation. Obviously, CNDB is a new kind of institution, postcommunist and postindustrial, and the prerogatives it undertook in the field of performative arts are rather associated with the so-called new institutionalism, than to the former communal establishment. As Géza Kovács noted, its prerogatives endowed performative arts a central role in the wide symphony of political changes, but the stage, nevertheless, was forced to remain but a stage.

This descriptive introduction on the type of space where the performance of the artist Fairuz was shown was needed to better make out the evolution of the docufiction involving character Farid Fairuz. But let us first see how he started off. He was born in Beirut to a Lebanese mother and a Jewish father, he emigrates with them between Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan; after losing his parents in the civil war in Beirut, he is adopted by two Bedouins, and then, after some years, by a wealthy Jordanian family. After several travels along Europe and the United States of America, he settles in Romania, further to a mediumistic effort, in the body of choreographer Mihai Mihalcea. That was the artist's biofiction in 2010. In 2013, Farid Fairuz says: „I was born horny but I was baptized as a Christian Orthodox. I am born in Lebanon on 117 Giurgiului Road, half a kilometre away from the rail road separating the accepted world and the desert named Ferentari.

We were not allowed to step beyond the rails 'so we won't get kidnapped by Muslims'...' In other words, to continue the toponymic comparison, Turkey, Syria and Jordan, just as Lebanon, were nothing but mythological areas of Bucharest, charged with the republican-socialist-communist symbolism specific to the Socialist Republic of Romania, where the radical otherness and the stimulating difference were not so different from the way we regard today Middle East culture. Differently put, what Farid Fairuz furtively puts on stage is particularly this short-circuited tier of the postcommunist reality which, throughout the one hour the performance lasts, it takes off the safe garment of the folk tale, and is only left in the underlay of an inconvenient nonfiction, that is to say in the underpanties of a reality that is no longer aestheticised through mass-media filters. Farid Fairuz, presentified through symbolisms of the beard, wig and sunglasses, making him offensive, radical, but at the same time innocent and burlesque, interferes with the biographical narration of Mihai Mihalcea, defensive, sentimental, pathetic even, but no innocent however, and vibrating to the crisis. Both parts bring upfront contemporary media and political clichés that are satirised, to put it shortly, criticised by imitation and undertaken mimetism. Mihai Mihalcea tells a story, recounts memories

not necessarily in their chronological sequence, while Farid Fairuz is performing the stories told by the former, as a sort of a reasoner clown. Mihai is the mythologist, while Farid is the hermeneutist. Until both merge into the figure of the same character and begin to involve the audience into a performance that is, as of then participative and no longer contemplative, as it was in the beginning. The audience is now bid to participate in the general cheerfulness in Mihai's kitchen and drink cherry liqueur served by the choreographer while Romanian folk music plays in the background; then bid to turn into the confidants of the performer confessing that what he sees is life, real life and not a performance, that it feels as if he would get applause for simply walking. Stage art had previously been taken into the street, but the street, just as it is, was priorly brought on stage only in documentary theatre, as to the information available. This leads to the somewhat logical conclusion, that, in *Realia*, Farid Fairuz is attempting to sort of establish documentary dance, an assumption also consolidated by the author quoting in the performance staged in subRahova the observations that psycho-sociologists Manford H. Kuhn Thomas S. McPartland made in the article "An Empirical Investigation of Self-attitudes" published in 1954 in the magazine "American Sociological Review". Only that this type of documentary dance is to a lesser extent dance in itself, figurative corporal movement, and is to a greater extent movement performed in the most narrative fashion. It is hard to believe that dance can be a certain piece of rhythmic movement, as is the beginning fragment of the long rotation in the same kitchen, somehow reminding of a whirling dervish ritual; because this type of dance is rather always about dance, shifting the focus towards a second plane of representation. Just as Farid Fairuz freezes in the debut pose in Odetta's role, which Mihai Mihalcea dreamed for his entire life, as he confessed and urged us to trust, while the screen next to him shows a ballerina being spanked by an instructor until her skin turns blue. In a way, to return to what was discussed in the beginning, this epilogue can also be read as an allegory of the contemporary dance condition or, to be more precise, of the stage hosting *Realia*, as one can easily guess the Ministry for Culture behind the instructor character and the dance institution behind the spanked ballerina.

