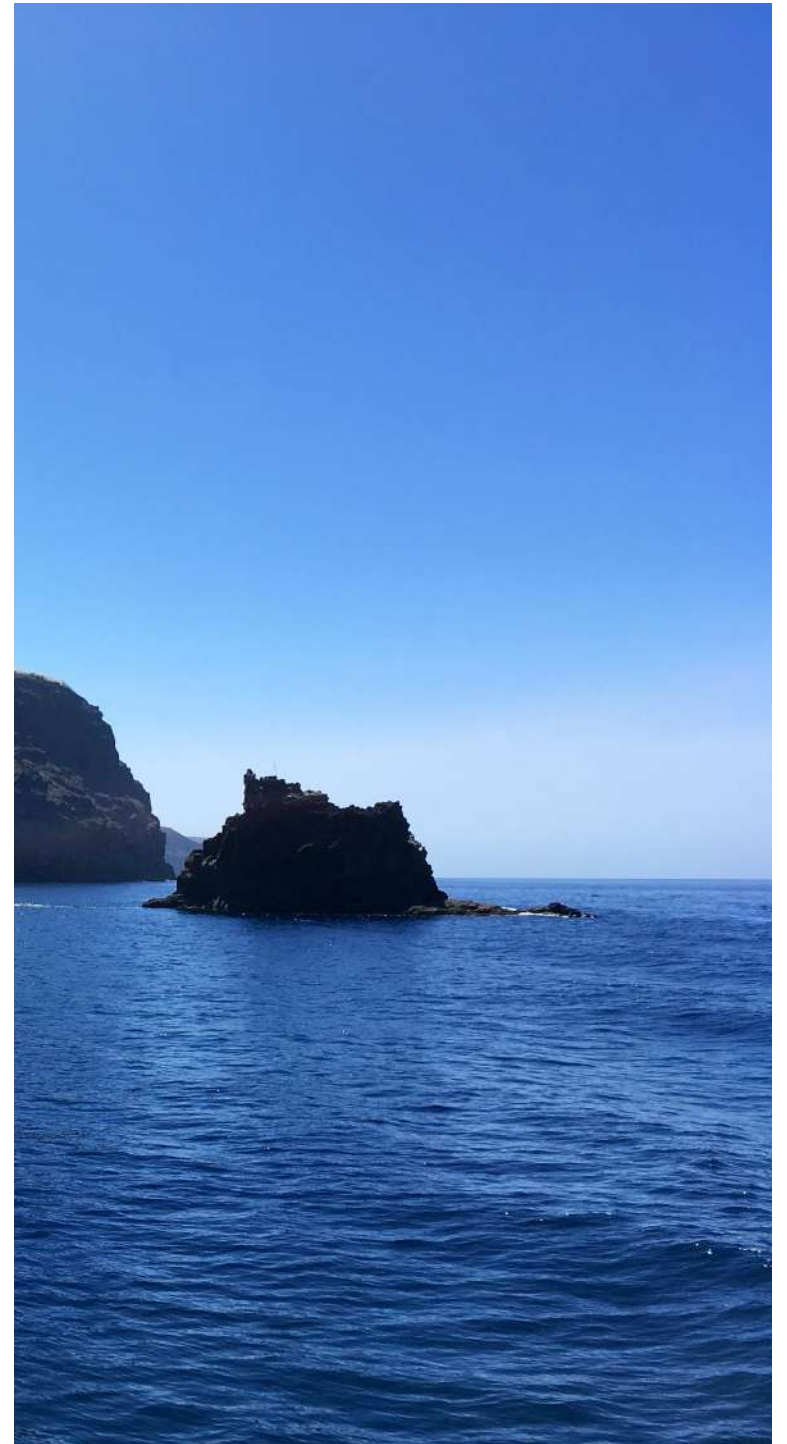


# *Eyelands*



*... the fundamental disagreement that troubles us, the oscillating contrast between claustrophobia and claustrophilia, between hatred and love for seclusion, according to whether we try to expatriate or we second the intimacy of a den, the seduction of living life with a solitary vice. Insularity, I mean, is not just a geographic segregation, but it carries others: the one of the province, of the family, of the room, of one's own heart. Hence our pride, distrust, modesty; and the sense of being different. (Gesualdo Bufalino)*

*Eyelands* is the title of choreographer Riccardo Buscarini's travelling project dedicated to the islands and their culture. The word play between "i" and "eye" (eye) in the title is intended to suggest a research on identity through a specific observation, such as an in-depth, scientific study.

The project stems from the passion for travelling and the fascination for remote places where the landscape and isolation have favoured the development of unique cultural traits. Archetype of identity and existence, the island shows, from the dawn of Western culture, as many connotations as the human contradictions. Created and defended by the four elements, the culture of the island evolves with man through time and through the encounter and hybridisation with different populations and cultures. Deserted, conquered, bought, sold or simply occupied, the island is primarily territory that man wants to possess for its resources, a place of real or imagined wealth, an exotic scenery for the myth or the fairy tale. An island means exile but also a landing point, a place from which one wants to flee or to desperately return, a symbol of the roots as well as, in the contemporary world, of escape from the routine.

On an island, the anxiety and curiosity that incite a journey beyond the horizon, and at the same time, a seductive invitation to the static contemplation of it coexist in the people who inhabit it even if for a few days. This curious and contemplative gaze is at the base of the project's observation.

*Eyelands* focuses on the relation between the landscape and the cultural identity of the island but also the effect of time on it. The project is a study and a tribute to the uniqueness and originality of cultural expressions that islands have acquired in

their history and which they tend to preserve with pride, dignity and nostalgia in a present that inevitably transforms, erodes, forgets them.

*Eyelands*, just like the islands themselves, speaks of the historical and social value of belonging and the relevance of a profound gaze on the world as an instrument to get to know ourselves as individuals and communities. It is a project that celebrates the potential of culture and movement, understood both as a functional action and an artistic expression, to create bridges between people, places and cultures that are far away in space and time.

From a logistical point of view, the project takes the form of a series of periods of residency of two or more weeks on an island. Riccardo Buscarini chooses a specific characteristic of the island's culture which becomes the topic of the research. A series of interviews, meetings, targeted visits and a movement laboratory with the participation of a group of local people focusses on this particular aspect - of the orography, of the language, of the handicraft, of the folklore, etc ... The purpose of the period of residence is the creation and presentation of a public performance or movement installation speaking of the island and its culture through its inhabitants' bodies. The activities will be documented with audio-visual material by local collaborators in order to be archived and, in the near future, to be presented in the form of a documentary and an exhibition.

*Eyelands* chapters

2018: La Gomera (Canary Islands)

2018: Malta

2019: Cyprus

2019: Lipari (Eolian Islands, Italy)

2021: Syros (Cycladic Islands, Greece)



## *Eyelands 2018 - La Gomera*

My initial curiosity was to work on the *silbo gomero*, the island's whistled language declared as a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO in 2009. I was interested in exploring the idea of spoken language and personal movement as codes that can generate a network and define a community if shared. I have met the inhabitants of the island - an anthropologist, some experts and many other people - I have spoken with them to know more about the silbo, its origins, its function and its meaning. I have observed the island, a place that with its mountains and deep valleys, does not seem an easy place to live.

I discovered that the characteristics of the *silbo* that fascinate me most are its functionality to extend communication in a place hostile to movement and its fragility in being a language that is disappearing like many other traditions of the rural world. On the one hand, this language has to do with the extension in space, on the other, its use today has to do with the extension in time. I imagine the frequency of the whistle as an elastic between "here" and "there" and between past and present.

The final presentation is a movement study was inspired by the image of a choir. Christel, Daniela, Manuel and I, four people of age, origin, different culture form a group of bodies that meet, tune and intertwine little by little, forming a community. In a predefined space that dictates orders as if it was representing the island itself, the public was witness and protagonist of the negotiation between the bodies.

Many thanks to José, Kico, Isidro, Eugenio, Martín, Gregory, María, Estefanía, Christel, Daniela, Manuel.

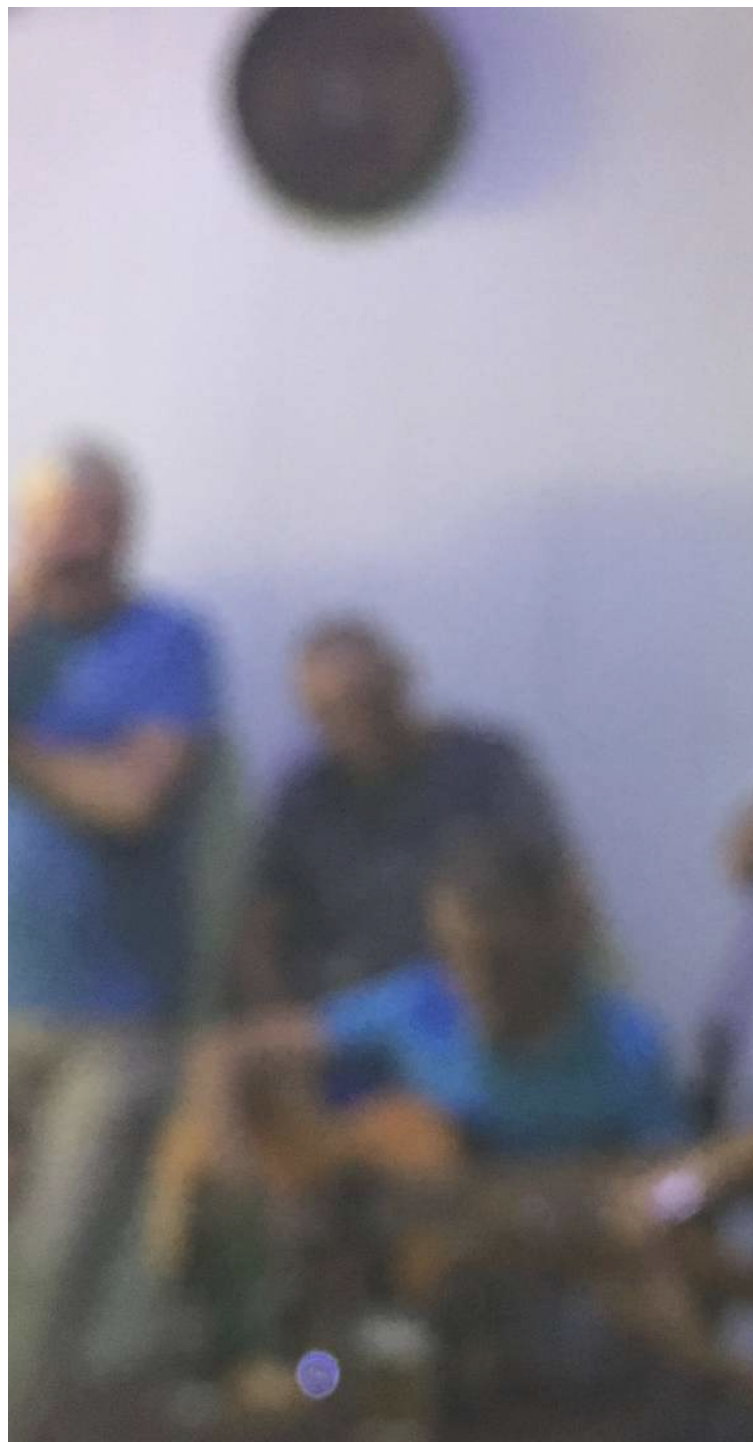
Special thanks to Centro Coreográfico de La Gomera and Paso a 2 - Certamen Coreográfico de Madrid for their financial and practical support towards my reflections.





*Eyelands 2018 - La Gomera*

Click [here](#) for the final sharing (password: eyelands)



### *Eyelands 2018 - Malta*

My second residency took place in Malta from 16 to 28 September 2018 in the frame of University of Malta. I chose to work on *għana*, a type of maltese traditional music based on story-telling and guitar. The aim of the two-week residency was the creation of a choreographic work on the 3rd year students of the Department of Dance Studies of the University of Malta. *The Passing* (working title) will be taken on a national and international tour (Malta and Spain) in November 2018.

*The Passing* does not use *għana* but stands as a tribute to the people who still gather to sing it on Sunday morning in Zejtun, a small town in the South-West end of the island. The *għana* comes from Malta's rural traditions. It is improvised around one theme by 6 voices creating, one by one, a series of stanzas of 4 octosyllabic verses with A-B-C-B rhymes in Maltese, a language that in itself is already a mix of arabic, Sicilian and other romance languages. What is produced in a *għana* session is an intertwined story-telling of conflicting/debating voices. Like many traditional story-telling forms of call and response, *għana* has the function of entertaining the community by showing and making fun of differences and clashes among its members. It is performed in front of an audience who sits in respectful silence while drinking, eating and enjoying, often with a smile, the fight between singers trying to upstage one another. It is a real virtuoso performance!

In *The Passing*, 6 dancers, like the 6 voices in *għana*, accumulate movement around one choreographic theme. They gather and separate from an intertwined partner work cooperating to find togetherness and a common language between different facets of the same identity. The spectator, on the other side, is left to contemplate the evolution of the relations formed and dissolved by continuous waves of movement.

Many thanks to University of Malta, ŻfinMalta, Lucía Piquero, Sara Accettura, Niels Plotard, Mariele Żammit for their support to this part of the project.



*Eyelands 2018 - Malta*

Click **here** for the sharing of The Passing (password: eyelands)

Click **here** for the process video





## *Eyelands 2019 - Cyprus*

My third residency took place in Cyprus from 24rd May to 3rd June 2019 with the support of Dance House Lefkosia by which I was invited to mentor the 5 choreographers of the Artists in Progress scheme.

Advised by DanceHouse Lefkosia AD Arianna Economou, on Cyprus I chose to reflect on food traditions as metaphor of multiculturalism. The research developed in a series of visits to markets in both the Greek and Turkish parts of the capital city Nicosia. The visit at the Museum of Archeology of Cyprus was also very useful to see people eating habits in old ages.

On the border between three continents and with a rich history spanning more than 10 millennia, the island has seen an incredible variety of influences, all of which add to the local gastronomy. Completely different characters are easy to witness on this island very much, from the cuisine's Lebanese, Greek, Turkish influences to Nicosia's old town architecture where ancient churches were turned into mosques.

The processes that came to my mind during researching were "blending" and "placing side by side", two simple actions at the base of cooking. You can mix different ingredients or decide to leave them separate, but still being close to one another. This is what I perceived in Cyprus, a place scarred by dramatic facts and divided by contrasting political powers but also where different ethnic groups have lived peacefully side by side. The dialectic metaphor "blending"/"accompanying" is really inspiring to me from a choreographic point of view and I hope to be able to translate this into a physical experience.

I went away thinking that the island, like in many other places, is still divided by politics but not by culture. Culture only can mix things, because it itself is a mix of elements, it does not divide people from each other. It just takes a curious, peaceful and hospitable mind to understand it. And this is what the Mediterranean Sea and my stay in Cyprus were about.

Many thanks to Dance House Lefkosia, Arianna Economou, Christiana Antonoudou, Simona Petkevičiūtė, George Lazoglou, Andreas Loucaides, Sotiris Sotiriou, Demetra Demetriadou, Stephanie Pastella.



*Eyeland's 2019 - Cyprus*







### *Eyelands 2021 - Syros*

Syros was a very interesting island to me. Very close to well-known, super-touristy Mykonos, Syros is an equally beautiful place where industry and commerce -and therefore life- was prosperous. The island's commercial activities spawned a service sector, including banking and insurance; industry, tanning, soap making, metalworking, milling, and textiles also provide employment. Syros's economy reached a peak in the late 19th century when its population topped 30,000.

The second world war took a heavy toll on Syros, which slipped into a decline that continued after the war. In the 1980s, the island started to turn around its fortunes as it looked to tourism to help its economy rebound, while the economy also got a boost from the reopening of the shipyards.

Like any other island I have visited, Syros's identity has changed radically in the past years. Its places of work producing richness, are now abandoned buildings, carcasses of industrial archeology.

Drawing from commerce as a metaphor for human exchange, connection, and communication, but also inspired by the architecture of the abandoned Kornellakis Tannery, I made *Gift*. The piece was my response to Syros Island, a place charged with history where different cultures in ancient and modern times merged and intertwined with one another.

Eleven women performed a score based on movement, singing, text as a funeral ritual taking care of/giving life to the remains of Kornellakis Tannery as they were ancient ruins.

Special thanks to Akropoditi Dance Festival for hosting the project, dancer and choreographer Eve Ganneau for assisting me during the research and creative process, and workshop participants Alice Dermati, Angeliki Sigourou, Christina Markopoulou, Eleanna Becim, Hara Yiannakopoulou, Lena Giaka, Lydia Bendali, Maria Kligkopoulou, Natalie Thaler, Sofia Koktsidou, Sofia Sideri.









Award-winning choreographer Riccardo Buscarini is an artist focused on constantly changing his creative approach to choreography and exploring its possible interactions with other art forms.

Beside working on his independent dance works and collaborating with many artists on installations and events, Riccardo has been commissioned to create works for dance companies internationally. *Silk*, his Golden Mask 2018 double-nominated creation on Chelyabinsk Contemporary Dance Theater (Russia) was restaged at ZfinMalta, the National Dance Company of Malta in autumn 2019. In 2020 he was one of the choreographers of *EDGE* (The Place, London). In 2022 he premiered *Requiem for Juliet*, his own version of Romeo and Juliet for ZfinMalta.

Highlights of his career so far include winning The Place Prize 2013 with the piece *Athletes*, the participation in the international research projects danceWEB (Impulstanz, Vienna), Creatives in Residence at The Hospital Club (London), ArtsCross London 2013 (UK, Taiwan and China), Performing Gender (Italy, Croatia, Spain, the Netherlands), MAM-Maroc Artist Meeting in Marrakech. His work in the visual arts field include collaborations with Summerhall (Edinburgh), London Festival of Architecture (2016 and 2019), and with London gallery Nahmad Projects during the exhibition *i'm NOT tino sehgal* curated by Francesco Bonami and miart - fiera di arte moderna e contemporanea di Milano 2017. Riccardo has approached opera direction working on traditional titles and new compositions.

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