



Episode 4: Plans For The Future with Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin

Kris Nelson: In 2020, the future was so bright. It was the decade we had all dreamed of. Then, the unthinkable happened. A pandemic that turned culture and society upside down. Now, a year and a half later, what do five leading artists and cultural producers have to say about their plans for the future? I'm Kris Nelson, artistic director and CEO of LIFT, London's biennial festival of international theater, and this is Plans For The Future.

Joining me today from Milan is artist, independent researcher and queer agitator, Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin.

Giorgia, there you are! Joining us live from the Milan, today's guest is Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin, an artist, a researcher, and a queer agitator of Armenian descent. Giorgia's research is built of a collection of pedagogic and performative events that focus on experiencing pleasure as a form of resistance to systemic oppression by relating a queer trans feminist approach to somatic practices. That means we are in our ideas and we are deep in the body. Trained in dance, their work exists in the shape of movement, video, text, choreography, sound, gatherings, and deals with narratives of hostility, survival strategies, rest friction, sensuality, and healing.

So, if you love work that mixes complex, personal and powerful journeys for both the performer and the artist, and if you like following a maker who can treat life's complications and tenderness' in equal measure, then you absolutely need to place Giorgia on your map.

But I probably don't need to tell you that as I'm sure the clarity and rigor and joy that they work with will be revealed as they themselves talk about their work.

Welcome here, Giorgia to Plans For The Future. How are you doing?



Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: I'm good. How are you? I love that you wrote that. Its good.

Kris Nelson: It's like where I get to do my BBC vibes, you know.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Totally, totally. But you know, it works. So it goes the thing.

Kris Nelson: Cool.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: How are you doing?

Kris Nelson: I'm well, yeah, it's bucketing rain here and life is good. We're we're rip-roaring back towards some kind of irreversible reopening and it feels quite strange. How about you? How are things in Milan?

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yeah, it's a very similar to what you're describing apart from the fact that it's not raining, but, there's this thing, I feel like that's happening a lot now where very suddenly and very fast, things just went back and not only back, I feel, but like with an enhanced sense of anxiousness or quickness, or maybe because I perceived myself as very slow, everything feels three times faster.

But I don't know, because maybe, obviously all around the world it's been a massive, like two massive years. I feel, because Milan specifically was particularly hit and in very specific ways from the beginning, there's something really confusing for me about how much it's very perceivable, collective trauma that is there, but there's hardly any addressing of it or language around it, but even also amongst, you know, peers, colleagues, it's something that is there, but it's almost like, you know, we know that it's here and therefore we just go. Yeah, and this obviously for me carries a lot of worry. And almost what's coming out of this year and a half is almost like a hardening towards a type of working or a hardening towards work as a center, in ways that I don't know, maybe also naively I thought we could look at. But clearly everything is stronger than the things that we look at, I guess. I don't know.



Kris Nelson: I know, but there's something about what you're saying that makes me think about pace and even the people I know in the sector or out in the world, wherever they're at, who are saying, "let's get back to it, let's get back to it."

I know that they feel this thing that we all learned to move differently, be in the world differently, be much slower. And I know we'll miss that and that we jumped back and got right back to everything, it will have an effect. Society is going to have a long Covid anyway, and that's going to be part of it, it's like moving too quickly after a knee injury or getting up too fast from the table and knocking over the table.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Kris Nelson: There's definite things that will happen this summer as everyone races to get a bit of bliss back.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yeah. And I guess also in terms of not acknowledging in language or in action or in practice, you know, that there is a need to look at what's happening as a collective trauma. Like this for me, it completely impedes us from any sense of finding strat-, not even strategies because it's not about strategies, but like literally language and modalities in which the thing that needs to heal becomes the center, you know, and not the periphery of what needs to be done. And yeah, I'm going off on a tangent.

Kris Nelson: But it's an important one. And maybe it comes to the next question because that healing could feel heavy, but it also could feel inspiring.

And one of the things I've been asking everyone is: what's been inspiring you right now and through this period of time? For you, I imagine it's been, you know, as a busy touring artist, lecturer, maker in lots of different contexts, you've been doing the jenga and the reshuffling of probably a beautifully planned year or two. You're making new work. You made this work with us, on Concept Touring or readapted it. So where have you been getting your inspiration? Has it been from the ceiling or has it been elsewhere?



Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: It was speaking to someone the other day about this, about how I feel maybe the way in which I understand and work things is not to make through inspiration, but through contingency or context or continuous, like, um, maybe also internal monologue, but hopefully it comes out somehow of a law, like elaboration and language around what's going on. And I think this is what I do anyhow all the time, and I feel like for me, because my life or the way that I work, that I was already changing before Covid started.

In a way it was the preamble for what happened next, for what happened later? You know, it really stopped everything, but in a way I felt like, luckily for me, I have structures in place already to hold myself in that pause, which was something that I was already working with or working on or trying to bring into my practice or my dialogue with institutions, like through different, you know, different things. And so I think it's because it already had started, it didn't really feel like 'whoa', you know, I mean, it obviously did for many reasons, but like, it was also like, a moment where it was like, oh, okay, this is happening now.

Okay. We can't go on, you know, we can't travel, we can't go do this. We can't do that. And then. And somehow I like to sit with the journey that had taken me all the way to there and the fact that it was happening in that moment where everything was going in, cause I often don't feel, you know, like the things that I experienced or that I'm living are like synchronized with the rest of the world.

So for that to be happening, I was also like, oh, you know, there was something that I was like, oh, okay, this is it's happening.

Kris Nelson: You're in sync and out of sync, you were prepared and unprepared.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yeah something like this.

Kris Nelson: I love it. You'll have to share your toolkit.

You talked, you were talking about structures and things. Is there anything that Italy has gotten right? Or that Italy has gotten right in this time that the rest of the world should learn from?



Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: You know, I don't want to bitch about where I live, but, but...

Kris Nelson: Haha, fair.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: But also yes, there are many problems. I don't know. I think we're so much still, I don't know, working it out or really not. I feel like there's these two opposites, you know, these two poles exist at the same time, so it feels like everything has been overcome.

And now, you know, you go, you do things it's like, and I guess it depends, like in terms of where direction we're pointing towards, then that determines what works or what doesn't, no? So I could say, you know, things have been dealt with in a way that now it's possible to do many things, but I don't know if necessarily this is the thing that, you know, I feel is a plus. So yeah, I dunno. I'm also really confused about this, right?

Kris Nelson: To be revealed.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: I'll let you know.

Kris Nelson: Thanks. Again, send me the information please!

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: I will, I will.

Kris Nelson: So you were participating in our commissioning project Concept Touring with this work [Gisher](#). For Concept Touring we selected 15 artists working on 9 projects gave the money and time and mentorship to develop an idea for international collaboration with little to no travel.

Would you tell us about *Gisher* and what you worked on in the commission?

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yeah so *Gisher* was... I'll try and make it brief. So *Gisher* was a, is a work that I premiered in July last year, and it's a work that I've made over the course of two and a half years, more or less. And it gathers a



series of texts that I wrote and a video that is 45 minutes long that me and my partner and collaborator Frau De Isabella shot in Armenia in the summer of 2019.

And so, the work consists of... the audience enters a theater space. There is the video, so I'm not present, and they watched the film and the film includes the text that I wrote. And then the audience is invited at the end of the film to walk outside, where they will find me and a bonfire outdoors. And the bonfire, the section of the bonfire includes a series of eight, I call them voices but they are texts that I, that are in response to the text that you hear in the film.

And I had invited eight artists, collaborators of mine, to respond in writing to what I had written. And they have many different declinations and natures. These texts, some of them are directly to me, some of them are almost like a short paper about the relation, about labors of care, Madalia Franito wrote this paper about liberals of care very much connected to Covid because it was also, we premiered after the first lockdown, in the first opening. And yeah, and this is kind of what it is like. When people ask me what it's about I can't really say, I don't really know.

Kris Nelson: Are the voices responding to the film, the content of the film or the sort of the spirit of the film, or to you?

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: I think to me, because all the people that I invited are people that are very close and dear to me.

And we're, we've been in dialogue for, with some of them for many years now. And so I feel like it's well, because the work is me, right? So it's always a response to me somehow. Some people chose to really respond to parts of the texts that you can find like links between what you heard earlier and after.

A lot of it is about, I feel like overall, relationship to body and grief and geographies and, you know, the multiple ways in which friction shows up in those, in those, um landscapes let's say. And yeah, that's kind of what it is. I don't, I haven't described it very well, but, um...



Kris Nelson: I think you've given us the image of watching this film, which depicts from what I've seen, you in Armenia, landscapes of Armenia, urban settings, and then this bonfire where we are joined by voices. I have, I mean, I'm there.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yeah. No, the important thing I think to say about the video is that I am barely in it. And the way in which, because we had a lot of conversations also with Frau who shot the majority of the images about how to go and collect images now in a place, that is very loaded also in terms of like history relationship to the west, you know, imperialism and so forth, and how much, immediately just because of the nature of the images, there is a risk of it becoming a documentary or explanatory in a sense of like bringing in, in the ways in which documentaries are built, bringing back information so that it is accessible to who haven't seen it before.

And this was something that we really wanted to avoid a lot. So you don't really see like anything wide, for instance, it's very rare in the film that you see wide shots. And Frau works on collages of images. So almost as a way of reconstructing or attempting to construct an image that holds the complexity in the gaze or that invites the complexity and the gaze of who is watching, that makes, you know, that at least allows some questions to emerge.

Through that about, you know, how are you looking at this where you're looking at this from, have you ever seen this before? What do you think it is? You know, and I feel like, in this, like in these many layers is where the work is situated.

Kris Nelson: And now you have this idea that it will travel.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yes.

Kris Nelson: And perhaps new voices as it meets and greets different places.

So what, over this time during the, your work, in the Concept Touring commission, how is it - how are you imagining it moving and migrating?



Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Now, like, I feel like after this time, because it's been since April, that we started, so it was kind of long. Yeah. It was really important for me to go back to revisit this work that had a very short life because of Covid, and to have time to think about it away from working out how it could have been. And so the idea would be now that I developed during the residency also with the help of [Kopano Maroga](#), who was amazing. So, the section in which the audience hears the responses around the fire would be now, um, offered to other people that I don't necessarily know from before, that somehow feel resonance with the film or with the text that I wrote and this idea that I'm very, that is very dear to me. And to, let's say SWANA cultures in general. SWANA is an acronym that stands - for people that don't know - for Southwest Asia and North Africa, which is the idea of storytelling and of passing on information and tradition and knowledge and language through storytelling.

And also in, how can I say, in this process of fabulation things are also resolved, you know, or can be somehow unpacked or, um, we find our narration for things we don't have language for. So this is kind of the proposition. So I guess, depending on where the work is hosted, there will be some time spent with people that live there that are from the SWANA demographics, specifically at the intersection of queerness and belonging. And yeah, and then I'm very interested and happy to see, also scared because I'm very controlling I think I realized in my work, but I want to try, you know. This is the thing about storytelling. You pass it on and it's not yours anymore. And so I need to learn this.

Kris Nelson: Yeah exactly, we talked about this a bit before. But for the listeners, these new storytellers, these new voices, should they be experienced storytellers, either professionally like you, or could they be anyone?

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: I mean, also I don't consider myself an experienced storyteller, I don't really know how to write, I try. Yeah. I use writing as, yeah, as many things, but no, not necessarily. And this is the thing, I was speaking this morning to someone about it. I'm not necessarily curious or interested in selecting people that come towards me, I would like to be chosen, you know, through the text, through the film, through the works, with the conversations



that we can have. I think in this I'm curious to know who and why would like to carry this thing with and for me at some point.

Kris Nelson: Yeah.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: So I guess, it can be anyone

Kris Nelson: It's, I mean, amazing, I've got this image of how to write that invitation or, or you might create that a prompt that people could follow to select you, just select the process and say, "I want to do this. I want my voice to be broadcast. Around this campfire or bonfire." And then there's a festival or a theater or some kind of presenter in the middle.

How do you hope that they help that transfer that carrying of the work? Where do you see them fitting in?

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: I think one of the cores of the work lies for me, because for me it's super important to be very soon in dialogue with whatever institution decides to host about, you know, because this can easily become from an institutional perspective, you know, a chance for participatory practices, audience development, you know, all these things that exist and that I find problematic also in many ways, or that I don't necessarily want my work affiliated with in this moment. And so for me, there needs to be firstly, a conversation about what is the institution's relation or position, not only with me, but towards, you know, the city, the context in which they work, who is invited in the institution and who isn't and why. Is this the first time, you know, that queer people entered the institution? If so, how can the institution facilitate this entrance without tokenizing or, you know, um, what do you call it? Yeah, absorbing. So this is really the first conversation. And then I will - because I also need, you know, there's this thing about as artists trusting the institution is a whole thing - but I feel like there needs to be a lot of that here because also if I'm not present in the city or I don't know the context or whatever, there needs to be, I need to lean a lot. And I need to trust that the people working in the institution can facilitate and find, not only the people, but the ways in which, the ways to language this offering.



Kris Nelson: And to hold the relationships.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yeah. Exactly.

Kris Nelson: Yeah, because you, yeah, there's so much in it that is about your personal film, your personal story, their response to you. And if we, you know, if you follow it, that you don't get on plane and you don't get on the train, you might see opening night on a smartphone. Haha.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yes of course its fine.

Kris Nelson: Haha sorry, I don't mean to, I don't mean to give you those kinds of chills.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: No it's good.

Kris Nelson: Ah, but like then I guess it has to become theirs. But also you can't be erased or phased from it because it's your work, but also also they can feel, you never want to feel that you were just this sort of distant being saying, "do it differently or," ...

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: No

Kris Nelson: Do you have clues about how that practice might develop?

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: In dialogue with institutions, you mean?

Kris Nelson: Yeah, and then with the people that you're working with.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: I'm not sure yet. I feel like now it feels like the idea is kind of emerged and it feels solid. And now for me, it's about really, maybe again, writing a text as an offering, and to start this with people in institutions that might already have ideas, or other artists that live in whichever city that can be interested or have the a desire for this? Yeah, it's really also really practical. I



would like it to also be very practical how this is approached. But in terms of concrete strategies, not yet other than what I said.

Kris Nelson: Yeah, exactly.

I mean, it's a simple enough practice or form that you're proposing and the depth to which a presenter could go or a local champion who could be your host could go, and the depth of the storytellers could go. That's where it's a very distinct, subtle form with loads of depth and potential. That's great.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Thanks.

Kris Nelson: So, uh, were there any ideas that you threw out over the course of it, or did the making of it kind of knit together fairly, with ease and that kind of thing?

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: You mean for the content?

Kris Nelson: Uh, no, I think it was kind of clear from the start.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: There was this idea that I was having at one point that maybe the voices would not be a response to my text but would be responding to each other.

But other than that, no, I feel like because the work already existed and it has a shape, I feel like I knew that this was where I wanted to, yeah, to insert some space. No, I don't feel like I threw anything, surprisingly, because usually I throw out so many things, and they're like spiral to come back to the essence.

Kris Nelson: I'm pleased for you and I'm happy to see how this work in the world.

While you were speaking, Sonia Hughes said "I loved what you were saying about contingency rather than inspiration. I think that is so in the world where we have to find what is necessary, possible, beautiful, given the current current circumstances."



Is there anything else you want to say about that notion around contingency?

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: I mean, I guess also maybe because of how I think about things or just my experience in this body, in my work and how I don't feel I've not ever that's, that's not right, but that I often engage in processes of sitting and looking for things to enter me. You know, I feel like things enter me like by default and the work is often times trying to like to guard that rather than do the opposite, you know?

Kris Nelson: Don't absorb the impulses, don't take all the inspiration. Don't skip onto the next thing right away.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yeah. Something like that. And also, like, I feel in the last, I guess like five or six years where my practice has really changed, things have solidified, a lot of things have gone. And the things that have stayed are really core and there is where I move. I feel like they move through contingency and through context as core, you know, and not like as looking to pull in.

And when I say contingency, I don't mean like necessarily, you know, resolving or dealing with things it's more like, and also obviously there's that, um, but, it's very specific entry points or way of looking at things that has allowed me to find language for myself, for my body, for my work, for the things that I want to say or do. And so I think of context as, I wouldn't use the word inspiration, I would use like, you know, response to context is how I work.

Kris Nelson: Yup. Yup. Great.

We want to know about the future...

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Honey, we all do.

Kris Nelson: Haha, please tell us.

But you have tools that others that I've talked to so far haven't, which are... you use divination in your practice and before you came on, I was talking a bit about



the piece that you wrote or [the interview you had with Jamila Johnson-Small](#) in the International Curators Forum.

You talk about divination as a place for holding space rather than - it changed my thinking about what divination was, because I guess I thought about it as kind of instinct or guessing at the future. But you talked about it as a possibility for looking at, through, with an intention, to question and move away from structures of looking that are rooted in pain, violence, sameness, or hostile contacts, et cetera. I might be taking that a bit out of context for transition. I'm hoping to pull off like Simone Biles jumping from the balancebeam but I'm don't think I match her skill at all. But I've tried to say the sort of thing about divination in your practice, which is real, like it's, I've heard you talk about it and where it is, and also this, our audience is joining us to hear plans for the future and how we might shape the future or see it... do you want to move to this part of the chart where we do the, yeah,

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Let's

Kris Nelson: It was a big preamble right. You got the shuffle in. It's like, no, I'm blushing. Okay. Over to you.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: It's good. It's good! I feel like maybe it's important to introduce it the way in which I use or I work with...work is not the right word... I do things through tarot and pendulum, but we're looking at tarot now. I really genuinely don't feel like I can predict what's going to happen. This is not my approach to things. Similarly to what you were saying that I wrote about, that it is a tool for questioning, and either if I read it to myself or to others, it's really like a question generator type of process, you know, like I use tarot a lot for writing. So I've been reading for, I think four years now. And it's really about, yeah. Learning the symbols, what I'm recognizing, but then this practice of, um, like intuitive questioning, I think it's something like this. And then it depends, right. If I'm doing a reading for someone else, it's about, uh, emptying what I can of myself and my perception, but still holding what I know about the things that I'm being asked.



But I don't know how you want to do this now. I can also just pull... how much time do we have?

Kris Nelson: Uh, we're good. We have about 20 minutes.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Okay. So maybe we can do three cards and I can talk a little bit about them and if somebody or people have questions.

I feel like we raised a lot of, um, things that maybe can come up. So let's see, I can just pull three cards and then we see, um, so if someone listening has, um, knows something about cards or also reads, I read the Tarot de Marseille, and I only read the ones that are called the major arcana.

So, there's 21 cards, and they're basically the cards with titles. Okay. So they're not the cards that only have numbers apart from one. They're not the ones that you would use to play cards basically. Okay? So, I pulled three cards, and the way in which I read them is like a sentence. So from left to right.

So, the first card is the chariot.

Yeah. And then I'll talk you through each one. Um, the center axis of our reading is the fifth arcana, the pope.

And the closing one is the moon, obviously, also because we're going into a new moon. I learned, in terms I guess of all the things that we were talking about earlier, and we talked a lot I feel, about structure and structural things and moving forward. So it makes a lot of sense that the chariot comes up.

The chariot is a very, um, matter of fact card. Um, so it has to do with going, obviously it's a tool for going. So I guess, we can either use cards as suggestions or as questions. Right? So if it was a suggestion, that it would be like, you know, maybe look at the tools for your going, what are the question could be, what are the tools for your going, um... what are the things that are already in place in this going? And is this going, going? That was very lame, but this is what came up.



Kris Nelson: Is the charriot packed, did you put the wheels on, and can it move? You know the destination? et cetera. Yeah.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Exactly. Um, the person let's say like driving the charity has faces on each of their shoulders. And for me this is always a reminder of the fact that going is not necessarily going forward or that it's not a linear process.

And so how, what would our going look like if we weren't guided by our eyes necessarily? You know, what would it be if it's not the front of our body going in one direction, you know. If we think about multiple trajectories, if we think about, um, yeah, many things. So there's a question here, I feel, about tools and strategies, and direction.

Also because the center axis is the pope. So it's about, um, dogma. It's about, on the macro scale, I feel, a hardening of structures that we have been seeing obviously and experiencing. And it's also about, on a smaller level, I feel it's about, what are the words that we choose to language our position, our presence, and our cluster in contexts that are, you know, the world that are not private.

So there's something very descriptive about the pope, I feel, that invites us to think about, literally words and how and where we're speaking from or where one is speaking from. Almost as if they're saying, I feel like they're saying, you know, watch out for the words that you are choosing and the context that you are saying them in. But also it's about this beautiful process I feel of constructing language for yourself, you know? And about that being 'verb' - in Italian, you say 'verbo' like verb, like a narration somehow, you know? Yeah. Um, so I guess, we looked at structures and strategies, we're looking at language, and then the moon came and I'm very happy cause it's my favourite.

I shouldn't have favorite tarots, but I do! Um, the moon is obviously a water card, but it's also, it's a healing card. It's one of the three healing cards. And when it comes last, I feel like it almost an invitation to say, you know, this is the thing that needs to happen or that will happen, or that are, that need to be looked at and gone through and dealt with. But the most important thing is



always the last one. Right. And so, um, the moon has something to do about looking at, what do you call them, like tides or waves, you know? And so it really determines that and invites a certain rhythmicity I feel in pace and in energy and in posture, that is a facilitary, like waves, and not direct. And I don't know because it's a satellite and because in the tarot it guides, you know, like, or it invites or informs, um, healing processes. There's something there for me about always remembering their amazing power of oscillation.

And I say this because also in pendulum work, this is very important. No, because this is what you read. And I feel like there's so much space also in a lot of things that we were talking about, you know, like there's so much space that can be found from there. If oscillation is the question, or if oscillation is a methodology, yeah, it can be amazing and very generative and we don't have to worry so much, you know, about the chariot or the Pope or the, you know... This is kind of the reading, but if there are questions or things that people would like to know more, I can try.

Kris Nelson: It would be great to hear some questions from everybody, but absorb that. I mean, I think it's a, I don't know what you make of it everyone listening, but I love the feeling of hearing or reading and where, um, because it's very hard to make. It's very hard to listen, to not connect things and not attach things and start to tease out or sort of move the puzzle pieces around. And I guess that's what you're saying about using it as an act of clarifying questions for yourself or your instincts or what might be next? Hmm.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yeah. What were you connecting?

Kris Nelson: I was connecting with the rigidity of the time we're in, the thing we talked about at the beginning of the conversation about well, a bunch of things. I thought about the vehicle that we're all on towards getting “back to normal”, in big quotations, and the dogma around that, um, on both sides, that it's an argument about how we reset and how we come back as opposed to a dialogue, or an it its not an empathetic, uh, conversation in any case, for the most part. And then I thought that at the end of the night, at the end of that conversation, the moon is there and the tide is lapping at the shore, so that the quiet or stillness that we might've found on the macro level, uh, is possible. And then in



terms of your work, I heard that like, there's a potential vehicle for this project to be moving. There might be, the rules about how it might play out or, it could be overruled or have too much structure around it or that, or that it needs structure around it, in the pope.

Uh, and then, again, that there's a return in the finale. It's this, that you described this oscillation, this, um, the moon has its power, stories have their power, uh, standing around with an audience, um, at a bonfire and hearing voices has a power and that takes away the man-made things and the people involved somehow. That somehow there is a greater sense or a greater power to it all. That's gentle and has its own rhythm and assistance.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Thank you.

Kris Nelson: Thank you.

“For me”, Sonia says, “I wrote what are my tools”, and now she wants to know, what are your tools?

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: In general, I think the ones that I've offered now are the ones that I count, I don't necessarily as tools because there's something productive in tools or in the use of tools that I don't know if I necessarily...if it agrees with how I think about things necessarily. But yeah, I think, you know, I did say I use cards to write or to check in with myself or to ask questions for sure. And I think, yeah, the things that I've been doing have been about trying to understand, to answer this question, which is very big and very complex and I would like it not to be necessarily limited to the things that I know that can hold me in place, which are also super important, obviously

[reading the comments in the live Instagram conversation] What are, exactly, what are your tools beyond the tools. Same, something like this. But, yeah, I don't think I can answer this question. Maybe in 10 years. I will know, but, yeah.

Kris Nelson: Or should you two meet one day.



Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Also!

Kris Nelson: Sonia is making a peice with us, premiering a piece this year in our LIFT LOVES LONDON season called *I Am From Reykjavik*. Yeah. So there's a, there's a whole other connection to make there.

But, um, I dunno, Sonia, I think you're also an agitator and definitely a writer and a performer and so there's a nice - I'm smiling at a correlation, because I love, I love it when matches are made in this way.

What have you been saying to other artists these days?

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: What have I been saying?

Kris Nelson: Yeah, in terms of that thing that you talked about, about the rigidity of the structures that things are closing down and yet people want transformation.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: I guess it's more like, I feel a general like, vibe, that there is an expectation for things to be done, and an impossibility for this and how these two things hardly ever, like how it's always been like this, but how it's enhanced now. And, um, yeah, so things like this, I feel, um...

Kris Nelson: It's similar to what I think. I mean, I've been thinking about how, as we work with artists, the thing of who's carrying the impossibilities has been on my mind.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yeah and I think, its not a Covid-specific thing.

Kris Nelson: No, um, it's just a new, a bunch of new ones that we could think to distract ourselves from the other ones.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Exactly. Yeah. And, yeah, I guess in a way, at some point for like five minutes, a group of us, of artists thought, you know, like, oh, this could be a really good moment for things. Like for discourse to change, for



practice to change, for systems to be looked at, you know? But it was literally like the shortest utopia ever, and so I guess now I feel like there's a split between who wants or who can stay at a pace in systems, you know, or who was there since forever, and who is not. And this is a conversation that, or I don't know, something that I would like to find more space to look at, that there would be more space and look at. Um, yeah.

Kris Nelson: Yeah. We hope, I mean, I'm a Pollyanna optimist, but I do hope that that first blush of that utopic thinking, we come back to it somehow, like a spring bloom that comes back every year that can stay or something, endemic wild flowers that just keep spreading,

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: I guess, because it needs like for it to not stay in this plane of like, oh, it would, wouldn't it be amazing.

It need actual structural systemic change. Right? So it means we need to start talking about universal basic income. We need to start talking about, you know, systemic oppressions within the institution. We need to start with, not only talking, but literally, for those things to sit in place. Um, and then it won't last for five minutes. Maybe it's actually,

Kris Nelson: Yeah,

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Yeah. Maybe the utopia was that, that we would talk about it.

We need to think about the moon now. It's not, we cannot...

Kris Nelson: We cant go back to the pope. We should think about the moon, I will tonight.

Thank you so much for being here today with us.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Thank you so much



Kris Nelson: Today, we've been with Georgia Ohanesian Nardin, artist, agitator, choreographer, dominator, and it's been a real pleasure.

Giorgia Ohanesian Nardin: Ciao.

Kris Nelson: Bye, Bye.

Thank you for joining us today. This is one of five conversations in our series Plans For The Future, so do check out the other episodes where I speak with intrepid arts makers around the world. To find out more about LIFT and our work challenging, artistic, political, and social conventions, supporting an equitable rebuild post-Brexit and the pandemic, and connecting the world to London, follow us @liftfestival or visit www.liftfestival.com. Even better, sign up to our newsletter for a monthly dose of LIFT. We promise not to bore you. LIFT is a national portfolio organization supported by Arts Council England. Plans For The Future is part of our summer season and our 40th anniversary LIFT LOVES LONDON, made possible by cultural recovery funding.