

VOLUME VIII, ISSUE 2
JULY-DECEMBER 2021
ISSN: 2284-3310
ISBN: 9791280081032
SPECIAL EDITION



LAMP IN A WINDLESS PLACE

Developing an Actor Training Methodology
through Sri Lankan Combative Art Angampora

Issue Editors: Saumya Liyanage,
Lyudmyla Honcharova, Marlon Ariyasinghe

Mise en Abyme

International Journal of Comparative Literature and Arts

Vol. VIII, Issue 2

July-December 2021

Lamp in a Windless Place

Developing an Actor Training Methodology through Sri Lankan Combative Art Angampora

Editor-in-Chief

Armando Rotondi – Institute of the Arts Barcelona

Guest Editors / Issue Editors

Saumya Liyanage – University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Lyudmyla Honcharova – University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Marlon Ariyasinghe – Senior Assistant Editor, Himal Southasian, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Editorial Office

Elena Dal Maso – University of Venice; Anita Paolicchi – University of Pisa; Valentina Temussi – Institute of the Arts Barcelona / Liverpool John Moores University; Alessandro Valenzisi – University of Strathclyde; Ida Libera Valicenti – University of Bucharest

Advisory Board

Alessandra De Martino Cappuccio – University of Warwick (UK); Joseph Farrell – University of Strathclyde (UK); Srecko Jurisic – University of Split (Croatia); Gaetana Marrone – Princeton University (USA); Andrew McKinnon – Institute of the Arts Barcelona (Spain); Drew Mulligan – Institute of the Arts Barcelona (Spain); Mariantonietta Picone – University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy); Elena Pirvu – University of Craiova (Romania); Antonio Saccone – University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy); Elisa Sartor – University of Verona (Italy); Andrew Sherlock – Liverpool John Moores University (UK); Roxana Utale – University of Bucharest (Romania)

Logo

Nicoletta Preziosi

Publisher

Mise en Abyme/IDEA
in partnership with the
Institute of the Arts Barcelona

Issue published in academic partnership with

University of the Visual and Performing Arts,
Colombo, Sri Lanka



And funded by and as a part of the

Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development
(AHEAD-DOR HEMS) Project



Contact information

Armando Rotondi: a.rotondi@iabarcelona.es

Submission of contributions and material for review purposes

journal.abyme@gmail.com

Web address

www.journalabyme.com

“Mise en Abyme” is officially recognised as an academic journal by ANVUR and is indexed by Scholar — WorldCat — Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE) — JURN Directory — IngentaConnect — Directory of Research Journals Indexing (DRJI) — Internet Archive — Academic Naver. All work in “Mise en Abyme” is licensed under a Creative Commons 4.0 Non-Commercial International License.

ISSN: 2284-3310

ISBN: 979-12-80081-03-2

All works are blind peer-reviewed.

Cover Picture

The illustration on the cover pages is inspired by angampora wood carving piece at the *Embekka Devalaya* and designed by Nuwan Chamika.

Acknowledgements

This special edition of *Mise en Abyme – International Journal of Comparative Literature and Arts* is dedicated to the actor training project titled “Lamp in a Windless Place: Developing an Actor Training Methodology through Sri Lankan Combative Art Angampora”¹ initiated by the University of the Visual and Performing Arts (UVPA), Colombo Sri Lanka in 2019. The three-year-long performer-training project is funded by the Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD-DOR HEMS) Project supported by the World Bank and the Ministry of Higher Education in Sri Lanka.

This special edition covers some of the writings generated through the Actors Lab and the literature review developed along with the research project. Lyudmyla Honcharova, a Ukrainian actor and a research assistant of this project, was a postgraduate student of Prof. Armando Rotondi, and this academic connection paved the way to work with Prof. Armando Rotondi and his team to realize this special edition of *Mise en Abyme*.

The AHEAD research team would like to extend their immense gratitude to the editors-in-Chief of the *Mise en Abyme* Journal and the editorial board members. This collaboration is greatly valued by the authors who have contributed to this special edition: Dr Sudesh Mantillake, Department of Fine Arts, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, and Nipuni Sharada Pathirage, from the Department of Drama Oriental Ballet and Contemporary Dance, UVPA Colombo who were invited to research on the Actors Lab. In addition, the Actors Lab participants: Thilakshini Rathnayake, Chamane Darshika, Marlon Ariyasinghe and Kanchana Malshani who have presented their reflections and analysis stemming from their time at the Actors Lab. Finally, the AHEAD team members, Natasha Hillary, Samal Vimukthi Hemachandra, Lyudmyla Honcharova, Bandhuka Premawardhana, Sachini Athapaththu and Saumya Liyanage who contributed to this special edition of *Mise en Abyme*.

The AHEAD Team is indebted to Guru Karunāpāla and his team of combat artistes who have been working with the Actors Lab participants and shared their esoteric knowledge of angampora.

AHEAD DOR HEMS 73 Project likes to thank Dr Harsha Athurupana, Lead Economist and the Program Leader for Human Development for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Prof. Thusitha U. Abeythunga, Lead Academic Expert and Nalaka Madushanka have been immensely supportive throughout the project.

We must mention our heartfelt gratitude and warmth towards our former Vice Chancellor, Senior Prof. Sarath Chandrajeewa, who has been a constant inspiration during the

¹ In order to demystify angampora martial arts and to cement its position among the other martial arts of the world (one of the main objectives of this endeavour), the Editorial Team decided not to italicize the word and to only capitalize angampora in its first usage. All subsequent references within the journal (except in titles) will be written as ‘angampora’.

early years of this project at the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka. Further, the AHEAD team wishes to thank the current UVPA Vice Chancellor Senior Prof. Rohana Mahaliyanarachchi, who has a clear sense of the value of research and innovations. Further, we are indebted to OTS office Director Dr Anusha Jayasiri and her team and our international consultants: Prof. Jonathan Pitches, University of Leeds, Prof. Paul Bauman, Cardiff University and Associate Professor Tanatchaporn Kittikong, Khon Kaen University, Thailand.

The AHEAD team thanks our copy editors and proofreaders: Marlon Ariyasinghe, Savindri Ferdinando, Bandhuka Premawardhana, and Yashoda Wasundara, who have meticulously worked on the preliminary drafts of papers and essays included in this journal. The illustration on the cover page of the special edition of *Mise en Abyme* is inspired by angampora wood carving piece at the *Embekka Devalaya* and designed by Nuwan Chamika.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a difficult time for many theatre artistes who relied on live theatre and performance. During the second lockdown in early 2021, the Actors Lab participant Imitha Jayakodi decided to take his own life. The Actors Lab lost an emerging, talented young actor and a dear friend. All the members of the AHEAD Team would like to dedicate this special edition of *Mise en Abyme* to Imitha and his valid contribution to the development of the Actors Lab.

Issue Editors: Saumya Liyanage, Lyudmyla Honcharova and Marlon Ariyasinghe

Mise en Abyme
International Journal of Comparative Literature and Arts

Vol. VIII, Issue 2
July-December 2021
Lamp in a Windless Place
Developing an Actor Training Methodology through
Sri Lankan Combative Art Angampora

Publisher
Mise en Abyme/IDEA

Mise en abyme
International Journal of Comparative Literature and Arts



Journal in academic partnership with the
Institute of the Arts Barcelona

iaab Institute of the Arts
Barcelona

Issue published in academic partnership with
University of the Visual and Performing Arts,
Colombo, Sri Lanka



And funded by and as a part of the
Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD-DOR HEMS) Project



COPYRIGHTS

All work in *Mise en Abyme. International Journal of Comparative Literature and Arts* is licensed under a Creative Commons 4.0 Non-Commercial International License. According to this, you are free to copy, distribute, display and perform the work as long as you give the original author(s) credit, do not use this work for commercial purposes, and do not alter, transform, or build upon this work. For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work. Any of these conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copyright holders. Nothing in this license impairs or restricts the authors' rights.

OPEN ACCESS POLICY

Mise en Abyme. International Journal of Comparative Literature and Arts is an Open Access journal, conforming fully to the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI). It has adopted the BOAI policy of "free availability on the public internet, permitting its users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of its articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, is to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited".

AUTHOR'S RIGHTS

Copyright on any research article in *Mise en Abyme* is retained by the author(s). Authors grant a license to publish the article and identify *Mise en Abyme* as the original publisher. Authors also grant any third party the right to use the article freely as long as its integrity is maintained and its original authors, citation details and publisher are identified. Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 formalizes these and other terms and conditions of publishing research articles.

Maybe a different kind of education would be an option, a different concept of acting-culture, one that in an admittedly old-fashioned sense – provides the person with more than skills and information. This would allow the person to conceive of himself constantly (Weiler cited in Zarrilli 2019: 172).

Weiler suggests rethinking the approach towards actor training methodologies, emphasizing on the constant learning process of oneself. Therefore, an actor's personal development, physical and mental wellbeing could be prioritized in a new concept of acting culture. Angampora could serve such an aim if introduced to actor training systematically. Further, Weiler holds the view that “the optimal way of teaching and practice would be to leave the outcome and result open to the practitioner's curiosity and capability for a lifelong learning” (Weiler cited in Zarrilli 2019: 170). While it is still not clear whether angampora would successfully fill the gaps in the modern actor training traditions of Sri Lanka and Europe. At the current stage of AHEAD DOR HEMS 73 research, angampora certainly can satisfy the psychophysical needs of the contemporary actor. Consequently, the paper aims to identify the needs of the modern actor by analyzing traditional western and non-western actor training systems.

2. Western actor training traditions

Research into western actor traditions has a long history. Most scholars trace Western theatre tradition back to ancient Greek performances, which is considered as the beginning of European theatre culture. However, it is incorrect to perceive European actor training and theatre traditions as something separated from the Asian theatre culture. Wiles and David suggest in their studies that Greece was a point where East and West interweaved. They also state that Greek civilization is close to the Indian and Japanese regarding its attitudes towards harmony between body and mind (Wiles, David 2000: 2):

Geographically Greece is a place where East meets West and it is not today a hegemonic power like the land of Shakespeare, so the drama of Greece is well placed to become a shared cultural possession, a vehicle of communication (Wiles, David 2000: 2).

In the same vein, Sarachchandra (1971), in the interview *The Uses of Traditions* notes “Greek theatre has many affinities with Sri Lankan theatre. The Greeks used chants, masks,