

**WOMAN.** Yes.

**MARTIN.** Good. And... I don't know if you can see it but this stage creates the fiction of a – it's basically a television set. Can you see it?

**INTERPRETER.** ma ba3rif idha fiki tshūfi, bass hadha l-masraḥ b-yikhla' al-khayāl...3amaliyyan huwe 3ibara 3an 3amal estudio telefiziūni. fiki tshūfī-h?

**WOMAN.** la, mā fī-ni shūf shī.

**INTERPRETER.** No, I can't see anything.

**MARTIN.** Well... Is this idea in any way similar to the one you developed in Damascus?

**WOMAN.** ma 3am b-esma3. [I couldn't hear.]

**INTERPRETER.** Can you repeat that?

**MARTIN.** Because for us it was very important to convey the sense of intense love and heartbreak.

**INTERPRETER.** li-anno...kunna muhtammīn bi-shlōn min-3abbir 3an ash-shu3ūr bilḥubb il-3mī' u bil-ḥasra.

**WOMAN.** Yes.

**LAURA.** (To **MARTIN.**) You have to repeat the same question.

**MARTIN.** Yes...

start **WOMAN.** 'abl kull shī lāzim 'ul inno l-masraḥiyye kull-a khayāl. baladna indamarit, ḥayātna ithaṭamit ' il-masraḥiyye 3am ithāwal tikhla' faḍā' lil-ḥanīn u lil-nustaljiya.

**INTERPRETER.** I have to say that the play is above all a fantasy. Our country has been completely destroyed and our lives have been broken, so the play tries to create a space for nostalgia.

**MARTIN.** Nostalgia for the soap opera?

**INTERPRETER.** nustaljiya lil-musalsal?

**WOMAN.** Yes.

**MARTIN.** You miss soap operas?

**WOMAN.** eh bass lissa fīh 3ndna musalsalāt.

**INTERPRETER.** Yes. But soap operas still exist.

~~**LAURA.** Yes. Let's talk about something else.~~

**WOMAN.** ana mushtā'a lil-musalsalāt li-anni mushtā'a l-abkī, mushtā'a l-abkī was-sabab ashyā' ktīr basīṭa. almasraḥiyye 3am tikhla' 3ālam khayāli- fih... al-mushkila alwahīde hiye alḥubb. ilna al-ḥubb wu-l-wijdān ṭarī'a li-t-tawāṣul ma3 hawiyit-na, t-tawāṣul ma3 māḍī-na, kamān ṭarī'a lil-ḥanīn ila l-waṭan al-maf'ūd.

**INTERPRETER.** I do miss soap operas because I miss crying for...simple things. The play creates a fictional world in which one of the only problems is just...love. And for us romantic love is a way of connecting with our identity, our past, and also longing for our lost country.

**MARTIN.** So in your production you created a fictional set of a fictional television melodrama?

**INTERPRETER.** idhan b-intāj-ik khala'ti sinārīu khayāli li-musalsal khayāli...mazbūṭ?

**WOMAN.** No.

**MARTIN.** Why not?

**WOMAN.** lianno hadha shī mustaḥīl halla'. ḥawādith almasraḥiyye kull-ha bi-oḍet al-'a3deh fi bēt 3ādi lianno hadōl al-amākin hinnen al-amākin al-wahīde illi mni'dir mnkūn fī-ha. mā fī masraḥ shaghghāl u mā mniḥsin niṭla3 bil-lēl. al-masraḥiyye it'allafit li-oḍet al-'a3deh oḍet al-'a3deh al-ha'ī'iyye aw shu illi ba'yān min-a. bil-ha'ī'a intāj-na kān yu3raḍ li-nās ktīr 'alīle, ya3ni sha'a fīha ḥīṭān mabkhūshe min ākhir qaṣaf. bass mā 3andna ay khayār u ṭab3an kunna mnisma3 kamān ṣawt raṣāṣ.

**INTERPRETER.** Because that would be impossible right now. The play happens in the living room of a regular home because right now those are the only places available to us. There are no working theaters and we can't really go out at night. So the play was written for real living rooms or what's left of them. In fact our production was done for a few people in an apartment that had holes in the walls due to the recent bombing. But we had no choice. And of course there were real gunshots in the background.