



Fig. 1

Movement Score:

- See
- Smell
- Touch
- Breathe
- Embrace
- Connect
- Hold
- Lift
- Carry
- Lug
- Balance
- Dangle
- Swing
- Drop
- Collect
- Hit
- Fall
- Roll
- Unroll
- Throw
- Tackle
- Fight
- Struggle
- Fold
- Detangle
- Cover
- Hide
- Depart
- Turn
- Spin
- Fly
- Transcend
- Return
- Land
- Rest
- Taste
- Spread
- Caress
- Dance
- Arrive
- Belong

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HOW THE PERSIAN CARPET MOVES YOU?

Bitá Bell



Fig. 2

Body as archive,
split in two.
Both feet here, one heart there,
belonging to the in-between.



Fig. 3

Persian carpet as a cultural signifier.
Eighteen kilos of actual weight,
generations of burden,
an embodied practice of moving forward, in spite of...



Fig. 4

Machine-made Persian carpet from IKEA.
Because of western sanctions there is no IKEA in Iran but there
is a whole section in IKEA dedicated to Persian carpets with
a map of Iran!

Deconstructing.
Reimagining.

I have asked: What does the Persian carpet remind you of?
You have answered: Aladdin's flying carpet. Mosques. Muslims
praying. Middle-Easterners sitting on the floor. Immigrants'
carpet shops. Women weaving.



Fig. 5



Fig. 6

Love and hate,
tenderness and violence,
calmness and anger,
admired and appropriated.



Fig. 7

My mother brought this carpet from Tehran.
The carpet traveled across borders, like the weight we accumulate
and carry over, across, and beyond.

The traces we leave behind.

Destroy patriarchal constraints.
Resist western hegemonies.
Refute colonial narratives.



Fig. 8

Exhausted.



Fig. 9

The western patriarchal colonial lens enforces a one-sided narrative.

To present oneself as complex, holding contradictions, and containing multitudes is to repel stereotypes.



Fig. 10

Recalling nostalgic joy.



Fig. 11

Growing up in Iran in homes that covered the ground with carpets, at times, end to end, our dance floor is the carpet itself: grounding our coming together, from celebrations to funerals, and how we take the load from every day. Ground for resistance: a country where dancing in public is prohibited and policed, homes become our bars and clubs. Our disco ball is the carpet!

Home is where the Persian carpet is!



Fig. 12

Creating an intimate setting where the audience can see each other and be in close proximity, for them to see the performer not just as the moving object of the performance, but also as a person, is a practice of decolonizing performance experiences. Performances in colonial terms often include a separation between performer and audience and that is often manifested in proscenium theater: a place that has a deep history in monarchies, power structures, and male gaze. Choreographing different ways of gathering an audience such as by imploring deep cultural practices that center hospitality is a strong way to decolonize performance settings.

When I reach my hand for help, I am seen and held.



Fig. 13

In Farsi, *DAM* means “time”, “warmth”, “to inhale”, “to be on the edge”. In English, it means “barrier”, “obstruction”, and “blockage”. *Noosh* means “to taste” and is a feminine noun. *Dam Noosh* is Farsi for “brewing herbal tea”. Combined together, *Dam Noosh/DAM* constructs multi-layered linguistic meanings into an intimate intense, and interactive solo performance with a Persian carpet. Complicated, heavy, textured, a complex negotiation of balance: this performance stimulates senses of smell, touch, taste, visual and audio for a visceral experience based on an autobiographical narrative that struggles to transcend the imposed boundaries of identity and othering. It is vital to think about ways of changing the experience of gathering and being present for a performance away from practices of colonial *observer-object* dynamic. Decolonizing performances encourage humanizing the body and movement practices in order to activate and cultivate care, empathy, and community.



Fig. 14

How the Persian carpet moves you? is a movement experiment derived from the performances of *Dam Noosh/DAM* during the first weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a historical, cultural, political, and artistic look into the Persian carpet, exploring improvisatory home-made movements and choreographic patterns by researching, reclaiming, and subverting our connection to this orientalized and globalized object. The performance practice was conceived as a dance movement exploration for online platforms and then later for in-person workshops.

→ Fig. 1:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh*, Performance, Urban Arts Space Gallery, Columbus, Ohio, United States of America, 2019. Photo: Heather Taylor.

→ Fig. 2:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh/DAM*, Performance, *START/AS International Contemporary Art Festival*, Rokiskis, Lithuania, 2019. Photo: Klaus Richter.

→ Fig. 3:
Bitia Bell, *How the Persian carpet moves you?*, Workshop, *Angewandte Performance Laboratory Symposium*, Vienna, 2022. Photo: Suchart wannaset.

→ Fig. 4:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh/DAM*, Performance, Lalish Theater, Vienna, 2019. Photo: Mario Ciperle.

→ Fig. 5:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh/DAM*, Performance, Lalish Theater, Vienna, 2019. Photo: Mario Ciperle.

→ Fig. 6:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh/DAM*, Performance, Lalish Theater, Vienna, 2019. Photo: Mario Ciperle

→ Fig. 7:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh/DAM*, Performance, *START/AS International Contemporary Art Festival*, Rokiskis, Lithuania, 2019. Photo: D. Baltakys.

→ Fig. 8:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh/DAM*, Performance, *SKIN Festival*, Dschungel Wien, Austria, 2022. Photo: Rainer Berson.

→ Fig. 9:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh/DAM*, Performance, *SKIN Festival*, Dschungel Wien, Austria, 2022. Photo: Rainer Berson.

→ Fig. 10:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh*, Performance, Urban Arts Space Gallery, Columbus, Ohio, United States of America, 2019. Photo: Heather Taylor.

→ Fig. 11:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh*, Performance, Urban Arts Space Gallery, Columbus, Ohio, United States of America, 2019. Photo: Heather Taylor.

→ Fig. 12:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh/DAM*, Performance, Stand 129, Favorit-Bühne, Vienna, 2021. Photo: Matas Al Kerdy.

→ Fig. 13:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh*, Performance, Urban Arts Space Gallery, Columbus, Ohio, United States of America, 2019. Photo: Sahar Fadaian.

→ Fig. 14:
Bitia Bell, *Dam Noosh/DAM*, Performance, Stand 129, Favorit-Bühne, Vienna, Austria, 2021. Photo: Peter Oroszlany.