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Epic of Gilgamesh: A Tale of Love and Revenge

August 21, 2014
6 minutes, 6 seconds

Speakers: Shahrokh Yadegari, Elmira Mohebbali

Transcribed by: Sarah Fuchs

[IDEAS Performance Series](#)

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Time	Transcription
00:08	[IDEAS INITIATIVE FOR DIGITAL EXPLORATION OF ARTS + SCIENCES]
00:11	[EPIC OF GILGAMESH A TALE OF LOVE AND REVENGE HOST: SHAHROKH YADEGARI, DIRECTOR, IDEAS GUEST SPEAKER: ELMIRA MOHEBALI, DIRECTOR AND ARTIST]
00:18	Shahrokh Yadegari: Tonight's presentation is by Elmira Moheballi [Shahrakh Yadegari, Director, IDEAS] who— a director and writer who is an MFA candidate at the Visual Arts Department and I know the piece that she will be presenting tonight has gone through many years of research, is generally a type of artist who lives with the piece that she is working with. The piece is— as she wants us to know— is a work in progress.
00:50	Elmira Moheballi: I said I would like [Elmira Moheballi artist, IDEAS] to file a divorce because I am extremely tired and my colleague responded, “really? I didn’t know that you were married.” “Well, I’ve been married to Gilgamesh for a few years now,” I said and it cracked her up. We both cracked with laughter. This conversation happened about eight months ago when I decided to finally separate my identity from goddess Ishtar.
01:30	[Cylinder seal showing <i>Ishtar</i>]
01:30	Elmira Moheballi: I tried so hard to fulfill this role. The goddess of love was known as Inana or Ana during the Sumerian Era, 3000 B.C. and also known as Ishtar during the Acadian times 2300 B.C. At some point I realized that being Ishtar, or any goddess as a matter of fact, was too much for me. Yet being Ishtar was my only way to hide. Hide from what? I can’t even start to explain. With Gilgamesh, I lived for a long time. I performed every woman that he possibly could have known. Here is a passage in the <i>Epic of Gilgamesh</i> , translated by Maureen Kovacs, describing the first encounter between Shamhat and Enkidu: “That is he Shamhat! Release your closed arms, expose your sex so he can take in your sensuousness. Do not be restrained. Take his energy! When he sees you, he will draw near you. Spread out your robe so he can lie up in you and perform for this primitive, the tasks of womankind!”
03:13	[A Tale of Love and Revenge an interpretation of the EPIC OF GILGAMESH]

- 03:21 [HUSH... THEY... MIGHT...]
- 03:31 [THEY... MIGHT HEAR YOU]
- 03:39 [THEY CLAIM THAT THEY ARE CLOSSER (typo for closer) TO YOU]
- 03:46 [THEN YOUR OWN ARTERY]
- 03:52 [BUT LET ME WARN YOU ABOUT THEIR EVIL INTENTIONS]
- 04:35 Elmira Mohebali: I saw the harm that Gilamesh was causing for Ishtar, [ARURU WASHED HER HANDS] emotionally and psychologically. And like many contemporary examples [SHE PINCHED OFF SOME CLAY], I had her sacrifice herself and her identity to become what her lover wanted her to be.
- 05:04 Elmira Mohebali: I'm wondering now if we as women give up our power purposefully because it was too difficult.
- 05:24 [ONCE, I WAS IN LOVE WITH THIS DEMIGOD]
- 05:33 [I VOLUNTARILY CAME HERE TO LOOK AFTER MY LOVE]
- 05:43 Elmira Mohebali: Father, give me the bull of heaven so he can kill Gilgamesh in his dwelling.