

IMAGINATIONS ~ INSTITUTIONS ~ PRECARITY IMAGINARY SCHOOL FOR THE FUTURE OF THE (ART) INSTITUTIONS

Institute for Applied Theatre Studies, Justus-Liebig University Giessen
www.uni-giessen.de/theater

2 – 6 December 2019

Georg-Büchner-Saal / Georg Büchner Hall
Bismarckstraße 37, 35390 Gießen

OPEN PROGRAM

Monday, 2 December 2019

19.00 – 20.00 Lecture: **Ana Vujanović**

Conviviality? An Attempt at Breaking the Spell

The rationale of this opening lecture is pragmatic and ideological, because pragmata are precious – they are our concerns, our deeds, our re(s)publica, and because ideology is vital – it is our worldview, our social imaginary, our transindividual prefiguration of the future.

In approaching the simple and yet almost utopic notion of conviviality when speaking about the cultural and artistic institution, I would start with the institutional theory of art, which helps us avoid fatalistic “either /or” critical positions toward the institution(s) – since art is per se is an institution. Although it is possible to imagine some hypothetical examples of art that take place outside the society – in privacy a Neolithic woman collects beautiful stones just because it provides her visual pleasure – art as we know it in contemporary Western society is a social practice, which is shown in public and which is shaped by certain rules, procedures, roles, as well as a struggle against them. However, the Artworld is an established practice, not an established society or corporation, since its rules and procedures are mostly conventional. Nevertheless, this does not imply that its rules and procedures are easily changeable; it rather indicates that they do not have juridical but – performative power. If so, then in this lecture I would like to examine Ivan Illich’s tools for conviviality of institutions, with can perform differently and give us “the freedom to create things among people live”. As Isabelle Stengers advices, we must first “break the spell” of capitalism as the only possible world, and in order to do so, we need no sorcerer, we need a crowd of neo-pagan witches. Like my-humble-self for instance.

***Ana Vujanović** is a cultural worker in the fields of contemporary performing arts and culture: researcher, dramaturge, writer, lecturer... She holds Ph.D. in Humanities (Theatre Studies).*

She is a member of the editorial collective of TkH [Walking Theory], a Belgrade-based theoretical-artistic platform, and editor-in-chief of the TkH Journal for Performing Arts Theory. For several years a particular commitment of hers was to empower independent scenes in Belgrade and former Yugoslavia.

She has lectured at various universities and educational programs throughout Europe, was a visiting professor at the Performance Studies Dpt. of the University Hamburg, and taught at HZT Berlin. Since 2016 she has been a team member and mentor of fourth year students at SNDO – School for New Dance Development in Amsterdam. She participates in art projects in the fields of performance, theatre, dance, and video/film, as a dramaturge and co-author. She has published a number of articles in journals and collections and authored and edited several books, most recently A Live

Gathering: Performance and Politics in Contemporary Europe, with L. Piazza (Berlin: b_books, 2019). She is currently working on a documentary film *Resisting Landscapes* with M. Popivoda, and a research project *Performing the Self in the 21st Century*, with B. Cvejić.

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20.00 – 20.45 Discussion / **Bojana Kunst**

Tuesday, 3 December 2019

10.15 – 12.15 Talk / Presentation of the book
A Live Gathering: Performance and Politics in Contemporary Europe
 A. Vujanović, L. A. Piazza (eds.), b_books, Berlin 2019

16.30 – 18.30 Case Study #1: **Czarne Szmaty**

Czarne Szmaty #czsz (The Black Rags) - the group was set up on 3 October 2016 in Warsaw by Marta Jalowska, Karolina Maciejaszek, Monika Sadkowska and Magdalena Staroszczyk. Our first action took place during the first Women's Strike. We blocked street traffic in Warsaw, standing across multiple streets with a several-metre-long black sheet displaying huge letters in white that read "BORDER OF CONTEMPT". It was the moment when we decided to take the floor to speak about social and political issues, especially those devoted to females.

We work within a broadly defined performative art. We queer and reclaim public space, historical discourse, national symbols and anniversaries. We make female bodies and personalities visible. We work on the streets, we work on the Internet, we make them our exhibition space. We question the place and the authority of art institutions. We want to describe you the specific of our work in the context of Polish political conditions, where strong radical, totalitarian pressure on democracy is going arm in arm with homophobia, antisemitism and re-rising of patriarchy. As a CzSz activist collective we claim ensuring female visibility and reclaiming public and symbolic space as crucial tasks for building new, non-totalitarian, non-capitalist and post-democratic system in Europe.

20.00 – 21.00 Lecture: **Valeria Graziano**

Recreation at Stake

Departing from from Audre Lorde's intuition around the polysemy of the term 'recreation', I will put forward this concept as an organizational principle for thinking the stakes at play in cultural institutions and collectivities able to act politically in the present. In my presentation (based on an article appearing in *A Live Gathering*, eds. A. Vujanovic and L. Piazza, b_books), I will transpose the double binding that Lorde ascribed to recreation, with its connotations of play, reciprocity, repetition and regeneration, from the realm of intimate, one-to-one relationships to bear consequence upon the organization of collective endeavours, in order to transgress some received ideas around the organization of cultural production, the locus of creativity and the politics of use of collective pleasures. The importance of recreation shall become clearer as I call attention to a type of organization that has existed in various forms throughout modernity, dedicated to regenerating living labour and sustaining free time of the oppressed and the exploited against capitalist temporal structuring and valuation – and in opposition to the limitation of an experience of the public sphere as solely conceived in relation to the predicaments of work or consumption. The recreative hypothesis is moreover a political framework for reclaiming the organization of those semiotic, affective or relational forms of production that, under capital, stand severed from the

other kinds. I will base my presentation on a number of examples, including historical references to junk playgrounds, youth organizations and people's houses, as well as the contemporary example of the occupation of abandoned cultural facilities in Italy in the aftermath of the 2008's financial crisis.

Valeria Graziano works as a research fellow at the Centre for Postdigital Cultures, Coventry University. Over the years, she has been involved in numerous initiatives of militant research and collective pedagogy across art institutions and social movements. Her research focuses on organisational practices and tecnopolitical tools that foster the refusal of work, the creative redistribution of social reproduction and the politicization of pleasure. Currently, Valeria is convening *Pirate.Care*, a research project and network of activists, researchers and practitioners against the criminalization of solidarity and for a common care infrastructure. Her recent publications include 'Repair Matters', a special issue of *ephemera: theory & politics in organization* (May 2019) and 'Learning from #Syllabus' (in *State Machines, Institute of Network Cultures*, 2019).

21.00 – 21.45 Discussion / **Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski**

Wednesday, 4 December 2019

15.00 – 17.00 Case Study #2: **Swoosh Lieu**

Currently Johanna Castell, Katharina Pelosi and Rosa Wernecke are working together as SWOOSH LIEU. They studied at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies in Giessen and have been realising projects in the field of performance and installation in collaboration with other artists* since 2009. The collective creates temporary spaces and images in real time while also focusing on their production. In this way, the space of theatre opens itself up to socio-political analogies that are always negotiated and experienced with its means. Between 2016 and 2018 Swoosh Lieu developed *What is the Plural of Crisis? – ein performativer Krisenbericht in verteilten Rollen* an examination of central themes of the complex' crisis. Using a feminist approach, they examined how the so-called financial crisis affects different protagonists and examined what function theatre, its formats and its techniques can assume in these times of crisis. The trilogy further explores themes and formats of former projects and continues the collective's examination of what is currently political in the theatre and how we can update the theatre as a technique for political disposal. The performances of Swoosh Lieu were shown at "Tanzplattform", "Stückemarkt des Berliner Theatertreffen", "Impulse Theaterfestival" and "Politik im Freien Theater". In collaboration with NDR two of their performances have been adapted as radiopieces. Since a residence at the Goethe Institut Villa Kamogawa Kyoto (JP) in 2018, the collective has been working on the website "A Feminist Guide to Nerdism", which portrays and cross-links feminist media artists*. The project will be continued in 2020 as part of a residence at the Tarabya Academy of Culture in Istanbul.

19.00 – 20.00 Lecture: **Livia Piazza**

Fiction is a dirty Job

The work of fiction can hardly appear as a 'dirty job'. Yet, if we understand fiction as that which is 'constructed' rather than 'non-existing', things do get a little dirtier. This contribution will work backwards into the idea of fictional institutions, the notion of fiction as a tool, and the relationship between fiction and novelty in order to trace the contours of fiction as a dirty job, its consequences and its opportunities in the present time.

These will be the basis for a reflection on art institutions and their chances to be 'honest with the real' (Garcès) and work against the populist and neoliberal political imagination: it's a dirty job but somebody's got to do it.

Livia Andrea Piazza (1986) studied Economics and Management of Art and Culture at Bocconi University in Milan. In 2015, she completed a PhD in Cultural Sciences at Leuphana University in Lüneburg, and published the book "On the Concept of the New: Framing Production and Value in Contemporary Performing Arts" (2017). She engaged with different collective research platforms (a.o Aleppo/Brussels; Critical Practices Made in YU), curating theory formats within art festivals and institutions (a.o Santarcangelo Festival, Homo Novus Festival, DAS Theatre). As a researcher and editor, she focuses on performance and politics. As a practitioner in the field of performance and dance, she worked as independent dramaturg and producer. Since September 2018 she teaches at Bocconi University and since April 2019, she works as teacher and researcher at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies in Gießen.

20.00 – 20.45 Discussion / **Goran Sergej Pristaš**

Thursday, 5 December 2019

19.00 – 20.00 Lecture: **Henrike Kohpeiß**

Space for Life – The Institution as a Paradox and Care as a Currency

I am most interested in the institution as a paradox from a feminist perspective. Since public institutions have historically been sites of exclusion and quite ruthless executions of power, it is always the question in how far we want to invest in them, become part of them in order to participate in that power. On the other hand, of course, we can try to build our own institutions as resistant entities that create stabilization for the social structures that we ourselves prefer to live with. In relation to that it is interesting to think about, how weak forms, as in weak bodies, careful social habits and withdrawn aesthetics can be institutionalized. How do we build an institutional frame for what has to be protected? Finally, moving along the notion of care I would like to explore a little bit the idea of care as a currency in institutional settings - how does care become part of capitalist calculation and how can we be aware of that?

Henrike Kohpeiß (1990) studied philosophy in Berlin, Rome and Vienna as well as Applied Theatre Studies in Gießen. As a dramaturge, she is collaborating with artists from the fields of choreography and performance art. Her academic research interests include critical and feminist theory, philosophy of affect and emotion as well as theories of subjectivity. She is employed as a research assistant at the collaborative research center »Affectice Societies« at Free University Berlin and is currently working on her PhD-dissertation about negativity in the work of Theodor Adorno and Saidiya Hartman.

20.00 – 20.45 Discussion / **Marta Keil**

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