



LAB:DANCE #1

Dance dramaturgy as collaborative practice

Abstracts / Bios of contributors

Lectures – artistic interventions – impulse sessions

Lectures

By Rudi Laermans, Maja Zimmermann, Giorgi Spanderashvili, Mateusz Szymanówka, Kirsten Maar

Rudi Laermans: Co-Structuring Complexity. Notes on Dramaturgy's Complicity in Composing Dance

Dramaturgy is 'complexity-work'; it's about reducing possibilities when things get messy or become 'overpopulated'; and it's about enhancing possibilities when whatever kind of artistic elements one is working with tend to fall under a certain zero degree of writing / composing. Dramaturgy is to the co-pilot of Composing, or the construction of a plane of consistency (Deleuze), one that holds within the field(s) of 'the sensory' or/and 'the conceptual' or/and 'the meaningful'.

Rudi Laermans is senior professor of Social Theory at the University of Leuven, Belgium as well as visiting professor for Social and Cultural Theory at P.A.R.T.S in Brussels. His fields of research are: Social system theory, critical theory and sociology of creative work. He has published on Niklas Luhmann, Georg Simmel and Pierre Bourdieu as well as on contemporary dance and performance as for example the works of Jan Fabre, Meg Stuart, A.T. de Keersmaecker and Jan Lauwers. His recent academic publications are situated at the intersection of canonical sociological theory (esp. the Weberian tradition), social systems theory (esp. Luhmann) and post-Marxist critical theory (Negri & Hardt, Agamben). He regularly writes on culture and the arts, including contemporary dance.

Maja Zimmermann: To hold space

Starting from my personal experience, I'll investigate the aspect of caretaking within the dramaturgical work. Instead of problematizing it as the "dark and shameful side" of this job (Cveijc, 2010), I would like to emphasize the skills and elaborate strategies that are needed here. To do so, I'll adopt a specific concept of caretaking, which is called 'to hold space for

someone'. Or – in the realm of the dramaturge – *to hold space for a creative process to take place.*

In my lecture, I will transform some rules from this concept of care work to the dramaturgical field. Instead of being the one who knows more (or less) than the choreographer/the group, the task is to create a space that allows everyone to enter the process in a state of not knowing (yet) and at the same time to trust the things everyone knows already. How can the specific knowledge that is developed through/within the work be captured and condensed? What kind of language/words are needed to keep this space open? How to create terms or descriptions that are specific and precise, and at the same time open enough not to narrow the view or stop the process of doing? To hold space is then a dramaturgical practice to create knowledge relationally.

Maja Zimmermann studied Dance Studies at Freie Universität Berlin after studying Fine Arts in Lucerne, Switzerland. She lives in Berlin and is currently working as a dance dramaturge for choreographers and artists like Lea Moro, Marialena Marouda, Jam Rostron and the festival "Tanztage Berlin". She co-founded and curated the performing art festival "Acker'Festival" Berlin that featured emerging artists and worked for interdisciplinary projects, e.g. at ZKM Karlsruhe as assistant of the artistic director. Furthermore, she realizes own artistic and theoretical projects like the exhibition "Hands on" that dealt with techniques of touch and took place at the artspace les complices, Zurich.*

Mateusz Szymanówka: „Does it look like Meg Stuart?” - Dramaturgy as a practice of compassion

This presentation deals with the dramaturge's role in artistic processes when these processes begin to operate as personal crises. This presentation may or may not refer directly to fictional or not so fictional agents working in the field of contemporary dance at points somewhere between Berlin and Warsaw. This presentation might be supportive, it might also just observe you from the second row and take notes.

Mateusz Szymanówka is a dramaturge and curator in the field of contemporary performance and choreography. He studied cultural, theatre and dance studies in Warsaw and Berlin. He currently lives and works between the two cities. He was involved in projects of Agata Siniarska, Korina Kordova, Martin Hansen, Ania Nowak, Marta Ziótek and Przemek Kamiński among others. He has developed projects and programs for performing and visual arts institutions, such as Nowy Teatr in Warsaw, Teatr Studio in Warsaw, Museum of Art in Łódź, City Art Gallery in Kalisz. In 2016 he received the Grażyna Kulczyk Research Scholarship in Contemporary Choreography for the project Think Tank Choreograficzny – a platform dedicated to a collective research on choreographic practices developed at the intersection of Polish and international dance context.

Giorgi Spanderashvili: Mapping dance practice – Georgian case South Caucasus Contemporary Dance & Experimental Art Festival in Tbilisi

South Caucasus Contemporary Dance & Experimental Art Festival in Tbilisi was established in 2012 to promote and develop contemporary dance practice not only in Georgia but also in entire region including Armenia and Azerbaijan. Since 2013 the festival collaborates with local choreographers and dancers to help them to develop their own creations and tries to open area of possibilities in this field for further professional practice. Caucasus region has a very rich tradition of national dance, which in its very general understanding is rather common feature of everyday life. Though so-called contemporary dance is almost missed from the entire context – one can hardly find the independent dance companies or spaces with shaped focus on contemporary dance practice. Reasons are diverse which varies from cultural policy system to very general socio-cultural processes. After collapse of the Soviet Union, context of the region involves conflicts, socio-political and economic crisis and struggle to accommodate new reality of living independently. With the main contextual features presented review is an attempt to draft current state of the contemporary dance practice in Georgia on bases of the above-mentioned festival and on some other independent collaborative dance projects.

Giorgi Spanderashvili is Georgian based curator, art manager and cultural practitioner. His professional background is related with number of local and international projects. Since 2010 he's been in working for Center of Contemporary Art / CCA-Tbilisi and two editions of Tbilisi Triennial (Offside Effect, 2012 and S.O.S. – Self-Organized Systems 2015) as the chief coordinator. Since 2013 he is in charge of South Caucasus Contemporary Dance & Experimental Art Festival in Tbilisi. Giorgi is co-curator and founder of Georgian video art archive – Videolmage and Block21 Residency project in Rustavi city, Georgia. His professional experience is also connected with following projects and festivals: 24 Experimental Theatre Festival (2014); ArtAttack Tbilisi (2014-2015); Tbilisi Live Performance Project (2015); SOU Festival Tbilisi (2016, 2017) etc. Giorgi got his BA degree from Shota Rustaveli State Theatre and Film Georgian State University in Cultural Management and MA degree from Tbilisi State University in Psychological Anthropology. Currently Giorgi works and lives in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Kirsten Maar: In between dramaturgy as translation – prolongating the state of indeterminacy

Describing dramaturgy as way of constant shifting between various practices and translating between different forms of knowledge, my lecture asks in how far it is possible and desirable to extend this gap to leave open a field for improvised thought and re-/acting. At the same time this in-between state is hardly bearable for a longer time and as such I further ask how we then could deal with such states or how we could insert forms/formats of being with the unfinished, the inadequate, the insecurity. And finally, why does it seem so important to keep this indeterminacy also for an exchange with the audience.

Kirsten Maar works as a dance scholar and dramaturge. Currently she is visiting professor at the Dance Department at the FU Berlin. From 2007-2014 she was a member of the DFG-Collaborative Research Centre „Aesthetic Experience and the Dissolution of Artistic Limits “in the project „Topographies of the Ephemeral “. Her research fields are the intersections between visuals arts, architecture and choreography, curatorial strategies, spatial

conceptions and kinesthetic experience, scoring practices and composition. Among many other publications, she is co-editor of Assign and Arrange. Methodologies of Presentation in Art and Dance (Sternberg 2014).

Artistic Interventions

By Miriam Kongstad, Erna Ómarsdóttir

Icelandic dancer and choreographer Erna Ómarsdóttir, born in 1972, completed her studies at the Performing Arts Research and Training Studios in Brussels (P.A.R.T.S) under the direction of Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, and graduated in 1998. Since then she has worked with directors and choreographers such as Jan Fabre, Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui and les ballets C de la B. In 2008, together with the musician Valdimar Jóhannsson, she founded the dance company Shalala. Among their works are Teach us to outgrow our madness and the concert performance Lazyblood. Erna was one of the founding members of the collectives Ekka / Reykjavik and Poni / Brussels. As a choreographer, she has worked for the Icelandic National Theater and has collaborated with artists including Gabriela Fridriksdóttir, Björk, Ólöf Arnalds, Ben Frost, Reykjavík! and Margrét Sara Gudjonsdóttir. She is a five-time winner of the 'Griman', the Icelandic theatre award for dance.

Miriam Kongstad (b. 1991) is a Danish artist based in Berlin and Copenhagen. With a background in music, choreography and performance, she now works within a wide range of art forms and mediums such as performance, sculpture, installation, sound, poetry, as curator and is part of the artist duo Bonnie & Clyde. In her practice, she uses socio-anthropological strategies as a tool for decoding familiar elements and structures from everyday life. www.mmk.wf

Impulse Sessions

Hosted by Ricardo Correia Carmona, Efva Lilja

After finishing his studies in Biology at the University of Lisbon, Ricardo Correia Carmona graduated in Dance and Performance Studies from the Higher School of Dance of Lisbon in 2003. From 2003 to 2005 he worked in the Production Department of that school as an executive producer and stage manager. In 2009, he completed a specialization in Management of Cultural Organizations and Projects. Between 2005 and 2009 he worked at the residence center "O Espaço do Tempo" as assistant artistic director and curator. During this period, he was responsible for coordinating several national and international projects including European projects and the "Portuguese Platform for Performing Arts". From 2010 to 2012 worked at "Alcantara" in Lisbon as curator and later, joined the Executive Direction, contributing to the Alcantara Festival and several other projects. Since August 2012 works as Dance Curator at HAU Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin).

Efva Lilja is an Artist and Professor of choreography, working with performances, visual art, film and writing. From 1985 to 2005 she was Artistic Director of the E.L.D. Company based in Stockholm, producing work in more than 35 countries around the world. She has been decorated and received several prizes and awards for her artwork. Since 2003 she has, parallel to her artistic work, been Professor of Choreography and 2006-2013 the Vice-Chancellor of DOCH, the University of Dance and Circus in Stockholm. 2014 she was the Expert Advisor on artistic research at the Ministry of Education and Research in Sweden and 2016 she is the Director of Dansehallerne in Copenhagen.

Workshop

By Merel Heering. Warm up by Kasper Ravnhøj

Merel Heering: Dramaturgy as the art of conversation

When studying dramaturgy there is often a focus on studying content, focusing for example on practicing dance analysis, building repertoire knowledge and diving into philosophy. In her practice as a dance dramaturge, Merel Heering found out that to truly open such content in a creation process, dramaturgy is as much about the art of conversation, as it is about artistic research and composition. Therefore, this practical working session focuses on opening possible ways to approach and practice a dramaturgical dialogue.

Merel will work around the question: how do you create the conditions for conversation? Her approach is based on the conviction that (artistic) collaboration can only exist when there is clear communication. She also departs from the idea that dramaturges, as much as dance artists (or any of the other stakeholders in the field), should continuously consciously develop and articulate their artistry to be able to position themselves within an (artistic) dialogue. Therefore, exploring the participants' definitions of their own artistry will be part of the working session. This theory-practical workshop will be accompanied by a warm-up session facilitated by choreographer Kasper Ravnhøj, suitable for both dancers and non-practitioners.

Merel Heering (1986, The Netherlands) graduated from the master Theatre and Dance Studies (cum laude) at the University of Utrecht in 2010. As a dance dramaturge, Merel works with several choreographers within Europe. Merel is closely affiliated with dance house Dansateliers in Rotterdam. In addition, Merel works as a curator for Jonge Harten festival in Groningen, The Netherlands.

Kasper Ravnhøj is the artistic director of Mute Comp. Physical Theatre founded in 1998. The company tackles urban themes and tendencies in performances that embrace theatre, contemporary dance, live music, slam poetry, martial arts and crash dance. Kasper Ravnhøj is a dancer and choreographer and has developed his own physical method which he practices and teaches worldwide. An approach that challenges the borders of the body and its physical abilities.