



Press information, 12th May 2016

## Impulse Theater Festival 2016

At a press conference today at the FFT Düsseldorf the concept and program for the Impulse Theater Festival 2016 were announced.

Once again in 2016 the **Impulse Theater Festival** is *the* place for outstanding **independent theater** from German-speaking countries. From **15th - 25th June** this event of the **NRW KULTUR-sekretariat** will be held in its primary location of Düsseldorf and in its partner cities of Cologne and Mülheim an der Ruhr. Artistic Director **Florian Malzacher** explained the concept behind this year's festival and, together with dramaturg **Nadine Vollmer**, introduced the productions in this year's program.

Florian Malzacher: "Headed by a quotation borrowed from Brian Eno "**Start cooking ... Recipe will follow**", Impulse 2016 presents works which - while being very different and indeed sometimes contradicting each other - are searching for how we can act now both artistically and politically, even though it is unclear where this will lead. Because politically, socially, wherever you look: the situation is not good. But what's even worse: it is hard to understand the implications. Action seems to be needed - but how? And what would be the appropriate form for theater to do this?"

The theater, in common with the whole of society, is searching for vantage points from which we can view the present, pause briefly and plan the next step. The works we have invited from German-speaking countries examine the present sometimes in documentary form, sometimes analytically, sometimes clearly and conceptually, sometimes poetically and imaginatively: **Gintersdorfer/Klaßen**, who are represented once again this year with a large ensemble of Ivorian and German performers, dancers and musicians, investigate in the opening production '**Der Botschafter**' how colonial structures continue to operate today - a question which is also asked in a very different way by the young theater-makers **Julian Warner & Oliver Zahn** in '**Situation mit Doppelgänger**'.

The war in the Middle East, which is getting ever closer, is the subject of two other invited performances: while the Austrian choreographer **Christine Gaigg / 2nd nature** together with the composer **Klaus Schedl** primarily examines our perception of war via the media in '**untitled (look, look, come closer)**', the **COSTA COMPAGNIE** has collected words, sounds and images from the Hindu Kush in '**Conversion / Nach Afghanistan**' with which they relay the war, its effects and complexities to the audience.

**Rimini Protokoll** director Daniel Wetzels places a very quiet, touching and playful work in contrast to the extremely loud discussion about refugees: in '**Evros Walk Water**' (after John Cage's 'Water Walk') the audience turn into representatives of absent refugee children who are stranded in Greece. The river Evros - as one of the borders of Fortress Europe - also stands in the center of **andcompany&co.**'s radio play '**Orpheus in der Oberwelt. Eine Schlepperoper**', which is broadcast in co-operation with WDR

during the festival. In their film installation **'Occupy, Resist, Produce'**, **Dario Azzellini and Oliver Ressler** offer insights into three factories across Europe occupied by redundant workers. Religion is also becoming increasingly influential: in **'Martin Luther Propagandastück'**, **Boris Nikitin** chooses a religious service for the enlightened white middle classes as a medium for manipulation, faith and the search for one's own freedom to act. That what was regarded as personal always remains political is shown by **She She Pop** working together with actresses from the Münchner Kammerspiele in **'Fifty Grades of Shame'**: sexuality and the body are constantly historical, social constructions and a question of power, as. Bodies are also the center of attention in **'Noise'**, a work by **Sebastian Nübling and the junges theater basel**: for the young people on stage political movement, protest, is also always bodily movement – energetic, fast and loud. Can neoliberalism and its fake promises of freedom be accelerated so much that they crash into the wall with speed?

And so the future suddenly enters through the back door, at least as a concept, In retrospect it will be clear what we are currently experiencing. Simply an episode or a time of fundamental change? The prelude to catastrophe or salvation? In the space of a black box **Ariel Efraim Ashbel and friends** stage **'The Empire Strikes Back: Kingdom of the Synthetic'**, a future landscape in black in which future visions of past times echo and war is declared on concepts of race, identity, and cultural hegemony.

As one of the three international commissioned works which Impulse initiates in its live film project **'Germany Year 2071' Nature Theater of Oklahoma** imagines a Germany in which revolutions come and go, in which extra-terrestrials are first welcomed before being turned into sausages. For this, the camera becomes a tool for the New York-based company to make all the audience and passers-by in Cologne part of the project in a cogent way. The finished film will then be given its world premiere next year at Impulse 2017. The script will be translated by Ulrich Blumenbach, famous for his congenial German versions of David Foster Wallace.

The Silent University Ruhr which was founded last year – an alternative university for refugee academics initiated by the Kurdish artist Ahmet Ögüt – is embedded within an international summer academy. Under the title **'Learning Plays'** four artist-initiated schools, academies theoretical platforms come together for the first time; the **Performing Arts Forum – PAF** from St. Erme, the **School of Engaged Art** of the St. Petersburg artists' and theoreticians' collective **Chto Delat, die Vierte Welt** from Berlin and the **Silent Universities from London, Stockholm, Hamburg, Athens, Amman and Mülheim**. At the end the circle will be extended into a performative conference which asks whether it is possible to find other, more radical forms of education and dissident participation.

That political art often avoids contact with real politicians is taken by the Israeli choreographer Dana Yahalomi of **Public Movement** as a pretext to initiate a very concrete meeting of art and politics. **'Make Art Policy!'** invites influential politicians from all the parties represented in the regional parliament to Düsseldorf town hall to articulate their cultural political stance, using the structural similarities of art and politics, the stage and the civic chamber in order to discuss the role and future of art.

The program is supplemented by **conversations, lectures, concerts** (by acts including **Schwabinggrad Ballett & Arrivati**) and evenings spent together in the festival center designed by the Düsseldorf/Cologne creative collective **Labor Fou** at the FFT Kammerspiele. An **online collection of material** raises specific issues concerning the independent theater scene and opens them to discussion.

Dr. Christian Esch, Director of producers NRW KULTURsekretariat: "Once again Impulse measures the pulse of our times. After Mülheim in 2015 this is now happening in Düsseldorf: here the Impulse Festival confronts widespread perplexity with artistic reflections and initiatives, which are thoughtful, provocative, exciting and surprising – they're what impulses should be."

From 22nd June to 1st July 2017 Cologne and the Studiobühne will be the principal venue for the Impulse Theater Festival, together with its associated partner theaters in Düsseldorf (FFT) and Mülheim (Ringlokschuppen Ruhr).

The comprehensive press folder, program booklet and all our program and booking information can be found at [www.festivalimpulse.de](http://www.festivalimpulse.de).

*The Impulse Theater Festival 2016 is produced by the NRW KULTURsekretariat in co-operation with the FFT Düsseldorf, the studiobühneköln and the Ringlokschuppen Ruhr as well as the cities of Düsseldorf, Cologne and Mülheim an der Ruhr. The festival is funded by the Ministry of the Family, Children, Youth, Culture and Sport of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia, the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, Sparkasse KölnBonn and the Goethe Institut.*

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