

ZÜRCHER THEATER SPEKTAKEL

15.8.—1.9.19 Organized and presented
by Stadt Zürich Kultur



FINAL REPORT

A FESTIVAL FOR EVERYONE

Hardly ever before has the Theater Spektakel met the aspiration to be a festival for everyone in such comprehensive and multifarious ways as in its 40th edition. Big theatre and dance productions, an 18-day large-scale project by Boris Charmatz in the open air, Short Pieces by newcomers, a star-studded symposium, freely accessible sound installations, circus from Palestine and Morocco, lectures by renowned scientists, street art, Afro-pop and minimal jazz, swims in the lake, discussions at the regular's table and African kitchen – at the Theater Spektakel this is not about «either/or» but «both/and». During 18 days, the Landiwiese hosted a variety of worlds, cultures and communities, which co-existed in permeable, open and engaging ways and allowed for inspiring encounters and new perspectives. During the jubilee event this became perhaps the most obvious in Boris Charmatz's project «20 dancers for the XXth century» when 20 of the world's best dancers presented solos at twelve spots on the Landiwiese during three hours and had the audience be in direct touch with contemporary dance. Frank Willem's solo in the midst of bathers on the Saffa Island will go down in the festival history as an unforgettable highlight in the matter of art mediation.

25 000 visitors attending one of the 155 events subject to charge, 87% of seats sold (2018: 87%) and a total of over 150 000 visitors on the Landiwiese demonstrate: The programme and the focus of the festival enjoy popularity and appreciation.

The low-threshold discursive and participatory programme elements, which have been further expanded, obviously meet a need. Over 400 visitors attended the lecture by sociologist Saskia Sassen on the Lakeside Stage, around 40 dance-minded people gathered for the daily warm-up led by the charismatic choreographer Boris Charmatz, the inclusion workshop «Change of Perspectives», giving a first-hand experience of what it means to be disabled, was fully booked in an instant and in broadcasts, developed in the radio workshops, young refugees reported on how they experienced the festival.



CROWD PULLER ZENTRAL

The new, two-storey venue Zentral devised by architect Ralph Alan Mueller not only set a distinctive architectonic highlight to the festival site, it also turned out a crowd puller after only a few days. With a bar, panorama terrace, an attractive audience area, the meeting place Zentral oben and a carefully curated programme of street art, acrobatics, late night shows and concerts on two stages, the Zentral presented various freely accessible festival offers in an appealing way.

ON THE PROGRAMME

The programme allowed for a variety of targeted encounters with contemporary performative art: At the opening of the festival's jubilee edition, the works by Lia Rodrigues, Phia Ménard and La Re-Sentida set a strong, evocative triad. With Stefan Kaegi/Rimini Protokoll, Jan Lauwers & Needcompany, William Kentridge and the experimental large-scale project Terrain|Boris Charmatz we presented outstanding, artistic positions of political theatre and dance. They were flanked by smaller, formally and topically very different productions by Geumhyung Jeong (Korea), Genevieve Murphy (Great Britain), Anna Karasinska (Poland), Royce Ng (Hong Kong), Samara Hersch & Lara Thoms (Australia) or Ali Chahrour (Lebanon) and the Short Pieces, which gave evidence of the trans-genre creative force, social commitment and the inventiveness of a young generation of artists.

Works at the interface between visual arts such as the sound installation by Dimitri de Perrot in the entrance area or the installative Short Pieces by Ira Mekonyan, Hiba Alansar and Eunkyung Jeong, but also the virtual performances by Roehrs & Boetsch managed to address new audiences.



The productions by the Chilean theatre company La Re-Sentida (picture above), the Australian theatre makers Samara Hersch & Lara Thoms (picture below) as well as by the Palestinian Circus, all presenting young people on stage, acquired a particular urgency due to the current political and social situation and touched the audience deeply. All three productions were created before the climate movements and Fridays for Future and are based on the young protagonists' confrontations with burning, future-shaping issues such as violence, sexual abuse, migration and the treatment of refugees. Yet formally very different, those production combine artistic work, personal concern and social commitment to powerful artistic statements for political creative power and give rise to hope.



ZKB PRIZES 2019

Last Saturday, the traditional award ceremony of the ZKB Prizes took place. For the first time since the launch of the Audience Prize in 2016, the jury and the audience were on the same page: The ZKB Patronage Prize and the Audience Prize went to the Australian theatre makers Samara Hersch & Lara Thoms for their committed documentary theatre show «We All Know What's Happening», which they elaborated with young people. They focus on the eventful colonial history of the island of Nauru, which today is used as a refugee reception camp by Australia. Many of the detainees are the same age as the protagonists.



The Ukrainian artist Ira Melkonyan and her Rubberbodies Collective were awarded the Acknowledgement Prize for their sensual performative installation «Upstairs Geology 50/50» (picture above).

Find the statements of the jury on our website.

GASTRONOMIC SERVICES

With the exception of two rainy days, the persistent summery weather lured many visitors to the Landiwiese and resulted in partial record turnovers for the restaurants and bars. The tried and tested establishments mastered the rush with bravura. The budgeted contribution of the gastronomic services will be reached this year.

TICKET SALES

A large number of the total of 25 000 tickets sold were purchased online. Blockbusters in the advance sale were the two performances by William Kentridge, Groupe Acrobatique de Tanger, the concert by CocoRosie and «Granma. Metales de Cuba» by Stefan Kaegi/Rimini Protokoll. Nevertheless, the decisions to purchase a ticket are made increasingly spontaneously, which is reflected in the ticket sales of the Landiwiese box office.

The campaign «A Festival for Everyone» was again generously supported: 296 suspended tickets and 345 suspended drinks were donated (2018: 200 tickets /280 drinks) and nearly all of them could be allocated.

PARTNERS AND SUPPORT

The Theater Spektakel is an event organised by City of Zurich Kultur and is generously funded by its longstanding main Partners Zürcher Kantonalbank, Swiss Re and the Canton of Zurich as well as by the co-founder and present media partner Tages-Anzeiger. The directorate of the SDC, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, the lottery fund of the Canton of Zurich, the Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Migros-Kulturprozent, Stiftung Denk an mich and the Patrons of the Festival engaged themselves as further partners with substantial contributions.

In addition, the following institutions funded the festival (budget 5 million Swiss Francs) with generous funds: Ars Rhenia, Baugarten Stiftung, Elisabeth Weber-Stiftung, Georg und Bertha Schwyzer-Winiker Stiftung, Max Kohler Stiftung, D&K DubachKeller-Stiftung, Stiftung für Radio und Kultur Schweiz as well as the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia.

Contributors of substantial in-kind sponsoring were KIBAG AG, Zürichsee Schifffahrtsgesellschaft and Verkehrsbetriebe Zürich. The festival direction would like to thank them and all other companies, which supported the festival with material and logistic contributions.

THAT WAS THE 40TH

We would like to thank all visitors for their interest, openness, curiosity and applause. You significantly contribute to the success of the festival: «In Zurich, or in any other European city I know of, there is no other more convincing sphere where you can experience utopia than during this festival. » (Daniele Muscionico, NZZ, 26/8/2019) In this spirit: See you next year. Find impressions on the 40th Zürcher Theater Spektakel on our website theaterspektakel.ch.

THEATER SPEKTAKEL 2020

The 41st Zürcher Theater Spektakel takes place from Thursday 13 to Sunday 30 August 2020. The advance sale starts on Wednesday 8 July 2020.

Zürich, 3rd September 2019