TH311 Performances and Practices of Postdramatic Theatre in Germany

Seminar Leader: Julia Hart
Course Times: Monday, 3:15-6:30pm
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Course Description

What happens in the theater when the text is no longer the central aspect of a theater production? The term “postdramatic theater” became widely known in Germany in 1999 by theater scholar Hans Thies-Lehmann with his book *Postdramatic Theatre*. This course is first going to explore the development of this performance aesthetic in Germany by discussing the theories of German theater scholars Hans Thies-Lehmann and Erika Fischer-Lichte. While analyzing the practices of German postdramatic work from artists such as Pina Bausch, Einar Schleef, Frank Castorf, Rene Pollesch, and Christoph Schlingensief, students will ultimately create their own postdramatic theater pieces in a laboratory setting. We are also going to examine the postdramatic use of new electronic and social media in current Berlin theater productions and study the influence of the postdramatic aesthetic on the current Berlin theater scene.

Requirements

- active participation in class discussions and rehearsals
- completion of all reading assignments
- attendance (One absence is allowed. Every additional absence will result in the demotion of one-half letter grade at the end of the term.)
- completion of one performance analysis essay
- participation in the three performance requirements: two short lab pieces and a final performance

Performance Lab requirements:

- choose one or more aspects of the postdramatic theatre discussed in class (space, time, sound, the body, the voice, etc) that you would like to explore and critically plan, devise, and create an experimental piece
- one additional 2-3 hour rehearsal per scene to be completed outside of class

Written requirements:

Performance Analysis Essay (4000 words)
Due 19.11.2015
*Please note: Essays that are submitted 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade. Late essays must be turned in within four weeks of deadline and cannot receive higher than a C.

Performance Analysis Essays should contain the following:

- A thorough critical analysis of a performance seen during the semester in Berlin discussing and describing the role of space, the voice, tempo, rhythm, atmosphere, sound, composition, costume, set design, electronic media, and further theatrical devices and symbols observed in the performance.

**Grade Breakdown:**
- Final Presentation 40%
- Written Assignment 30%
- Class Discussions 30%

**Schedule**

31.8  What is postdramatic theatre?
      Introduction to postdramatic theatre and performance

7.9  The Panorama of Postdramatic Theatre
      Required Reading:
      *Postdramatic Theatre*: 16-33, 68-71, 77-82

14.9.  Postdramatic Theatrical Signs and Examples
      Required Reading:
      *Postdramatic Theatre*: 82-132

21.9  German Directors and Postdramatic Theatre: Frank Castof, Christoph Schlingensief, Einar Schleef, Rene Pollesch
      Required: Topic/Idea for Lab Piece 1

28.9  Rehearse and Present Lab Piece 1
      Assignment: one rehearsal outside of class

5.10  Performance as an Event
      Required Reading:
      *The Transformative Power of Performance*: 11-37

12.10  Shared Bodies, Shared Spaces: Community, Touch, Liveness
      Required Reading:
      *The Transformative Power of Performance*: 38-74

19.10  Fall Break

26.10  Corporeality
      Required Reading:
      *The Transformative Power of Performance*: 75-106

2.11  Spatiality, Atmospheres, Rhythm, Temporality
      Required Reading:
      *The Transformative Power of Performance*: 107-137
9.11 Rehearsals and Presentations for Lab Piece 2
Assignment: one rehearsal outside of class

16.11 Dance and Movement in the Postdramatic Theatre:
Pina Bausch, William Forsythe, Meg Stuart, Anne Teresa de Keersmaker
Required Reading:
*Essay Due

23.11 Performance Collectives and Groups that have influenced the Postdramatic Theatre in Germany: Forced Entertainment, Gob Squad, She She Pop
Required Reading:
*Essay Due

30.11 Devise and Rehearse Final Performance
Required: one rehearsal before class

7.12 Last Day of Class. Rehearsals, Presentations, Critique

14.2 Completion Week