

Art of Event – Event of Art

EVENT CREATION is the latest buzzword in the arts world. Europe is a continent of festivals, and Finland, we might say, is the promised land of events. Every village hosts the minimum of five festivals per year, not to mention towns and cities. Doing things together, voluntary work and dedication to joint annual efforts have long traditions in our country, and they have laid the foundations for the blooming festival scene.

Due to the strong history of village fêtes, festivals are often associated with the carnival tradition. A festival is an extended Day of the False King, where you can feast and frolic. The locals are usually fond of “our own festival”, and a little proud, too. Also the cities and regions that are working on their survival strategies in the post-industrial world have a soft spot for festivals. An abundant, joyous and colourful selection of events shows the world an image of a dynamic city or region, which will hopefully attract the right kind of residents and investments to the area.

On the other hand, art festivals around the world are significant venues for education, because they give local people – whether they be in London or Rovaniemi – an affordable opportunity to learn about other countries and their culture, ideas, and trends. Also, arts professionals who have been drawn to the international scene for one reason or another are usually big fans of festivals, thanks to their atmosphere and rich cultural supply.

So – we’re in a situation where the growing number of festivals is heating up competition. Event management is becoming more and more professional, drifting further away from cheerful voluntary work. In fact, I wonder if arts festivals have much to do with carnivals any more. Partying is of course still in the picture, but is the crux of an arts festival someplace totally different?

Of course there are people, for whom a festival is just a burden that messes up their everyday life. For them, the whole phenomenon is a swear word. Art festivals are often accused of making safe

content choices: choosing global niceties that will surely sell well – acts that have no local = real relevance in any place. However, I have been going to theatre festivals for ten years now, and I still have not seen that notorious commercial festival show with trivial content. Instead, I have often witnessed a festival serving as a kind of experimental laboratory for productions that would not come into being or find the right audience, if done locally. In my experience, art festivals are the place where experimental productions and works in progress can be shown to an audience well-versed in theatre, without any box office pressures. In our consumer society, if this is not a value appreciated by the arts field, I wonder what is?

For me personally, the most meaningful factor in organizing a festival is the form of the event as an entity. Over the past years, art philosophy and art discussion have pointed out how the role of a subject has been transferred to the recipient, who has traditionally been seen as the object of artistic activity. In the theatre, this shows in a wide variety of means with which the division between the stage and the auditorium has been transgressed in order to activate the spectator. Theatre makers have given up traditional performance spaces, they’ve run down from the stage to be in the middle of the audience, they’ve done performances for one spectator at a time, and so on.

But because the theatre conventions – entailing the dark, passively receptive auditorium and the precisely lit, active stage – are so solidly programmed into the heads of most theatre goers, this gap is very difficult to bridge.

Instead, in our mental pictures, a festival is a carnival, a fête that activates people. Even when the festival shows the most traditional stuff that the audience will follow quietly in their seats, between the shows, there is usually a variety of opportunities to be part of the festival events, to be an active participant within the festival framework. For example, our festival includes artist discussions, clubs, workshops, a seminar, a festival blog for public commentary... And what we haven’t planned in advance, we may improvise in the spur of the moment or include in the programme next time.

I think an active spectator is the salt of the festival. Having said that, we should

not forget how important it is to choose the programme meticulously, because the core duty of festivals is to showcase art that local audience would otherwise miss out on. These are the reasons why I want to organize festivals over and over again.

So it’s no wonder people love festivals. Everyone gets their share – a community tied by mental, geographical or other connection gets its village fête, the spectators get their festival experience and carefully selected programme, the city gets its share of creative stir, artists get a place for developing their artistic work and an attentive audience, the arts field gets an opportunity for networking, festival organizers get inspiring jobs... and it doesn’t hurt anyone to do something that surpasses the day-to-day routines, every once in a while.

And last but not least: let’s not forget joy. A festival is an event with the inherent quality of joy. Can you imagine a festival dedicated to stress? Or, if someone actually organized a stress festival, I’m sure it would be a blast!

Johanna Hammarberg
Baltic Circle festival director

Alice Ad Infinitum TEATTERI NAAMIO JA HÖYHEN

OFF CIRCLE

Please tell something essential about your company / ensemble / theatre. What makes it what it is? Our mission is to ask big questions in an intimate performance space. A diverse, yet a close-knit company, we like to flirt with modes of performance, particularly with the physicality of dance and performance art, while still retaining our identity as a theatre company. At the beginning of nearly every project, the basic question of ‘what is theatre?’ comes up again and again, and all of our work is an attempt to answer that question. When we’re not performing, we’re training, or we’re finding new theories or people to train with. A method is never thrown out until it’s been tried.

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? Alice ad infinitum

tum is about outer space and inner worlds. Drawing from Lewis Carroll's classic as well as parallel universe theory, we explore permutations of life within ourselves: we're all at once fictional, real, strange, impossible, unlimited, and confused. As for why, it all started with a cryptic text message from another continent – and that somehow makes sense.

Since we've worked with director Eero-Tapio Vuori on several occasions during the last 10 years or so, the questions, methodological approaches, and themes behind this project have somehow been "in the air" for a long time.

Do you have some specific working method? Why have you chosen to use it? One of the hallmarks of Teatteri Naamio ja Höyhen is the fact that our working methods are intimately tied to individual productions.

It is very hard to believe that only one particular method or aesthetic approach could serve every project and lead to inspiring theatre. Instead, we like to examine different – sometimes even contradictory – methods to get deeper into the basic questions of theatre itself.

For Alice, over a two-year period, we experimented with acting in mirrors; we played with the process of getting in and out of character; we improvised on everything from Cheshire cats to Pavlov's dog; and we tore down walls in our theatre.

Do you have a mission, i.e. is there something that was lacking from the Finnish theatre scene before you showed up? From an artist's point of view, you could say that the desire for a theatre in Helsinki, with the aforementioned ideals and working methods, was what prompted us to start a theatre company in the first place. Most of our productions are original pieces made to surprise and challenge.

Concerning our audiences, we have the same wish for them as we do for ourselves: sometimes to poke and push, but ultimately to give ourselves the courage to leap into the unknown.

If your company has an upcoming production, please tell a little bit about it. Our next premiere is in September 2008 with a piece called Suuri Koneisto II – Will to Power. To put it briefly, it's improvised Shakespeare. The dramaturgical structure and rules are quite elaborate, but as with all games, the execu-

tion is improvised. And no, we don't wear tights.

Answered by Juha Sääski & Johanna McDonald, actors/performers

13, 15 & 16 May at 7 p.m. | Höyhentämö
performed in English | duration: 3h, one intermission
TICKETS: 20/10€ | TICKET SALES : 045-6711047
www.nh.fi

The Role of the Festival Audience

A COUPLE OF TIMES I have left a theatre performance during the break – if not in the middle of the play. I do as I do with books and films. I quit reading Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* after 50 pages and I think I didn't even get to 30 minutes with the film before I left the cinema.

I am not of the tight schedule business type, but 50 pages or 30 minutes without any reward or heightened interest is enough – in a world full of art.

If I don't get hooked up, why couldn't I instead read once again Malone Dies or dig up an old VHS where I recall taping Pina Bausch?

So much art, so little time.

Though all art forms where the audience faces a live performer have a distinctive culture of spectatorship, theatre seems to make a difference. Rock, jazz, circus – actually most live performance acts don't make noise about what their audiences do, as long as they don't disturb the performers. And if I leave a chamber music evening in the middle of a piece, it might only be considered rude or 'uncivilized' behavior.

But at a theatre performance someone always reacts to my act of leaving the performance. If I know some of the actors, I get the feeling that I have to explain my action later, but actually even other members of the audience can feel hurt – like my choice of leaving would mean that I evaluate negatively what I have seen, that I want to say it does not deserve anybody's attention. As a part of the theatre audience I lose my subjective right to just dislike certain themes and theatrical conventions –

following a symbolically strong bond between actors, me, and the surrounding audience.

Theatre culture with its myths has not made it easier for me. It has actually even created a stance towards me which resembles the classical defense against theatre critics. Some directors and actors say that critics would like to create theatre, but as they are not talented enough, they write critique. In my case the myth says that I can't take the challenge the play poses on me. The problem is always in my end, and I have as well already heard a couple of times that I am just ignorant, and I have been asked why I come to the theatre if I want to have everything my way.

At festivals watching the plays to their end seems more natural to me – because the role of the festival audience is different. We have come to share something additional, not just the substance performed on stage, but institutional talk, new horizons, and our sometimes even painful quest for what theatre really is. In the festival audience I am not acting out the role of the spectator I am used to. I am a festival spectator, who is taking part in a shared journey on what theatre is as a form of art in this era, in these margins, and in the chosen languages and geographical frames of the festival.

We gather to change – not just ideas, but ourselves, and our relation to theatre. We meet to have a break from routine. Some of us 'network' – some of us rethink even fundamental questions of life and death.

In the end it would as well be harder to leave a performance during a festival. We meet other festival people throughout the days in other performances, in parties, and in roundtable discussions.

Our acts are seen and registered by dozens of eyes we will encounter later on. It would be easy to create cracks to the fragile ritualistic force field which develops during the festival days, to destroy the feeling of melting into one tribe for a week.

And we know less what we are seeing. As performances come from distant geographical, linguistic and cultural locations, we are often supposed to be spectators of a kind which we do not (yet) know. There is a bigger possibility that if we leave, we make a mistake, as we know less how to interpret what we witness.

In this dialogical, transformational space, we, in the role of festival spectators, we train ourselves to see new possibilities of spectatorship. The role of the festival audience is, so to speak, of a meta-nature, one in which we reflect upon not only what theatre really is, but how it could and should be interpreted and experienced.

Max Ryyänen, lecturer

Baltic Circle 2008

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Call Cutta in a Box INTERNATIONAL RIMINI PROTOKOLL [Switzerland / Germany]

CALL CUTTA IN A BOX is an exclusive performance served for one spectator at a time. Instead of a theatre space, it is created in an office with no one else present. The performance starts when the phone rings – the caller is a call centre employee from Calcutta, India. Answering the phone starts a 50-minute journey between two working places, the office of Descon Ltd and an office erected in the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art. Anything can happen during the performance. Anything that two people who don't know each other may come up with over the phone.

The Swiss-German Rimini Protokoll is a cutting edge company in contemporary European theatre scene. It is a trademark for directors Helgard Haug, Stefan Kaegi, and Daniel Wetzel. Instead of professional actors, the pivotal roles are cast with people who are experts in the field the performance deals with. The performers of Call Cutta in a Box are real call centre employees.

What is the most common question asked about Rimini Protokoll? Why are you called Rimini Protokoll?

Do you have a stock answer to it? Protokoll is a term for a script of something which has just happened or which follows a certain procedure. Our first theatre texts were basically protocols of meetings with old people and Formula 1 racing rules.

So we had a word with three "o"s and wanted another one with three "i"s. Rimini is a city, where none of us (Rimini Protokoll's directors) has ever been to. But in the 80s all our school mates went there and came back with lots of things to tell. Just like when you come back from a great theatre play.

In Call Cutta in a Box you deal with the globalization of work. Why did you choose this topic? When we were in India the oddest place we found was a room full of people talking to other people who were somewhere in the US or England. They used false names on the phone to make the customers believe they were right next door. We thought this division between low-cost and high-price countries might be a good interaction tool if only it would not be used to sell things. It could be a bridge between cultures. A telephone can be the most intimate place to meet somebody hearing their words right in your ear.

In Call Cutta in a Box the structure and form of the performance is very specific. Why did you choose it? Often when we do plays on big stages, we would like to meet each spectator in his/her very individual way. And when I am sitting in a big audience my biggest challenge is to see something that the others don't see. Our theatre is always a form of communication where people who have something to say meet others who want to listen. That's exactly what happens in Call Cutta in a Box. Only a small part of the script is written by us. The rest is a form of the indescribable

Art of conversation. Everybody who comes out of the show tells me a different story of what they just experienced.

Your method is to work with professionals of different trades. Are there any practical and/or ethical challenges connected to that? The people we work with have all kinds of backgrounds, some have also experience in working in call centres. But professional call centre employees are actors by definition and training. We've been listening to their performances in various performances. My favourite at the moment takes place in one floor of BNK in Calcutta, where several New York Pizza services have outsourced their telephone service. So the operators there – let's call them performers for the moment – have a very very different task, much more difficult and atavistic than a European theatre performer. It is about the appetite of people in New York who are hungry. So you stand next to these operators in India and you hear them asking New Yorkers if they'd like extra cheese, extra peppers, large or extra large or XXL, combined with what drink and so on. And closing the order the performer repeats the order, clears the bill, checks the credit card number and tells the customers in how many minutes the pizzas will be delivered in Brooklyn or Manhattan and so on.

Imagine what would happen with the appetite of the customers if they would start wondering whether the service staff they talk to actually sit in India? This would mean a very heavy portion of global extra cheese that would attack all feelings for just a quick pizza from around the corner. So, in favour of both the outsourcing company and their customers the Indian performer first of all has to make sure that his theatre of customer services hides the reality of globalisation. Actually it could be an attraction – such a free long distance call, and there would be other things to talk about than extra cheese. My example was a pizza - but one of the increasing service markets is all around medical services, all kinds of services that are being invented on the basis of the difference of costs between India and the west.

But this theatre of customer services also forces the Indian performer to hide their identity. Without constant adjustment of its theatrical performance to the sensitive market of western service scenario, the eastern performer of west-

ern services would lose their part – meaning, their job. Globalisation – let's use this term although it is just a new word for a much older thing – implies illusion and self-betrayal on the side of the consumer, meaning, us, and this is of course connected to racism and xenophobia. Because there's actually no reason why the pizza should be any worse only because the information about extra cheese came via India, after all, it is your Pakistani next door neighbour who will put it in the oven.

Are there any practical and/or ethical challenges working with employees from developing countries such as India? India is a whole continent. In India there are as many poor people as in the whole of Africa. But there are also 200 million members of a growing middle class. The performers we work with are people with good language skills, so they are far away from the street. Call Centre operators in Germany are exploited workers – earning around 8 times less than a teacher or 20 times less than a doctor. In Calcutta call centre operators earn about 4 times as much as a teacher or a doctor. The cultural gap between the show and its audience is a big part of the fun of it. Our Indian performers are just brilliant story-tellers, singers and listeners on the phone.

Call Cutta in a Box is the second version of a project called Call Cutta. The first version was a guided tour through the city: the spectator was connected to an Indian call centre employee via mobile phone and got directions to walk through the city of Berlin, having the impression the person on the other side of the world knew more about it than the spectator himself.

Why did you want to create a second version? It was great fun and a very important experience, this walking tour project Call Cutta. We staged the first chapter in the North of Calcutta and then the second one in Berlin. These tours were very much shaped by the guiding aspect, conversation was rather limited because to stop walking and start talking was not really foreseen. Also technically the connection was just not so good - fragile and noisy. We asked ourselves what would happen if we reduced the complications along the way and offered the option to really talk. So we found out that it is what we have to stage now: A possibility to just talk for a while.

Is Call Cutta in a Box a political performance? Theatre can be a tool to make experiences that don't fit in the standard settings of perceiving the world and it's so called order. Be it regarding the person next door or the ideology of global markets. But we don't use theatre in order to tell you what we are criticizing or what you're supposed to criticize. We would write a pamphlet then. This play offers you a chance to talk to people on the backstage of this globalisation process?

Are you looking for new experts and themes to work with as you are visiting Finland in May? You are most welcome to introduce us to all your neighbours.

Answered by Stefan Kaegi and Daniel Wetzell

9-25 May & 3-15 June, Tue - Sun, starting times:
3 p.m., 4 p.m., 5 p.m., 6 p.m., 7 p.m. & 8 p.m.
Kiasma | performed in English | duration: 50 min
www.rimini-protokoll.de

PRODUCTION: Rimini Apparat COPRODUCTION: Battic Circle & Helsinki Festival (Helsinki), Camp X (Copenhagen), HAU (Berlin), Kunstenfestivaldesarts (Brussels), Nationaltheater (Mannheim), Schauspielhaus (Zürich), 104 (Paris) IN CO-OPERATION: Descon Limited (Calcutta), Kiasma-teatteri (Helsinki) SUPPORTED BY: Culture Programme of the European Union, Goethe-Institut Finnland



Can Art Change the World

A discussion in connection of Morten Traavik's Miss Landmine Expo

THROUGH THE AGES, artists have wanted to fight the evils of society through their work. Either concretely or under the surface, numerous art pieces and projects across the world have tackled various problems of contemporary society. Can artists make a difference through their work?

This is the topic for the discussion between the artists Morten Traavik and Ulla Karttunen and Unicef's campaign leader Veera Videnius.

A Comment from an Activist – Miss Landmine Angola 2008 Project
I've been actively involved in the peace

movement for more than two decades. Over the years, there have been moments when I've felt cynical, numb to the horrors of war and people's indifference. Working for peace requires perseverance. A lifetime is not enough for building permanent world peace. Not even a miniature peace. Working for peace is a project where several generations work towards change, without scoring points for their personal efforts. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines restored my faith in the human being and how simple things can change the world, after all. By giving a voice and face for landmine survivors, and by opening the eyes of ordinary people, authorities and decision-makers to see the reality of the conflict-inflicted areas of the world – to realize how strongly it affects everyone of us!

When the International Campaign to Ban Landmines received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, I was sitting in that church, looking around at a group of people involved in the campaign across the world. Each of them was dressed in their best, solemnly following the ceremony. Ordinary people: Tun Chanareth, the Cambodian landmine survivor in his wheelchair, a campaigner from Iraq, Tim, the demining specialist from England, a doctor from a Red Cross field hospital – the crowd that had managed to stop the landmine production and export in the world, the crowd that had managed to get more than 100 countries to ban landmines and their use. Only by telling and showing people, what it is like, when a mine brings your life to a halt.

Art and artists can join in and give a voice and face to war victims, survivors, bring them to the dreams of arms dealers, to the official visits of authorities, to the discussions at the negotiation table – art can make a difference, if the artist wants to make a difference.

It is a pleasure to see landmine survivors portrayed in the Miss Landmine Angola 2008 Project as the beautiful, wonderful people that they are. The fight against landmines is a campaign of joy and action, not a movement of death and misery.

Laura Lodenius
Activist, Finnish Peace Union – UN Association of Finland,
Campaign Against Landmines

14 May, 5 p.m. | Kiasma auditorium

(See *M* for Miss Landmine Expo)

Clubs

3 x Festival Club

BALTIC CIRCLE OPENING CLUB is organized together with Helsinki Contemporary Circus Festival CIRCO and TheatreTent. All the organizing festivals will present their program. Theatre, circus and music guaranteed!

8.30 – 10 p.m. Fast Forward Festival
10 – 11.30 p.m. Screening of the Marx Brothers' film *At the Circus*.
11:30 p.m. – 03.00 a.m. Somethin' Else DJs @ mbar.

Fri 9 May | Lasipalatsi Square | Free admission

Fuck Off Festival Clubs

SMEDS ENSEMBLE HOSTS a three night long Fuck Off Festival Club, featuring theatre makers' bands from Estonia and Finland. Here you will find out how theatre workers swing, rock, rap and boogie.

Wed 14th of May

Läski (Todellisuuden tutkimuskeskus), Los Putas Presidentos (Ryhmäteatteri), Marie C ja Terijoen hallitus (Teatteri Vanha Juko), Rahikainen ja peräänantamattomat (Kristian Smeds' Tuntematontotilas / Unknown Soldier)

Thu 15th of May

The real fans plays music of Houkka Bros., Dj Levy plays Italian hits (Houkka Bros./Smeds Ensemble), Niklas (Svenska Teatern), Raadio Maria (EST)

Fri 16th of May

Päär Pärenson (EST), Chalise (EST), Raadio Maria (EST)

CHALICE – If you haven't heard Chalice, you've missed the essence and quintessence of Estonian hip-hop. This guy both sings in falsetto and raps ultra fast. But the common denominator is always a personal approach to life and music around him.

LOS PUTAS PRESIDENTOS – A band featuring Miguel Castro, Marque Castro and Pasque Castro

LÄSKI – Läski is the foremost experimental Finnish rock-band today! Well, at least one of the strangest. Läski (meaning ham, lard or fat) was born from the remains of the band called Pale Rider & Lonely Faggots, a band specialized in playing brutal country music. Läski is musically reaching towards to the roots of our West-Siberian existence and to the space where music is being created. Läski is: Pasi Mäkelä, Tomi Suovankoski, Tuomas Timonen, Ville Härkönen, Lauri Kontula & Miikka Tuominen.

MARIE C JA TERIJOEN HALLITUS – Vocal and instrumental ensemble "Marie C and the Terijoki Government" hails from Vanha Juko Theatre in Lahti, Finland. The group performs progressive music in various European and Finno-Ugric languages for enlightened courses. To be precise, they feature progression, regression, cursing and misinterpreted evergreens and pop classics.

NIKLAS – Niklas Häggblom, Niklas Groundstroem & Niklas Weissenberg play progressive folk music in Swedish.

PÄÄR PÄRENSON – Päär Pärenson is an Estonian rapper, whose rhymes and moves Baltic Circle audience can check also in *Man-Machine*, a contemporary dance performance by KokoTeatteri.

RAADIO MARIA – Raadio Maria's single *Helsingi on täna haige* has become a small hit even in Finland. Now the band makes its first visit to Helsinki. Raadio Maria is a band of well-known Estonian culture workers from different fields.

RAHIKAINEN JA PERÄÄNANTAMATTOMAT A band from the play *Tuntematontotilas* by Kristian Smeds.

14-16 May at 9 p.m. – 03 a.m. | Semifinal
TICKETS: in advance 8€ (Tiketti and Q-teatteri)
from the door 10€

Closing Jazz Picnic Party

THE FESTIVAL WILL FINISH with a jazzy picnic party at the side of the Pitkäsilta Bridge. During the break from jazz, Mikko Orpana and auto will entertain the picnic people.

The party will continue inside KokoTeatteri. Theatre groups Fisches Nacht-

gesang and Projektori-ryhmä will perform their music at 9 p.m.

17 May 4 – 7 p.m. | The embankment in front of
KokoTeatteri | Free admission

And...

BAR KOKO at KokoTeatteri will be open during the festival evenings.

Delirium PLASMA

[Switzerland]

INTERNATIONAL

DELIRIUM is a performance inspired by Plasma's visit to Baltic Circle festival in 2003 and the Finnish bar culture during the darkest November. The setting is an endless night in a bar with no way out. The bar forms a closed world of its own and a reality filled with surprising characters, mysterious encounters, and incidents bordering on psychedelia.

Founded in 2000, Plasma is a Swiss laboratory researching the language of theatrical expression. It works at the junction between theatre, music and visual arts.

The rumour has it that the Lost & Found bar in Helsinki was the location where the idea for Delirium was conceived. What did you lose and what did you find there? The starting point for this project was indeed our visit to Baltic Circle in 2003. What I lost is the name of the bar where we were. What I found is the word "Kalevala", some compositions of colours and a speech rhythm.

Are bars good locations for acquiring material for new performances? Was there some particular moment or incident that made you want to make a play about your experience at a Finnish nightclub? Delirium is celebrating life and theatre in a tragicomic way. It casts a glance at our inadequate attempts to generate meaning. At the same time it celebrates the possibilities of theatre as a medium – making language become music and turning movement into dance.

What really impressed me during our last visit to the Baltic Circle festival were

the special light, the short day, the long night, another dimension of time and some individuals who talked just a few words in the beginning of the night and a lot in the end.

You define your company as a laboratory for searching for theatrical forms of expression. What are the key chemicals in Delirium?

TIME - the base of our medium (on stage you can see extremely fast movements and also movements that are so slow that most members of the audience can hardly see them)

SOUND - we try to regard all acoustic events – including language and noises – as music

LIGHT - and its reflection on human beings and objects

Our work might be called experimental even if it is not our primary intention to transgress conventions but to create strong moments that inspire the audience. Depending on the community where we present our projects the audience perceives different aspects of our work as transgression of conventions. For example, the fact that we do not tell a straightforward story but work with the dramaturgical structures of dreams – or the fusion and interaction of different elements of theatre.

What would be the most theatrical song to sing in a karaoke bar? "Erbarme Dich mein Gott" by Johann Sebastian Bach (BWV 244)

Have your visits to other festivals (Cairo, Paris etc.) also worked as an inspiration for new Plasma projects? My brain saves – as everyone's brain – all the time impressions that come out very surprisingly and suddenly during my work. So far the fact that we have been touring a lot in different countries has had a big influence on our present work.

For example: The stage design of our project Random (Plasma project 9 about the question why something is something and not nothing) is illuminated by 1134 electric bulbs. The same kind of electric bulbs illuminate the "Sexodrom" in Paris.

What is your best festival memory? After the performance of our piece "Tip of the Tongue" at the International Fadjr Festival in Teheran in February 2008, a student was waiting for us in the foyer of the theatre. He was very excited. He

wasn't able to speak English any more than we were able to speak Farsi. Nevertheless he managed to communicate with expressive gestures that our work had opened his brain and broadened his horizons.

Are you looking for new delirium inspirations as you are again visiting Finland in May? We are very much looking forward to our performances at the Baltic Circle festival.

Maybe there will be a new seed planted in our brain system in Helsinki, we will carry it out, show the project that will grow out of that again in Helsinki, get fertilized, carry it out and show the result... in Helsinki, get fertilized, carry it out and show the result... in Helsinki, get fertilized, carry it out and show the result... in Helsinki, get fertilized, carry it out and show the result... in Helsinki, get fertilized, carry it out and show the result... in Helsinki...

Answered by Lukas Bangerter, director, writer, stage designer

9 & 10 May at 7 p.m. & 11 May at 3 p.m. | Viirus
performed in German, translated in Finnish and English
duration: 1 h 10 min
www.plasmaplasma.ch

SUPPORTED BY: Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, Alfred Kordelin Foundation

swiss arts council
prohelvetia

Disco Pigs AKSELI ENSEMBLE

OFF CIRCLE

Please tell something essential about your company / ensemble / theatre. What makes it what it is? Akseli Ensemble is a group of professionals gathered together to produce independent theatre, film and music as opposed to the commercial projects freelancers are usually forced to live on.

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? Disco Pigs is a story about two teenagers who see no love around them and therefore are filled with anger that they project to everyone and everything. The violence and misuse of narcotics by teenagers are ever present problems in Finland just like in other countries.

Do you have some specific working method? Why have you chosen to use it? The play is very straightforward storytelling with little illusionary material i.e. all action is presented to the public as the characters are telling the story here and now. This was underlined in the scenic design by taking out almost all realistic artefacts from the stage. No furniture and minimal props. Just the music they love (speaker cabinets) and the trash they use to tell the story (piles of old newspapers).

Do you have a mission, i.e. is there something that was lacking from the Finnish theatre scene before you showed up? Our mission is to produce pieces we would like to see ourselves. We do stuff we like without the need to compromise. Other groups are doing so as well, so nothing new there.

If your company has an upcoming production, please tell a little bit about it. The core of Akseli Ensemble is collaborating with Kom Theatre in a play called Kohti. It is a dramatization of a recent novel by Juha Itkonen, a widely acclaimed new writer in Finland.

Answered by Kalle Chydenius, director

12 May at 7 p.m. | KOM-Teatteri

performed in Finnish | duration: 1 h 15 min

TICKETS: 18/15€

TICKET SALES: 09-6841 841 / KOM-Teatteri

www.akseliensemble.fi

DramAgora

DRAMAGORA is an e-journal offering a venue for artist discussions and public commentary.

Critical writings of the participants of the *Mobile Lab Workshop* will be published in DramAgora during and after the festival. A selection of texts will also be published in print in 2009 to document the results of the Mobile Lab for Theatre and Communication project.

www.q-teatteri.fi/baltic_circle/dramagora

(See *M* for *Mobile Lab*.)

Ebberöds Bank

TEATER TRIBUNALEN

[Sweden]

INTERNATIONAL

EBBERÖDS BANK plunges into the whirlpool of the banking world and market economy. Interest rates and maximal profits serve as a barometer for happiness. Value becomes synonymous with financial equity.

What happens when an individual shatters this image, impugns the system, and establishes her own laws? The performance investigates the effects of capitalism on western society.

Teater Tribunalen has been making purely political theatre since 1995. The theatre wants to expose, question, and criticize political and economic power structures. Tribunalen wants to paint an ultimately complex, all-inclusive and earnest portrait of reality.

Is Ebberöds Bank a political play? What does the expression mean in this particular case? The project Ebberöds bank is a political and philosophical experiment which tries to investigate economic and sexually charged power structures. It is an attempt to make art about something as un-sexy as economics. The play focuses on discussion and reactions.

Is Teater Tribunalen a political theatre? What does it mean in practice? We want to give a more balanced picture of reality than the one that media offers us. Our repertoire is characterized by plays which are aiming to create thoughts rather than compassion. We could also call ourselves a philosophical or an activist theatre.

Do you think art can change the world? In which way is art a more efficient tool than other forms of political action? Art can change the world just as much or just as little as everything else in the world. Art can make us see the world with different eyes, which can be productive in a time when the views of a human are stereotypical. If a man wants to ask a certain political question, different tools are effective depending on the time and the theme. Sometimes it may be art, sometimes something else.

Does the substance of the play change as you are performing it in May to a foreign audience? Do you think festivals are good platforms for such performances as Ebberöds Bank? Does your perform-

ance have a more globally political message? Or do you prefer your "own", local audience? Theatre changes every time there is a new audience. What will happen in May is as exciting for us as for Finland. The theme of economy has absolutely substance for the non-Swedish audience since capitalism has become a global ideology. All platforms that create an opportunity for interesting artists and art to meet are good platforms.

In the performance you work with sponsors. Why? We wanted to find out what will happen with us as artists when we are sponsored by companies. The discussion about cultural sponsorship is a hot potato in Sweden. We also wanted to smash our own platform, which is the political arena Teater Tribunalen.

Are you looking for new inspiration for a political play as you are visiting Finland in May? We are curious about the views different countries around the Baltic Sea have on the theatre. Sweden has already given us a lot of political inspiration with its new government.

Answered by Frida Röhl, artistic director and actress

17 May at 7 p.m. | Q-teatteri

performed in Swedish, translated in Finnish

duration: 3 h 15 min, one intermission

www.tribunalen.com

SUPPORTED BY: the Swedish-Finnish Cultural Foundation



SUOMALAIK-
RUOTSALAINEN
KULTTUURIKÄSTÖ
KULTURFONDEN FÖR
SVERIGE OCH FINLAND

Elmo

OFF CIRCLE

PROJEKTORI-RYHMÄ

Please tell something essential about your company / ensemble / theatre. What makes it what it is? Artistically, Projektori-ryhmä is led by director and script-writer Juha Luukkonen, who's been working with these actors in different productions over the past ten years. The plays are reflecting various tendencies in today's Finland. The crew members are freelance actors and theatre technicians from the Helsinki area.

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? Sports have

historically been an important part of our national identity. While we lack great victories in wars, both military and monetary, sports offer an arena where Finns can boost their self-esteem. Each generation continues to pursue their gold medals, and the negative attributes surrounding today's sports (stress, doping and hyper capitalism etc) are easily forgotten. We want to comment on this phenomenon.

Do you have some specific working method? Why have you chosen to use it? Our method is quite simple – we work like hell with no pay. Seriously speaking, the aesthetics of our performances could maybe be considered traditional, where intensive acting, provocative, shameless and hilarious dramaturgy and precise teamwork is more important than decorative scenery.

Do you have a mission, i.e. is there something that was lacking from the Finnish theatre scene before you showed up? Projektori-ryhmä has set its goal to the making of theatre that comments on the society around us, it is theatre about the people for the people, done respectfully but also with a critical approach.

If your company has an upcoming production, please tell a little bit about it. As a joint project with Kansan Teatteri and Teatteri Takomo, Projektori-ryhmä will stage a play called Ihmeellinen Armo in Helsinki in March 2009. The play written by A-P Lahti and directed by Juha Luukkonen has been inspired by the Ibsen's Brand. While the state church is no longer one of the foundations in our society, the urban isolated man of today's Finland is about to lose yet one supporting pillar in the jungle of individualism and information overflow.

Answered by Martin Bahne, actor

10 May at 2:00 p.m., 11 May at 2 & 7 p.m., 17 May at 2 p.m. | Valtimonteatteri | performed in Finnish
duration: 2h 30 min, one intermission
TICKETS: 18/12€ | TICKET SALES: 041-5367995
www.projektori-ryhma.com

Entertainment Island 1 OFF CIRCLE – work in progress OBLIVIA

Please tell something essential about your company / ensemble / theatre. What makes it what it is? We work without a director devising the work collectively. Our work eludes the ready-made genres, still it is very recognisable, subtle and funny. For the performances we choose a theme that we look at from different angles and work through thoroughly.

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? Popular culture and entertainment. In the performance we are unveiling mechanisms of popular culture.

Do you have some specific working method? Why have you chosen to use it?

Oblivia's working process begins with a grand idea. One that is so grand at first that it seems impossible to handle. Through diligent and persistent deliberation we begin to filter our grand idea until it becomes tangible. Through this filtering we aim to arrive at the crux of the subject matter. Our process is dense and layered yet what we present on stage is minimal and spare. However, one soon becomes aware of the traces that remain and how the process is woven into the structure of the work.

We are listening carefully to what the work requires, which means that the methods differ from time to time. We haven't built a method so much as an attitude towards the work and towards working. Ours is a process of observation, of seeing and connecting and finding ways to communicate our concerns and concepts through performance. We work with methods of devising, creative responses, collective work and improvisation.

Why did we choose it? The need to discover something else, something unique to us as a group of people.

Do you have a mission, i.e. is there something that was lacking from the Finnish theatre scene before you showed up? We have been working together as an (international) ensemble for seven years and developed a special approach towards performance and our own distinct minimal style. This kind of com-

mitment towards the work is rare these days, not only in Finland.

If your company has an upcoming production, please tell a little bit about it. We are embarking on a three-year project (Entertainment Island) that deals with aspects of entertainment and popular culture using different means; performances, film, photos, book, workshops, seminar. We intend to tour with the whole project in 2010. The upcoming performance is the first part and it premieres at the Kiasma Theatre in October 2008.

Answered by Annika Tudeer, founder and artistic director of Oblivia

9 and 10 May at 5 p.m. | Q-Theatre / Puoli-Q
performed in English | duration: 1h
TICKETS: 3€ | TICKET SALES: 044-5619301
www.oblivia.fi

Das Fliegende Spektakel OFF CIRCLE FISCHES NACHTGESANG

Please tell something essential about your company / ensemble / theatre. What makes it what it is? Fisches Nachtgesang is a theatrical orchestra, formed in 2002 during our acting studies at the Theatre Academy in Helsinki. We get our inspiration and lyrics from the late German nonsense poet Christian Morgenstern. The music, which we write ourselves, is influenced by a large variety of music styles from atonal art music to cabaret and electronic music.

The orchestra consists of Markus Riuttu aka Fritz (piano, accordion, melodica and castrate vocals), Hanna Nyberg aka Magda (cello, melodica, vocals, German beatbox and fancy dancing), Robert Kock aka Felix (Electric guitar, double bass, melodica, vocals and Jack-in-the-box) and Edith Holmström aka Gretle (violin, double bass, vocals and American suitcase recitation).

The orchestra has previously performed unplugged concerts at bars and clubs. Das Fliegende Spektakel is our first performance for the theatre stage.

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? The starting point for the performance was not a

theme or a written story. As the performance is built around more or less abstract musical numbers it is up to the spectators themselves to find a theme.

Do you have some specific working method? Why have you chosen to use it? We have tried to give our imagination as much room as possible. Both in composing the music and in the staging process we work from the conviction that everything is possible, or at least worth a try. We wanted to see, if it was possible to create a whole theatre performance where music, film and dance are in the main focus instead of the story and the spoken word.

Do you have a mission, i.e. is there something that was lacking from the Finnish theatre scene before you showed up? We wanted to make new kind of music theatre, not to follow the usual ways in which musicals are made. The objective was to make a cross-over performance where we could use the elements in the most creative way as possible, and where they would be a natural part of the whole. To create a performance that would be surprising, challenging but nevertheless entertaining.

If your company has an upcoming production, please tell a little bit about it. Das Fliegende Spektakel will be performed in Finland and abroad in the next few years.

Answered by Edith Holmström, Robert Kock, Hanna Nyberg and Markus Riuttu, actors

15 May at 7 p.m. & 16 May at 12 noon
Klockrike Teatern | performed in gibberish
duration: 1 h 45 min, one intermission
TICKETS: 10/5€ | TICKET SALES: 040-7734558
www.fisches.fi

FIT

THE NETWORK Theatre FESTIVALS IN TRANSITION (FIT) was founded in 2005. Between 2005 and 2006 FIT organised a series of contemporary theatre projects and highly regarded symposia on 'festival policy', which took place at the network festivals.

Year 2007–2009 FIT is organizing Mobile Lab for Theatre and Communication project, which is supported by

EU Culture 2007–2013 programme.

The festivals of the FIT network:

BALTIC CIRCLE
BALTOSCANDAL
DIVADELNA NITRA
EXODOS
HOMO ALIBI
KRAKOW THEATRE REMINISCENCES
LIFT
SIRENOS
SPIELART
4 X4 DAYS IN MOTION

www.theatre-fit.org



(For more, see *D* for *DramAgora* and *M* for *Mobile Lab*)

Helsinki

What is the role of festivals in the strategy of Helsinki, the cultural city? Festivals are a very important part of what Helsinki, the cultural city, is. They showcase new Helsinki art and bring new artists here, new trends from the outside. Also, 90% of Helsinki residents think that festivals are very important for the city; they are an emblem of a good city.

*In the preface to the book *The Helsinki of Festivals (2007)* you and Markus Laine wrote: "We want to build the evolving metropolis on the solid ground of art and creativity. This way we can guarantee the general attractiveness of the whole region". Could you tell us what that means in practice?* Attractiveness means that the people who already are here, who reside, engage in enterprises, and make art, want to keep doing that also in the future. They feel that this is a good city; it's good to be here. And those who are not here yet, will see this as a place where they should be. Art and creativity have an essential role in how we create a better city – for ourselves and for those who want to come here in the future. That's what attractiveness means, quite simply.

Is this related to Richard Florida's thoughts on the creative class and its attractiveness? The development of cities is more relevant than before, and cities are evolving strongly - especially in a society like ours - through creativity and innovation, creating something new, through intellectual, real life. Florida is one of those people who have brought global trends into international debate. Cities no longer develop as a result of placing new factories in them.

This is essential in Helsinki in particular, because here about 10 percent of people are working in the cultural sector. This is more than double of the European mean percentage. According to some estimates, the work of every third person in Helsinki is somehow linked to culture or tourist industry, which will undoubtedly make them some of the main livelihoods in Helsinki. So this is not a marginal branch, but some of the most important work done in our city. When we talk about this topic in Helsinki, we are not talking about the future; we are talking about what is already happening today.

If we have a peek at the future, what do you think Helsinki will look like as a cultural city in 3-5 years? It will be more diverse and international in many ways, fostering more dialogue, or even controversy. An element of diversity might be that Helsinki will be a more heterogeneous cultural city. It will surely be seen as more than one big cultural metropolis, together with the surrounding towns. I also think that the significance of culture in the city will be even more widely recognized.

What will be the visible implications of Helsinki becoming more international? I believe that the role of the Baltic Sea region, especially the Tallinn-St.Petersburg-Helsinki triangle, will be even more prominent than today. Another visible trait will be the rise of Asia. Cultural connections will grow stronger and more diverse. Thirdly, multicultural communication within the cultural field seems to increase generally. We'll be able to see an increasing number of connections and joint efforts in the cultural sector. Influences will be absorbed, generating something new.

In your opinion, which factors promote and which ones slow down the development of a city of culture? What promotes culture? Amazingly wonderful people.

High education level. Great institutions of higher education. The whole infrastructure that we have. Another thing that's just as important is people with positive attitude towards culture. Research shows that people in Helsinki have exceptionally positive attitudes towards culture, comparing with the whole world. The combination of these two – those who make and those who experience art – is one of our greatest assets.

And what slows down the development? It's possible that the great significance of culture won't be recognized and the speeches won't turn into concrete action after all, and that people who are part of the cultural field will cave in, and form cliques and protect their own secured rights. The problem is, if artists are not willing to see the major changes taking place across the world and in Helsinki.

Could you tell us a little more about these major changes? One of them is the fact that immigration has been very strong in Helsinki for a long time. Soon almost every person in ten has come to Helsinki from somewhere else. What we have to offer in the field of culture and the circle of professionals are no longer representative of all Helsinki residents. If we look at the theatre scene, for instance, directors, actors and others, I can't see too many immigrants there, theatre is very local. We could start from there.

The challenge is, how to activate immigrants in the field of culture. Another big change is that our population is changing also in other ways. The number of senior citizens is growing, but what does that mean? What kind of cultural consumers are they? These are major changes and we have to react to them now. Helsinki is changing, is culture changing as well? Can we secure a strong role for art and culture in the heart of these changes?

The third major change is globalisation. The growing international activities have opened up whole new prospects also in the field of culture. I think never before have Finnish artists been granted so much space to perform and work in international arenas. On the other hand, this can be seen also in how expensive some things have become. Artists' fees are going up, when they are working globally. More and more cities are joining the race to get a wide variety of good artists and their work. This forces the

field to specialize. On one hand there are those who can dictate their own terms and prices, and on the other hand there is a big crowd of those with no access whatsoever to the international circles. The gap between them is immense.

As the world is becoming more compact and bigger at the same time, we have no other choice than stay in the game, and get more and more culture and art into international communication and activities. The option that we would stand on the sidelines and watch, staying back here by ourselves, is an option with big risks. This change is in fact a new change. Here in Helsinki, we haven't been in a similar situation for a long time.

Finally, a personal question: Why do you go to festivals? Because they give me a lot of pleasure of various kinds! They satisfy my curiosity and my constantly changing tastes for art, and strengthen my feeling of being a member of community when I'm experiencing something interesting with other people. I'm having fun at the festivals, and they enrich my life.

Answered by Pekka Timonen,
Cultural director of the City of Helsinki

Internet

www.q-teatteri.fi/baltic_circle

Kana [The Hen] KOKOTEATTERI

OFF CIRCLE

Please tell something essential about your company / ensemble / theatre. What makes it what it is? KokoTeatteri is unique ensemble in the Finnish theatre scene because the program ranges from established contemporary international drama and new Finnish texts to political monologues and contemporary dance. KokoTeatteri is an independent professional theatre company which was founded in 1997. By the end of year 2007, KokoTeatteri has produced more than 60 premieres.

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? Viktor Drevitski brought Nikolai Koljada's play Kana (The Hen) to KokoTeatteri. Viktor had seen some of KokoTeatteri's performances and he wanted to create a cast for Kana around the actors Anna Veijalainen and Sesa Lehto. When the actors read the play they started to see levels that came quite near to themselves as theatre makers. This is how the main theme of the performance was born. We are melting a small theatre in Siberia into our own in Helsinki. To fuel the conflict we invited an Estonian actress Eva Klemets to play the role of a new actress of the theatre company in the play.

Do you have some specific working method? Why have you chosen to use it?

Director Viktor Drevitski's method is based on the school of Stanislavski. In Kana the diverse backgrounds of actors in making theatre enrich the performance. We can proudly say that Stanislavski goes KokoTeatteri. We are melting together Estonian, Russian and Finnish way to make theatre as lively as it is.

Do you have a mission, i.e. is there something that was lacking from the Finnish theatre scene before you showed up? Over the last years (2005-2008), KokoTeatteri's drama program has been focusing on non-Anglo-American drama. Earlier we have made plays from Lithuania and Estonia so it was natural to take up something from Russia next.

If your company has an upcoming production, please tell a little bit about it. Up coming premier is "High Heels Society". The text is written by Finnish author Sofi Oksanen and music composed by Maija Kaunismaa. This theatre production is built around songs about the modern woman in Finland. Premier September 19, 2008.

Answered by Isabel González, producer

11 May at 2 p.m. | KokoTeatteri

performed in Finnish

duration: 1 h 40 min, no intermission

TICKETS: 15 / 10€ | TICKET SALES: 09-2784820

www.kokoteatteri.fi

KinkyZone Finland

OFF CIRCLE

EUROPEAN THEATRE COLLECTIVE

Please tell something essential about your company / ensemble / theatre. What makes it what it is? European theatre collective was found to be a space where artists from all around Europe can meet and make performances combining artists' cultural background in a common theatrical language. European Theatre Collective (or etc. as we call it) is a very necessary coincidence. It could have been in Berlin, It could have been in Barcelona, It could have been in Budapest. But this happened in Helsinki. It is a collaboration between people with very different theatrical backgrounds and countries.

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? KinkyZone Finland is built on the structure of a sitcom even though the main goal of the performance is not to try to copy or parody the television. Main themes of the performance are Curiosity, Hope, Love, Happiness, Fetishes, Blackmail, Obedience, Accidental Suicides, Confusion and a Happy Ending.

Do you have some specific working method? Why have you chosen to use it?

European Theatre Collective wants to colour theatre market – in this case the Finnish one – with not necessarily a different way of doing theatre but with different cultural background energies. The method for this performance was work in progress. The team wrote the text, made the set, directed it and most possibly will operate the lights and the sounds as well.

Do you have a mission, i.e. is there something that was lacking from the Finnish theatre scene before you showed up? This is a question for the audience not for theatre makers.

If your company has an upcoming production, please tell a little bit about it. Many plans going on, abroad and in Finland.

Answered by David Kozma, director/actor

11, 12, 13 May at 9 p.m. | Restaurant Belly
performed in Finnish | duration: 1h
TICKETS: 5€ from the door only

KokoTeatteri

KOKOTEATTERI is an independent professional theatre company which was founded in 1997. The theatre's artistic director Anna Veijalainen has been a member of the Baltic Circle Artistic Board since 2003.

This year KokoTeatteri has two performances in the Off Circle programme and is hosting the Closing Jazz Picnic Party on Sat 17 May from 4 to 7 p.m. and an after party starting at 9 p.m.

(For more, see *C for Clubs*, *K for Kana* and *M for Man-Machine*)

Man-Machine KOKOTEATTERI

OFF CIRCLE

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? The theme for Man-Machine comes from the chess match between Garri Kasparov and the IBM's chess computer Deep Blue in year 1997. The result of that match was the victory of the computer and a lot of publicity for IBM. IBM refused further matches probably fearing that Deep Blue would lose. This specific chess exhibition match was held in 1997 - last century. In the 1980s scientists had forecasted that the man would lose to artificial intelligence in chess in the beginning of the new millennium. How long will it take for artificial intelligence to challenge the creativity of human mind?

How does our humanity change when our everyday life with its increasing tempo is handled by computers? Is the technology a friend or a foe? Computers have evolved in a very short time from room-sized calculators to portable and wearable devices with high-powered microchips that overlap our lives and shape our social identities. Home electronics, traffic control systems, data networks and security cameras are already part of our chip-controlled everyday life. We would like to think that we know how these devices work but in the reality a large number of people hardly understand the various user interfaces. Are we able to keep up the pace? Should we be more cautious with technology and its development? Is man still in control or has machine taken over the

drivers seat?

Do you have some specific working method? Why have you chosen to use it?

Choreographer/dancer Mikko Orpana has invited artists from different countries and with different backgrounds to do Man-Machine with him; from Estonia Taavet Jansen (choreographer, programmer, interdisciplinary artist, dancer/choreographer) and Päär Pärenson (dancer, choreographer and freestyle MC), from the Netherlands Renzo van Steenberg (electronic music and sound designer) and from Finland Juhoh Rahijärvi (lighting designer). This crew worked together with the concept of Man-Machine and built the whole performance together. So in this performance there is no "choreographer", "dancer", "lighting designer" ...

Answered by Isabel González, producer

9 & 10 May at 7 p.m. | KokoTeatteri

performed in English | duration: 1 h

TICKETS: 15/10€ | TICKET SALES: 09-2784820

www.kokoteatteri.fi

(For more, see *K for Kana* and *KokoTeatteri*)

Map

On the last page.

INTERNATIONAL

Miss Landmine

MISS LANDMINE ANGOLA 2008 was the world's first beauty pageant for women maimed by landmines. The winner was crowned on the 2nd of April in Luanda. Internationally renowned photo exhibition Miss Landmine Expo presents the project. In Helsinki Miss Landmine Expo is an installation – it features the photographs and also documentary films about the controversial pageant. Miss Landmine Angola 2008 was designed and realized by Norwegian director and actor Morten Traavik.

You are a director and actor. How and why did you end up with the theme of landmine survivors in Africa? Were you interested in the landmine issue, or Africa, or beauty? Legendary Hollywood producer Bob Evans says: "Luck is what

happens when chance meets preparation". I visited Angola for the first time in 2003 with my then-girlfriend, whose father is a renowned Angolan writer. The civil war had ended just the year before and the countryside was, and still is, one huge minefield. We couldn't go anywhere out of the big cities.

On that same trip, I had the pleasure of being a judge at a beauty contest that the kids in the backstreet behind the house where we lived are staging every New Year's Eve.

So I just used the old director's trick of putting two contrasts together, also known as a counterpoint. It also seemed to me that nobody else would have this idea, so therefore I was obliged to at least try it. Of course, I was also turned on by the challenge.

Was the reception of the project very different in Angola from the reactions in Norway/Europe? Not really that different, but much less complicated and ambivalent. The Angolans, from the women themselves to the highest levels of government, think it's a great idea. Period. The Miss Landmine participants are both amused and perplexed when I tell them that some white people are very indignant and outraged on their behalf.

What kind of media and public attention have you received for this project? Was the attention focused on the points you wanted people to talk about, or was the discussion on totally different themes?

Google "Miss Landmine" and see how many hits you get...

Luckily, the overwhelming majority of audiences and media worldwide seem very appreciative of Miss Landmine and seem to understand very well both the purpose of the project and the form I have given it.

What was the most idiotic feedback that you have got? A few, but very angry, people have labelled me and/or the project sexist, neo-imperialist, male chauvinist, colonialist, exploiter of other people's misery, tasteless, perverse, misjudged... you name it, we got it.

Were there some moments that made you happy that you started the project – other than appearance on CNN? I think I'm being quite honest when I say that I regard the CNN as a pleasant but rather insignificant bonus rather than the main achievement of Miss Land-

mine.

There have been many moments that have made me feeling very happy about starting it, the recent crowning of the winner in Luanda for example...

And not least, experiencing how much the women taking part in the beauty pageant have been enjoying themselves, really blossoming in the world spotlight like flowers getting their first drop of water for a very long time.

As an artist, do you think that the feedback and response would have been different, if the project had been made by some development aid NGO? Or could this kind of project even have been done without an artist's point of view? I don't think it's possible that a development aid NGO would ever come up with an idea like Miss Landmine. They are far too uptight for that. In the course of my work with Miss Landmine I have asked every single NGO established in Angola for their cooperation. Not a single one said yes.

Some even accused me of staging a "freak show". Most NGOs really need to go out and party a little bit more.

After this project, do you think art is a useful way to raise awareness on global, even difficult matters? Can art make a difference? It definitely can, but it rarely does.

I'm so not impressed by the self-appointed "political" arty-farty that either is 1) a variation on the "fuck Bush" theme, or 2) a "critique of our superficial media consumerist society", or 3) some trendy art-school-clever self-referring deconstruction bullshit.

Art needs to get its head out of its own ass if it wants to have any REAL political impact at all.

For example one of Oslo's "young, exciting" contemporary art galleries, the 0047, backed out of a deal to exhibit the Miss Landmine pictures because they started fearing media controversy. To me that says something sad but true about the size of contemporary art's reproductive organs.

You said recently, that now you are really happy that the project is over and to do good old avant-garde theatre. Why? Are you just tired after a huge project, or is there something more to it? The project is far from over I'm afraid. What I meant was that after an undertaking like Miss Landmine, doing a couple of good old straight theatre pro-

ductions feels almost like a holiday. So I'm just looking forward to a little relaxation before resuming the preparations for Miss Landmine Cambodia 2009...

Are you looking for new inspiration as you are again visiting Finland in May? Finland's a wild, weird and wonderful place, so I definitely do not exclude the possibility.

Answered by Morten Traavik, actor/director

13 May 4-5 p.m., 14-16 May 5-7 p.m., 17 May 1-5 p.m.
Kiasma-teatteri | Free admission
www.miss-landmine.org

(For more, see C for Can Art Change the World and R for Remember Me)

Mobile Lab for Theatre and Communication

TEN FESTIVALS from ten European countries focusing on contemporary theatre have come together to create a laboratory to develop innovative practices of communication between artists, programmers and audiences in response to contemporary performance.

Through artistic programmes, public discussions, collaborations with media and Mobile Lab workshops for theatre critics and writers, the project aims to re-enforce a bridge of understanding between artists and audiences, to encourage a wider discussion on contemporary performing arts and to activate the involvement of the media in reflecting arts.

The texts written during the Baltic Circle Mobile Lab workshop by the international participants will be published in the e-journal DramAgora. The workshop will be moderated by Rok Vevar, a Slovenian critic, festival curator, director, playwright and editor of Maska, the largest theatrical magazine in Slovenia and Rose Fenton, founder of the London LIFT Festival.



(For more, see D for DramAgora and F for Festivals in Transition)

Next Baltic Circle

will be in May 2009.

The Day-to-Day of Organizing a Festival

FIVE YEARS AGO, in May, the executive director of Tampere Theatre Festival asked me if I'd be interested in joining their new artistic team. As a drama translator, I had already established an international network of contacts when attending numerous theatre workshops. I also had seen a lot of theatre across Europe and, most of all, in such roles as the literary advisor to the Finnish National Theatre, I had learned to know the Finnish theatre scene very well. Because I was sure I'd feel comfortable working with the other team members that I knew very well from before, after a short time of consideration, I dared to accept the position. And, after that, I've been immersed in theatre 24 hours a day. Besides my day job, every year I see about 100 performances across Finland and Europe, I attend meetings, represent the festival at various functions, and of course, work hard, day and night, during the Tampere Theatre Festival week in August.

The obvious starting point for selecting the productions for the festival is the profile and the traditions of the festival. For example, in Tampere we are accustomed to seeing a selection of the best Finnish productions of the season, and about 5-10 samples of cutting-edge international theatre. Because our target audience is diverse, we will need to design the programme taking into consideration both traditional and experimental theatrical art, and cater for the needs of spectators of all ages, including children. When selecting international productions for the festival, we are not only looking for high artistic quality,

but qualities that create a contrast to the Finnish productions of the season, offering new perspectives on visual expression, relation between content and form, and representation in performance. There is no point staging visiting productions that "look Finnish".

My decisions to see a performance overseas are mostly based on press reviews and tips and recommendations from international colleagues, and therefore I really can't say any of my trips would be fruitless. When you go to a festival put together by an experienced artistic adviser, you are bound to see an exclusive set of interesting performances. However, whether a production is suitable for another cultural context, for example Finland, is not to be taken for granted. Sometimes, for example, the content of the production may be too tightly linked to East European political history, or the production might be commenting on the literary or performance tradition of a certain corner of Europe in a way that it won't open up to Finnish spectators. However, the most typical obstacle for production mobility is money and schedules, quite simply. The same theatre companies and productions tend to tour the same European festivals. I have often come across the slightly derogative expression 'a festival production'. However, we have to bear in mind that most of the productions have originally been made for a local audience, but because they have broken away from - and stretched - the horizon of expectations concerning an average performance, a vigilant artistic adviser has decided to showcase their "discovery" in a new context, and, at best, a star has been born. Kristian Smets certainly didn't have his eye on international festivals, when he was directing his version of *The Unknown Soldier* for the Finnish National Theatre in 2007, but the production has received invitations from all over Europe. A bold contextual and theatrical gesture, distinctive artistic quality, and universal themes seen in a new light, are the keys to success at home and overseas.

At best, a festival provides its audience with productions that attest high artistic quality and open new windows, introduce the spectators to something unfamiliar to them, overcome prejudice and lead the audience to gain new insights and to search for something new. For a professional, a festival offers a box seat

to observe the work of their colleagues – form, content, technique – and hopefully also inspiring encounters with spectators and colleagues alike. Many a cooperation project has been conceived when wise brains have found themselves in the same smoky corner of a festival club. These days all festivals offer an abundance of off-programme, including morning seminars and discussions for spectators and various professional groups on a multitude of topics relating to the theatre and theatre making, as well as afternoon presentations of the productions and late night clubs. Sometimes the off-programme is overwhelming, leading to festival fatigue, but personally, I immediately revive as soon as I see a well-done, well-thought production that strikes an emotional chord in me. Almost without exception, festivals offer exquisite productions that open up new worlds, and memorable and surprising encounters, and first and foremost, communication and understanding between people.

Jukka-Pekka Pajunen,
Artistic Board Member of Tampere Theatre Festival

Past is in Front of Ego

büro für zeit + raum
[Germany]

INTERNATIONAL

WESTERNERS shake off the past and direct their gaze ahead, towards the unfamiliar, uncertain future. The South-American ethnic group Aymara perceives time and space in a different way. For them, the past is in front of their eyes, and the future is hiding behind their backs. This unusual perception of time has given inspiration to PAST IS IN FRONT OF EGO.

büro für zeit + raum constructs painting-like performance pieces, blending theatre, dance, and visual elements to create seamless entities. The company was founded in Germany in 2005.

Your performance deals with the concept of time of the native-American Aymara

tribe, who sees “time” in a different way compared to us Westerners. What is *büro für zeit + raum*’s own concept of time? To have enough of it.

Why is time something to think about today? Oh, there are a lot of reasons... For me, one is that we treat events in time as things in space, and our body in relation to those events. Most people would, for example, place their 18th birthday (in case it has already happened) somewhere behind themselves, and locate the next edition of the Baltic Circle Festival in front of them. This concept of a timeline draws one forward very strongly, and sometimes I have the impression that somebody is pushing and shoving from behind my back. The vision of our own lifetime is still very much connected to the image of a ladder you climb up: Up is better, down is worse. But you get a tense neck from always looking up the stairs. Perhaps, if we imagined the things we wanted to achieve as being around us instead of being mainly in front of us, the way we move (also in our heads) would allow for more variety: Less march, more dance.

The performance is rooted in Professor Rafael Nunez’ studies. Why did you start working with his theory? How did the theory transform into a performance? I was reading an article about Prof. Nunez’ investigations by chance, and the effect was striking: understanding that, since there are apparently other cultures which have another “system” that “works”, our concept of time is actually only a concept. I felt the challenge of trying to transmit this irritation about the perception and spacing of time to the audience.

Even though I was also lucky enough to meet Prof. Nunez and ask a lot of questions, his studies of the Aymara rather functioned as a trigger for the work than as something we wanted to “directly translate”.

Is theoretical study often an influential form of inspiration for your works? No, there are many possibilities that could spark my fantasy: a sound, an object, peoples’ behaviour, a space..

What is your relationship to the theatre? What is your relationship to dance? Actually, my “roots” are in the so called spoken theatre. It was more by accident that I first ended up doing a physical

theatre school, and then returned to the “intellectual side” by studying directing afterwards. But finally, also through the experiences as an assistant for a dance theatre, I felt that my fantasy finds more possibilities within the use of movement, space and images. I often felt limited by the determinating effect of words, language, concrete situations in written plays. I am a big fan of the associative approach as well as a creator as a spectator, and stealing from dance theatre and performance art is a great help to achieve this.

What is the past and what is the future of *büro für zeit + raum*? Well, by showing our two productions, the *büro*’s past is present at this festival, and its future already started last year in planning the next project which is called “Hares on skates. Fantasy training for the real reality”. It will be a work on paradoxes and will premier in Berlin at the end of this year.

Answered by Anne Hirth, director

15 May at 7 p.m. | KokoTeatteri
performed in French, includes very little speech
duration: 40 min
www.buerofuerzeitundraum.de

SUPPORTED BY: Freischwimmer 2006 - platform to support young directors, Culture Programme of the European Union, Goethe-Institut Finland



(For more, see *W for Wait* here for further instructions)

Peltirumpu [The Tin Drum]

Q-teatteri

OFF CIRCLE

Please tell something essential about your company / ensemble / theatre. What makes it what it is? Q-teatteri was founded in 1990 by freelance actors. The aim of the group is to create new ways and circumstances to make independent, original, and experimental theatre, and to develop different rehearsing methods. At the moment Q-teatteri has

55 members, actors, directors, costume designers, set designers, lighting designers, producers, playwrights, theatre technicians, photographers, and graphic designers, all working on a freelance basis. Q-teatteri has become one of the most significant theatre companies in Finland.

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? Peltirumpu, based on Günter Grass’ acclaimed novel, *Die Blechtrommel* (The Tin Drum) echoes the rise and fall of the Third Reich through the Peter Pan like Oskar – a boy who on his third birthday decides not to grow up. Fiikka Forsman, the director, suggested this project.

Do you have some specific working method? Why have you chosen to use it? The company doesn’t have a predetermined working method.

Do you have a mission, i.e. is there something that was lacking from the Finnish theatre scene before you showed up? Certainly. Helsinki was lacking new independent theatres when we started about 18 years ago. The old ones were already established and lacking the energy, anarchy and social awareness we had and still have.

If your company has an upcoming production, please tell a little bit about it. We are making William Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* for this autumn. The casting has been made exclusively on basis of talent. *Macbeth* is played by Elina Knihtilä, one of the leading actresses in Q-teatteri and three quarters of the whole cast will be women. This is the proportion of talented actresses compared to talented actors in Finnish theatre. It should also be seen in productions.

Answered by Antti Hietala, artistic director of Q-teatteri

13-14 May at 19:00 | Q-Teatteri
performed in Finnish, translated in English
duration: 3 h 30 min, one intermission
TICKETS: 23/19/13€ | TICKET SALES: 09-45421333
www.Q-teatteri.fi

A Performance With an Ocean View (and a Dog) – II Memo of Time

Esitys merinäköalalla (koiran kanssa)

– II muistio ajasta **OFF CIRCLE**

MAUS & ORLOUSKI

Please tell something essential about your company / ensemble / theatre. What makes it what it is? Maus & Orlovski is a working group. Many of the members change in every performance. It has been gathered and led by director/writer Tuija Kokkonen and has involved actors, sound and light designers as well as video, visual and performance artists. Since 1996 it has done two series of site-specific memo-performance series: Maus and Orlovski – Memos of Love (1997) and Catchment Area – Memos of Freedom (1998-2003). Topic of this memo series is our relationship with the nature and the non-human, the interface of culture and nature. This has often been a work on the borderlands of performance at the same time. The group has no firm structure, space or founding, it acts in a nomadic style.

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? The starting points of A Performance with an Ocean View (and a Dog) are weather, air, time and potential. It is part of the new series of Memos of Time which deals with our relationship with the non-human from the perspective of duration and potentiality. The first Memo of Time deals specially with our relationship with animals. Why: what is a human being, what is not a human being; is it possible that a human being is not the centre of a performance; how to deal with the urgent question of durations (also non-human durations); how to create potentialities, how to look/work through impotentiality, not-doing; how to escape control...

Do you have some specific working method? Why have you chosen to use it? Working with the same thematic and performative questions in a series of performances can by now be called a method. As well as ways of dealing

slowly, layer by layer, with the materials. Also creating and exploring different durations and rhythms of the rehearsal processes. We rehearsed this piece during one year (before that a planning period) outdoors in several places around Helsinki: on the islands, other sea shores including an ancient shore from the ice age, two roofs and during the coldest time of the year some weeks in a black box drinking black coffee as laying down and throwing a ball to a dog.

Do you have a mission, i.e. is there something that was lacking from the Finnish theatre scene before you showed up? We have no mission, only long lasting interests, for example in weak action, also as a form of resistance.

If your company has an upcoming production, please tell a little bit about it. III Memo of Time will be premiered in 2009.

Answered by Tuija Kokkonen, director and writer

11 May and 13 May at 5 p.m.

point of departure: Kiasma

performed either in Finnish or English

TICKETS: 20/12 € | TICKET SALES: 09-1733 6501

www.kiasma.fi

A Performance is the Body and Soul of a Festival

THREE FINNISH MINISTRIES and the whole national art scene are now taking an active interest in exporting Finnish culture. There are cutting edge projects also in the field of theatre. Several agents are promoting and selling rights to drama texts and concepts for musicals.

But what happened to the export of theatre productions? After all, a theatre performance is the most representative and comprehensive product to be showcased at international festivals and venues that host visiting productions. A performance combines dramaturgy, the art of directing and acting, with visual and technical skills. At best, a festival is an artist meet, with contacts and encounters that leave deep footprints. A visiting company has to be able to stay a longer time than required by setting

up the show, rehearsals and performances. This is a question of prioritization, and assessment and appreciation of immaterial gain. Without risk taking, there will be no art. The concrete outcomes – international co-productions or active artist exchange – may follow, but sometimes with a delay of several years.

A theatre production is an artistic business card that will not be forgotten. It's okay if everybody doesn't like it, as long as the production arouses interest by being surprising, bold, reformist, and insightful, or, for example, by claiming that the theatre is dead. Long live the theatre!

Jukka Hytti, producer, director, freelancer

Q-teatteri

is the main organizer of Baltic Circle. This year Q-teatteri has one performance in the Off Circle programme.

(For more, see P for Peltirumpu)

Radio Doomsday HOUKKA BROS

Please tell us briefly something essential about your ensemble. What makes it what it is? Houkka Brothers (Houkka = God's Fool) is a collective, which came into existence through a performance entitled "The Wanderer", based on an old Russian Orthodox legend "A Pilgrim's Journey". It was devised and performed in 2003 by brothers Sylvester (Tero Nauha, a visual & performance artist), J.J. (Kristian Smeds, a theatre artist) and Frank (Juha Valkeapää, a voice artist). The small-scale table theatre performance toured at several, mostly theatre-orientated festivals in Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belgium, France, Norway, Russia and Hungary, and the brothers decided to do the second part of their religious trilogy: a "living-room musical" about the Catholic saint Francis of Assisi. The brothers asked a 4th member, Arvo (Pietu Pietiäinen, a light & sound artist) to tour with them with "The Wanderer"

and to prepare the new performance "Children, Birds & Flowers". The musical saw its premiere at the "Baltoscandal" festival in Estonia in 2006 and has so far been shown also in Finland, Hungary and Norway, often together with "The Wanderer". The third and final part of the trilogy is going to be about Martin Luther: The prologue of the third part is "Radio Doomsday", three radio broadcasts and discussion afternoons at the Baltic Circle festival.

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? See above.

Do you have a specific working method? Please describe it. Why did you choose it? Mah-jong, a Chinese game for 4 players.

Do you have a mission, i.e., is there something that was lacking from the Finnish or Helsinki theatre scene before you showed up? No.

If your company has an upcoming production, please tell us a little about it. The adventures of Luther will continue...

Answered by Pietu Pietiäinen, light & sound artist

14-16 May at 3 p.m. | Semifinal
performed: Wed and Thu in Finnish, Fri in English
duration 3 h
TICKETS: 15/10€ | TICKET SALES: Baltic Circle
www.houkat.net

REMEMBER ME

NABI

[Sweden / Norway]

INTERNATIONAL

REMEMBER ME throws a man onto the streets of Helsinki. The man is NaBi, an activist and preacher. He has embarked on a crusade to open people's eyes. NaBi burns all bridges behind him, says goodbye to art and hurls himself into the future. He thinks it is time to settle an old score with social stagnation and the powers of mediocrity, which are hindering his journey into happiness and fulfilment.

Remember Me is directed by Norwegian director and actor Morten Traavik. He is interested in active involvement in

the society through artistic expression.

Is Remember Me a political play? Or is it just using the form of a political act? Why? No, it's an anti-political play. Or if you will, a political act against political plays.

Nabi stands against political plays. Art that labels itself "political" is an illusion, made for and by self-righteous artists who want to appear clever and important but don't have the balls or connections to go into politics. Take real responsibility, or shut up and dance. This is Nabi's message.

Can you tell a little bit about the themes of the project, background, or intentions...anything? I am quoting Nabi nr 1 (formerly known as Joaquin NaBi Olsson):

"I am ready now.

It took me 34 years to become brave enough to do what I am about to do now.

This is my last show.

My goodbye to the audience. Remember me."

Why have you chosen places such as the Sergels Torg in Stockholm and Rautatienitori in Helsinki for the venues of this performance? Why can't it be performed in the theatre = black box?

Because we are not theatre. We want to talk to the People, not only to our friends and family.

We want as many people as possible to remember us.

Are you looking for new inspiration for a political play as you are visiting Finland in May? No, we are working for the separation of Political and Play.

Answered by Morten Traavik, director

16 May at 6 p.m., Esplanadi Park
17 May at 1 p.m. & 3 p.m., Rautatienitori Square
performed in English | duration: 45 min
www.joaquinnabiolsson.se | www.nabishop.com

PRODUCED BY: Dramatiska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden

SUPPORTED BY: Kulturkontakt Nord

(For more, see *M for Miss Landmine and C for Can Art Change the World*)

A Reviewer Sensing Space and Situations

- A Suggestion for the Common Ground for Theatre Festival Reviewing

A FESTIVAL IS A FÊTE, a moment when we break away from the day-to-day life and routines. An integral part of a fête is social exchange: mingling, meeting people and spending time together. In our secularized consumption culture, a festival can also be seen as a stage or a set for acting out social relationships and posing of various sorts. Also, the festival entails a possibility to defy norms. Because the roots of festivals are in religious rites and ceremonies, the idea of participation, instead of just observing the events, is part of the festival spirit. Obviously, the festival is a framework for organized events, in other words, the featured productions.

In the tradition of theatre reviewing, writing a review on a performance has been the principal task of a critic. At a theatre festival, a critic usually reviews individual productions, and sometimes several of them. The productions are not always discussed in relation to each other, but outside the festival context. As a festival participant – as a reviewer, performer, spectator – I have started to wonder, if it makes any sense to approach a theatre festival from the perspective of an individual production? Wouldn't it be more fruitful to start from the framework, and discuss the festival as an entity? But where do you draw the boundaries for an entity? Does a series of performances form an entity? Is the repertoire the only thing that matters to a reviewer? Should we question the division that we seem to be taking for granted: the official part of the festival – the featured productions – which are reviewed, and the semi-official part – discussions, seminars, workshops – which are rarely reviewed, and its unofficial part – spending time together – which is seen as some kind of shapeless heap of surplus material.

A festival provides a framework for social exchange that can be characterized as being a communal experience which is not, however, target-oriented or politically engaged. More than anything, communal experience means hanging

Seminar on Finnish Theatre Reviewing Today

out in the same space side by side, random encounters, possibilities to tune to the same wavelength, sharing the same mood. I don't know if it's even possible to distinguish emotional and intellectual attitude from each other, but at a theatre festival, if anywhere, they both have a strong presence, blending into each other. Discussing a performance requires an analytical approach from the reviewer and spectator alike, but sensing the moods is essential in the process of writing about a festival. And these moods come into being where people meet: at shows and clubs, on cigarette breaks, in workshops and discussions. It is possible to sense whether people are formal or relaxed, are there any real encounters, what kind of tensions are in the air? A reviewer has to let herself go with the whole body and to sense the situation and the space where everything happens.

In surveying the festival mood, it is not possible to distinguish the analysis of performances or other activities from its physical space, which is shared by the performers and the audience, and the discussion cannot be distinguished from its wider context of events. Physical space and context should be taken into due consideration when discussing the festival as a whole. The choice of spaces has an immense impact on how the festival mood evolves.

Traditionally it is often thought that theatrical art happens on stage. Although a theatre festival brings together art and other social interaction, a reviewer usually concentrates exclusively on art, thus reinscribing the division between artistic and non-artistic activity. But if a festival is a fête where the audience is embraced as participants, should reviewers direct their attention also to the audience? If a festival is an entity where social interaction plays a significant role besides performances, should a reviewer register also the moods of these situations? Where does the festival actually take place? On stage? In the house? During the intermission? In discussions? At clubs? Or somewhere else?

Marja Silde, freelance critic and artist,
participant of Mobile Lab for Theatre and Communication

(For more, see *M for Mobile Lab*)

HAS THEATRE REVIEWING in Finland come to a turning point? Are arts given enough space in the media? How well should a theatre reviewer know contemporary arts? Is the artist just a miserable narcissist expecting critical acclaim? Do reviews affect ticket sales? What's the forecast for new trends?

The discussion will be mediated by reviewer and theatre research scholar Outi Lahtinen.

SPEAKERS:

Pirkko-Liisa Enäjärvi-Jantunen

Ida Aalberg Foundation,
chairwoman of the women's committee

Hanna Helavuori

director of Theatre Museum, researcher

Anne Moilanen

freelancer journalist and researcher

Riitta Monto

Turun Sanomat -newspaper, head of culture section

Janne Saarakkala

Todellisuuden tutkimuskeskus, director & scriptwriter

Minna Tawast

Tanssi-magazine, editor-in-chief

Suna Vuori

Helsingin Sanomat, critic

The seminar is produced in co-operation with Helsinki University, Institute for Art Research

Open house, open discussion!

Seminar speaker's thoughts:

What Happens When an Artist Starts to Play Critic?

From 2001 to 2006, performing arts garage Todellisuuden tutkimuskeskus (Reality Research Center) was writing Metareviews – i.e., reviews on reviews – for Finnish Theatre Magazine. This spurred enthusiastic response in the theatre scene. If a piece of art can be reviewed critically, the same can be done for reviewing. On the background there was the eternal question of “What is good reviewing?” and also a reaction to what we saw as a descending trend in the quality of reviewing, accompanied by the desire to challenge this trend. And yes, it was also a way to let out some bitterness we had accumulated.

Why is reviewing so important? There's the box office question, of course. A positive review brings in people. Theatre is a form of art that disappears after it's been created, which brings us to another aspect that pushes the artist's buttons. What stays behind, what is put on file, should give a profound and accurate impression of the piece in question and its makers. That's why the artists extremely rarely are completely happy with the reviews they receive. It should be an essay that stands up to time. Why would anyone want more of a review than a big picture and five stars out of five? Anyway, that's the direction the main media are steering the reviews to, and the question is not what the reviewer wants, but what editors expect the audience to want to read or to have the attention span for.

It's all about time and its cultural evolution. In this development, a reviewer is someone who has more shows on their plate than they have time to see, and on the other hand, the space granted for reviews in newspapers or programmes is getting more and more limited. In one of my Metareviews in 2002, I reported the following observation. At the time, a reviewer was granted a text space of 4000 characters per production. Now the space has been cut down by half. At the same time a reviewer has to take into consideration that prestigious theatre institutions have to be covered extensively and the smaller ones will get whatever space is left. This is what people want. A nasty job. What should we do? I answer is aphorisms and poetry. At least I can't be bothered to complain anymore. I'm sure the editorial staff are doing their best.

After Jukka Kajava, the revered reviewer of Helsingin Sanomat, died in 2005 – let him rest in peace – I was at a bar once, and for a fleeting moment, I was dreaming that Kajava's successors would change on an annual basis, and they would all be professional theatre makers. This rotating job would offer the theatre makers and the audience a new perspective on theatrical art, just like teaching does. What a naïve thought! Assessing the work of your colleagues in public is not the same as assessing reviews in Metareviews. However, the idea didn't leave me at peace, and so I wrote a few cheeky reviews on the productions of my peers, based on my own preconceived ideas, without even seeing the

shows (that was the whole idea) and I learned something. That should never be done. You're not supposed to play with these things. Although those were not orthodox reviews, I took up a position that does not belong to an artist. It's not that artists don't have opinions or preconceived ideas about each other's work, but to talk about them in public is the job of a reviewer, not of an artist. There is an iron fence between the reviewer and the artist, you can't be both. A reviewer is needed, despite all the whining we hear, otherwise no one would say anything. But in the long run – is a big picture and five stars enough for a review? No. Where can professional reviewers then express themselves more profoundly and write their essays at peace? Nowhere, as being a professional reviewer entails not having the time for that. What is left then? A naïve and stupid artist, who writes for free and against his own interests. Should we give up the game, or learn and improve?

Janne Saarakkala
director and scriptwriter
Todellisuuden tutkimuskeskus - Reality Research Center

13 May, 12 a.m. – 4 p.m., Kiasma

Smeds Ensemble

hosts *Fuck OFF Festival Club*.

Please tell us in a few sentences something artistically essential about S.E.
It's serious stuff.

Your ensemble works internationally. Why did you personally, and you all as a company, choose to work outside Finland? For Ville and Kristian it was merely a logical choice: they've both achieved a lot in their artistic careers in Finland and they've been receiving invitations to do projects abroad for years. Of course, they could have continued doing that as freelancers, but working as a production unit makes it easier to share tasks and responsibilities. And it's a new structure we absolutely wanted to try out and develop!

As for me, I guess I have some kind of a natural born desire to mediate between different people and cultures – and be on the road.

So basically we're just following the natural course of things, and hoping to open up paths and create opportunities also for other Finnish theatre makers and artists to work internationally. For us, taking something abroad also means bringing something back, so our work is more about exchange than just one-track export.

Your ensemble has a lot more experience of the "festival business" than the average theatre company. Do you think that the pair of words (festival + business) is a correct one? Is it business or is it a contemporary structure for art and culture? Have you been making money? Has there been any artistic benefits? Hmm, this depends on the festival, the bigger ones can for sure be considered as businesses also in the economic sense, the smaller ones certainly not. Artistically, in my opinion, both structures are needed in the contemporary cultural field. Besides offering a nice opportunity to see a variety of shows in a condensed form, most festivals work as fantastic platforms and meeting points. Theatre is a field where almost everything is based on personal contacts, so the value of these meeting points is immense. But is it business?

What comes to our ensemble, we're just starting our "business" so basically we've just been spending money so far. But the artistic benefits are coming our way soon...

Should all the theatres consider working internationally, or do you think that it is good that some stay home? Working internationally shouldn't have any intrinsic value in the sense that "the theatres that go abroad are something better". As with all work it's important to think why things should be done in the first place, and then perhaps consider if it would make sense to look for international co-production partners and audiences. Nevertheless, I think networking and connecting with colleagues from abroad is always valuable, refreshing and mind-opening. And good fun of course!

In Baltic Circle Smeds Ensemble will be hosting a 3-day club called Fuck OFF. What's your message to the festival audience / organizers / world? Well, for example: why on earth should you fuck off, when you could come to our club? And it can also be: fuck, off-festival club! Or fuck off, festival club! Obvi-

ously the message is not yet clear to us.

Please tell us in a few sentences about the future projects of S.E. This summer and autumn we're warming up *God Is Beauty*, one of Kristian Smeds' plays based on a novel by Paavo Rintala. In October we'll start rehearsing a huge international project with the working title *A Trans-European Comedy About the Holy Hate* with the premiere in Brussels in February 2009. A lot of action with 9 actors and 10 dancers on stage – and with a reindeer as one of the main characters. And then there's a *Cherry Orchard* process-documentary-live-happening with Lithuanian actors looming around the corner...

Answered by Eeva Bergroth, head of production and PR

(For more, see *C for Clubs and R for Radio Doomsday*)

Soup Theater KLOCKRIKETEATERN OFF CIRCLE

Please tell something essential about your company / ensemble / theatre. What makes it what it is? Klockriketeatern has existed for fourteen years, and is one of the oldest independent Swedish-speaking theatre companies in Helsinki. It is dedicated to exploring the actors' perspective and renewed ways of expression, with an exceptional focus on language and poetry.

What is the theme of your performance? Why did you choose it? Inspired by fellow theatre companies in Estonia and Sweden, and as the theatre is located in the heart of Helsinki, this spring Klockriketeatern is exploring the concept of *Soup and Dinner* theatre, combining theatrical shows with culinary experiences. We hope that this concept will stay in our programme in the years to come.

Do you have some specific working method? Why have you chosen to use it? The theatre has no specific theme or working method, but is dedicated to joint productions and border crossing in artistic practises. Therefore, also, the *Soup Theatre* production is a mix of music, dance and theatre, with different groups joining forces under a common concept.

Do you have a mission, i.e. is there something that was lacking from the Finnish theatre scene before you showed up? As mentioned before, Klockriketeatern is dedicated to crossing the borders between different modes of artistic expression and the language of the stage. Many of our productions have been based on the texts of established Nordic poets and novelists.

It is the only theatre devoted to literary productions in this way.

If your company has an upcoming production, please tell a little bit about it. The Soup Theatre production at Klockriketeatern is part of the Baltic Circle Off programme. The theme is, as mentioned above, a boarder crossing combination of lunch/dinner and a show. On 13 November, Klockriketeatern will premiere its upcoming play by Jon Fosse, who's one of the most popular contemporary Norwegian playwrights. The play is entitled "Jag är vinden" (I am the wind).

Answered by Jesper Karlsson, press coordinator

PERFORMANCE 1: Jag såg en bild / I saw a picture
9 May at 7 p.m., 10 May at 12 a.m.

PERFORMANCE 2: Dick Holmström & Co. interprets
Vladimir Vysotskij
14 May at 12 a.m.

PERFORMANCE 3: Toner på flykt
16 May at 7 p.m., 17 May at 12 a.m.

performed in Swedish / Finnish

TICKETS: 15€ (includes a meal)

TICKET SALES: 0400-153791

www.klockrike.fi

Teatr.Doc

has been founded by the playwright Elena Gremina and director Mihail Ugarov in one of the Moscow cellars in 2002, as an open stage for emerging socially oriented theatre. Most of the plays that are staged in Teatr.Doc are written in documentary technique that is based on interviews with real life texts.

(For more, see W for World War II workshop)

Tickets

Q-teatteri

tel. 09-4542 1333 (Tue-Fri 11-15)
Tunturikatu 16 (Etu-Töölö), Helsinki

Ticket Service Finland (Lippupalvelu)

tel. 0600 10 800 (1,50 eur/min + pvm)
www.lippupalvelu.fi

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMME

25/20/15€

(Basic ticket, pensioner / Student, unemployed, press / Theatre professional and student)

TICKET PACKAGE

64,50 / 49,50 / 39€

Three tickets to international programme's performances (Rimini Protokoll's Call Cutta in a Box not included)

(normal | student/unemployed/press | theatre professionals/students)

Professional tickets only from Q-teatteri

Tickets to **Call Cutta in a Box 25/15€**
sold ONLY at Kiasma, tel. 09 1733 6501

OFF CIRCLE programme

OFF CIRCLE programme's groups sell their own tickets.

Fuck OFF Festival Club:

IN ADVANCE: 8€, Tiketti tel. 0600 1 1616 (0,98 €/min + pvm)

FROM THE DOOR: 10€

+ cloakroom fee 2€

Wait here for further instructions

büro für zeit + raum **INTERNATIONAL**
[Germany]

THE TIME WE SPEND ON WAITING! We are waiting for the bus, for traffic jam to dissolve, for the work to end, for the payday. Our days fill up with plans on what we'll do when... When we have the time, when we have the money, when we have company. What if we chose to live, instead of waiting? Or is the journey more important than the destination?

büro für zeit + raum constructs painting-like performance pieces, blending theatre, dance, and visual elements to create seamless entities. The company was founded in Germany in 2005.

Wait here for further instructions is the winner of many international festivals awards. What is your attitude to festivals? Are they promoting art, or is it all business? I like festivals. The travelling circus strikes back!

Yes, of course they are a wonderful form of promotion, but also business: the fringe scene is depending more and more on festivals and international networks, not least financially. But it's a shame if, because of this, "international" and "network" would turn into empty buzz words.

It's a pity that normally you leave immediately after your own performance and don't have the possibilities to see the others' work and have a real exchange with anybody – it's often too expensive to make the guest performers stay for the whole festival. (There would be more to write – but not now. The writer just came back from a festival and has to get some sleep.)

Do you think about which audience you make your productions for – the "local" one as in Berlin, or for the international one, as at festivals? Are the audiences' reactions different home and in different countries? When I start planning a project, I already think of it as to be shown (hopefully) at international festivals – in a way, they are my "employers" (or clients...). And anyway, until now, the themes I was interested in didn't depend on a locally conditioned knowledge – but we also haven't performed outside the "western culture zone" yet – I assume the "waiting" issue would be perceived differently in Nigeria or Brazil. Generally, I always think about the audience, since, because of the associative character of the work, the audience is invited to somehow "complete" the performance and make up their own version/ story/ meaning of what they perceived on the stage.

You do not have a permanent ensemble, but form each group based on the needs of the upcoming performance. The crew for Wait here is international and it also has a mix of artists from different fields of art. How are these single project groups formed, and what is the input of a particular artist in the process of

World War II Workshop

making the production? One big advantage of working in the fringe scene is that I can choose who I'd like to work with on my own, including technicians, assistants etc. It's the combination of people and the individual input of each artist (and non-artist) that turns the project into what it is in the end. I work in a very collaborative way, but I don't think that's very unusual. I choose artists because I like their work, of course, or their way to be on stage, and I try to bring people together who I think could be inspired and have fun working with each other. They should have the ability to also work independently and to share. I don't have a fixed image of what the piece should finally look like, I rather try to give tasks, provide images and ask questions. In the end, it is my work to put the puzzle together, but if I worked on the same subject with a different choice of people, the result might be completely different.

Coming to Finland, what are expecting to experience? Hmm. Tango?

Answered by Anne Hirth, director

14 May at 7 p.m. | KokoTeatteri
performed in German and French, translated in Finnish
duration: 1h
www.buerofuerzeitundraum.de

SUPPORTED BY: Culture Programme of the European Union,
Goethe-Institut Finland



(See also P for Past is in Front of Ego)

for dramaturges is done in co-operation between *Baltic Circle* and *Teatr.Doc* from Moscow, Russia. First part of the workshop was held during Baltic Circle 2007. This year Finnish and Russian playwrights continue to work with the collectively difficult matter: How to talk about our war history in the means and language of theatre?

(For more, see T for Teatr.Doc)