

## steirischer herbst 2016

### Wir schaffen das.

#### [We can do this.] – On the Shifting of Cultural Cartographies

It's no surprise that one issue dominates discussions this year, also in art, one which preoccupies us more than ever: Old Europe and its relationship to the rest of the world.

Current political conditions, refugee movements and the related discussions show just how fundamentally this Europe has become negotiable – politically, economically, culturally and ethically – and has come under immense pressure, both from within and without.

This year's leitmotif "Wir schaffen das. On the Shifting of Cultural Cartographies" presumptuously recalls a phrase used by Angela Merkel, in turn quoting Barack Obama – a naive and fateful statement perhaps, but one which hints at the potential utopian content of Europe: A community of democratic states, a zone that safeguards the basic values of humane, peaceful coexistence, a community bound by solidarity that – as entrenched in most constitutions – guarantees equal opportunities, free access to education and social security. And one which together finds ways of meeting the challenges of the day in a pragmatic manner, not driven by fear.

But perhaps the current situation itself is a chance to work on the idea of Europe beyond a purely economic context, to salvage this construction for the 21st century. What values, what concept of the human being, what models of education need to be decolonialised in the dialogue with the world so as to reconceive them on a different basis?

Topics and questions such as these run through the programme of 2016 steirischer herbst, featuring in many different ways in artistic and curatorial interventions. Swiss theatre-maker **Milo Rau**, for instance, with his International Institute of Political Murder presents the stories of people who came to Europe as refugees or who have their home on its fringes, asking: Are ancient European traditions endangered, or is migration not simply one of them? Based on their own histories, four performers from different countries project epic images of flight and homeland. In response to the question what influence rituals have on the state and vice versa, Norwegian choreographer **Ingri Fiksdal** and director **Jonas Corell Petersen** present an atmospherically dense answer in their piece "State", while Moroccan dancer **Taoufiq Izeddiou** explores the boundaries between tradition, modernity and different cultures in the dizzying performance "En Alerte". In "Guerrilla" the Catalan artist group **El Conde de Torrefiel** takes a look at the hidden fears of the people of Graz, constructing theatrical *Tableaux vivants* of our society.

In 2016, steirischer herbst is not only exploring boundaries in the metaphorical sense, it focuses artistically on the border region of southern Styria – a hot spot along the Balkan route for thousands of refugees since last year. In Leutschach, the renowned documentary theatre duo **Regine Dura** and **Hans-Werner Kroesinger** are organising performance-based walks with the aim of examining the subject of drawing borders in the history of the region ("Willkommen in der Europaschutzzone"), while in Leibnitz the Greek **Blitz Theatre Group** stages a surreal waltz of the dead on the ruins of Europe in "Late Night". With the aid of his biggest work of installation in public space to date, "This is my Blood", Angolan artist **Kiluanji Kia Henda** will be forging a link

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between current feelings of unease in society, Catholic traditions, southern Styrian wine-growing and the fences that are once again demonstrating the long invisible border with Slovenia. Over dinner with guests from politics, culture and the region, the "Grenzlandgespräche" (Borderland Talks) by **Monika M. Kalcsics** and **Eugene Quinn** will also focus on the many histories and stories of this area, while the "Mobile Tea House" by Austrian artist **Rainer Prohaska** is an invitation to engage in a dialogue of all cultures.

The festival will also present utopias and counterworlds to current conditions – for example in the opening production "The Night of the Moles (Welcome to Caveland!)" by French theatre wizard **Philippe Quesne**, who contrasts the agitation of current times with the life of moles and their slow-paced but untiring activity as a metaphor. With Gustav Mahler and vibrating porcelain, **Lemm&Barkey**, two artists from the Belgian **Needcompany**, draft a new universe in "Forever", and Austrian choreographer **Philipp Gehmacher** also reflects on "The Things of the World" in an exhibition in which he will also be performing. steirischer herbst is also presenting the first stage production of **Apichatpong Weerasethakul**, probably Thailand's most important film-maker. In "Fever Room", a dream world in which the figures from his last film "Cemetery of Splendour" seek refuge, the conditions of the audience's perception are reversed from the outset.

Focusing on Europe today and tomorrow, steirischer 2016 herbst also looks far beyond the boundaries and has also invited artists from outside the continent – more than ever before – to develop new works on this set of themes: in addition to those mentioned above, US artist **Steffani Jemison** joins musician **Justin Hicks** to take a look at the collection of Neue Galerie Graz, developing a music-based performance dealing with the question of what 19th and 20th century landscape painting can tell us about world images then and now. At the **herbst exhibition**, taking place this year at Kunsthaus Graz, Indian curator **Zasha Colah** mounts "Body Luggage", a show investigating the migration of gestures, body posture and knowledge transfer between cultures and times. From the particularities of historical continuities the exhibition questions art historical methods, engaging with various attempts to contain world art history. Enlightenment attempts to find geographical continuity have been critically dismantled, just as ethnography and the discipline of anthropology were so much born from the colonial enlightenment encounter.

Not only the world, the festival is also on the move. This year there is no central location like the festival centres of recent years – instead steirischer herbst 2016 is proclaiming an **Arrival Zone** in the Annenviertel district of Graz – a network of art spaces and venues for events marked by architectural interventions by British artist couple **Morag Myerscough** and **Luke Morgan**. German artist **Julian Hetzel**, for example, is opening his "Schuldfabrik" (Guilt Factory) in this zone, an installation-based walk between beauty clinic and soap production, setting out to examine the various economic and moral facets of the notion of debt (and guilt). The centrepiece of the Arrival Zone, however, is the **Volksgarten Pavilion**, which will be a transcultural, artistically interdisciplinary "House of Open Gates" for the duration of the festival. The aim is to create a place for everyone in the Annenviertel, a district characterised by migrants, in a collective process involving local residents and initiatives. The "Narratives from the Arrival City" that are experienced and lived here will be continued in the < **rotor** > exhibition rooms on the other side of the road: "New Graz".

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While this project will be open to everyone during the day, night-owls will be able to attend a new programme at the **Orpheum**: A pop-up club featuring a host of international live acts and DJs who will each be transplanting their particular scene to Graz for one night. The focus is on hybrid forms, crossing borders, mixing and the free association of sounds, genres, origins and modes of working – with Tambutronic from the Caribbean, Ethiopian Funk and shamanistic Rave, Cold Wave from Japan, Psychedelic Pop from Bahrain and various DJ collectives from Cairo, Berlin and Lisbon. **club panamur** is much more than a concert programme, it explores the leitmotif of the festival with different means – through the night. Especially for these nights, artist **Georg Klüver-Pfandtner** and architect **Stefan Beer** create a shimmering, vital club parasite that digs down deep into its host – the Orpheum – and infiltrates the renowned performance venue playfully, subversively and subtly.

The **herbst conference** investigates Europe's current state from a postcolonial and decolonial perspective. Is Europe obsolete? What remains of the small utopian region which, only 20 years ago, was the focus of hopes for a peaceful and pluralistic 21st century? There is every indication that the "old world", reinvented as European Union, is a profoundly vulnerable and crumbling structure: "Welcome to the former West". The conference is taking place on a greenfield site. As a situational setting for the theoretical encounters of this year's **herbst Academy**, the **Mamaza** artist collective is temporarily proclaiming the "Garden State" at the Orpheum. For five days, the venue is being transformed into a public garden created with plants borrowed from local people of Graz. It obeys its own laws and invites everybody to reflect, discuss and stay a while.

The exhibitions at the festival's partner institutions are also taking a look at Europe and its turbulent relationship to the world, but also possible drafts for the future: Markus Krottendorfer documents scenes of a Eurocentric description of the world at **Camera Austria**, meandering between anthropology and invention of the world. studio Asynchrome in **the smallest gallery – collaboration space** and collectives such as Maschen or Mzbaltazar's Laboratory at **esc medien kunst labor** reflect on counterworlds and ideal societies based on Thomas More's 500-year-old treatise "Utopia". **Forum Stadtpark** will be the site of "Ouzhou Palace", a Palace of Europe erected by an artist collective with members from the fields of architecture, photography, visual art and literature.

With artists Ai Weiwei and Edmund de Waal, **Kunsthaus Graz** is focusing on ceramics, a material that can be interpreted as a vehicle of knowledge across times and civilisations – "Kneaded Knowledge" – while Austrian artist Markus Jeschaunig presents an olfactory map of Europe at **Kunsthalle Graz**. **Grazer Kunstverein** is mounting a personal show of British film-maker Beatrice Gibson, while **Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien** presents an exhibition on performance art that questions the boundaries between active and passive. When **steirischer herbst** was founded some fifty years ago the term Trigon was coined to refer to the artistic dialogue between Yugoslavia, Austria and Italy. The exhibition "Bratstvo i Jedinstvo", that opens towards the end of the festival at **Haus der Architektur**, traces the processes of transformation that have taken place since then.

**musikprotokoll 2016** also sets out to inspect its own cultural map for *terrae incognitae*, stretching the globe of charted worlds of music in all directions. Physically, when Renald Deppe joins Tehran-

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born composer and electronic musician Hassan Zanjirani Farahani to explore new territories or Deena Abdelwahed, who situates her art in the coordinate system between Tunisia and Western Europe. Stylistically, when 85-year-old composer Alvin Lucier ventures along those narrow paths traced by the movements of a cellist's bow arm, when performer Blixa Bargeld manoeuvres his audience along tortuous paths of voice and language and in a joint expedition, Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra and Klangforum Wien climb the peak of powerful premieres; coordinates can also be perceived in terms of time, as in the project "Die Logik der Engel" in which distant vocal music from the 13th and 14th century meets miniature premieres from the here and now. Musical maps abound.

The "Randnotizen" (Marginal Notes) have been online since May. This year again, five artists will be keeping a highly subjective online diary: Swiss theatre-maker **Milo Rau**, Austrian author and musician **Daniel Wisser**, author and graphic artist **Teresa Präauer**, and **Natalie Ofenböck** together with **Nino Mandl** (alias **Der Nino aus Wien**). The latter two set out last year on a research trip around Styria for steirischer herbst and are now presenting "The Green Album" after many experiences, great and small. The exclusive concert tour following the presentation of the album, with the two artists being accompanied by their trusty Viennese rock'n'rollers and Styrian musicians, will be taking them to Allerheiligen bei Wildon, Leibnitz, Leutschach and Graz. The beautiful hills of southern Styria or the black heart of the grey buildings of Vienna?

**Information and tickets:**

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