



Press release, June 21, 2015

Impulse Theater Festival 2015: political, provoking, inspiring!

The closing party of the 2015 Impulse Festival at the Ringlokschuppen Ruhr in Mülheim, went on until early Sunday morning. After ten festival days, the most important platform of independent theater in the German speaking world strikes an exceptional positive balance: 4,800 visitors from the Ruhr region and from all over Germany, as well as international experts participated in more than 60 events. With 91% seats sold, the new concept was adapted impressively well by the visitors. The festival focuses on one city – this year Mülheim an der Ruhr with the Ringlokschuppen Ruhr – and at the same time strengthens close cooperations with the partners in Düsseldorf and Cologne.

Titled “Gesellschaftsspiele”, Impulse’s program presented outstanding works of independent theater: a political and social laboratory of the present, where performative arts could unfold their agonistic, provoking potential and where social ruptures and sores were not only concealed, but addressed and acted out. Impulse explored how society plays itself, for whom it plays and: who is allowed to participate in the game. How can theater today still and again be a political, public space: with its contents, but also in its respective form.

For Florian Malzacher, artistic director of Impulse, the approach to take a very broad view over independent theater with the invited productions (Gob Squad with “Western Society”; “The Civil Wars” by Milo Rau; Gintersdorfer/Klaßen with “Chefferie”; andcompany&Co. and “Sounds Like War”; “Ibsen: Ghosts” by Markus&Markus; Rabih Mroué with “Riding on a Cloud”; Herbordt/Mohren’s: “Die Aufführung” (“The Performance”); “Anonymous P.” by Chris Kondek & Christiane Kühl; “Der Ur-Forst” by Hendrik Quast & Maika Knoblich) has paid off: “I am very happy that, together with our audience, we managed several ambitious balancing acts: Between theater works with very different artistic handwritings. Between serious political topics and sensual play. Between artistic-social long term projects and pointed interventions. Between critical, challenging theories and lively parties and intense conversations at the festival center.”

Thanks to the funding of the German Federal Cultural Foundation this year, Impulse could present beside projects from the German-speaking world as well present three projects by non-German-speaking artists together with the partners studiobühneköln, FFT Düsseldorf and Ringlokschuppen Ruhr in Mülheim. With “Building Conversation”, the Dutch theater maker Lotte van den Berg explored forms and conditions of conversations in Düsseldorf, the project “Our Position Vanishes” by the British artist Phil Collins with Daniela Kinateder and students from Cologne and Ramallah tried out collective rooms of experience for spectators, performers, musicians and theorists while shuttling between the festival cities Mülheim, Cologne and Düsseldorf, and in Mülheim an der Ruhr the Ringlokschuppen Ruhr opened the Silent University, initiated by the Kurdish artist Ahmet Ögüt, an autonomous platform for the exchange of knowledge of refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and non-migrants.

A conference on the limits of representation in politics, media and theater, panels and lectures, films and concert performances completed the program. An extensive collection of material on the internet picked up specific questions of independent theater and will continue to put them up to discussion after the festival.



Dr. Christian Esch, director of the hosting NRW KULTURsekretariat, particularly emphasized the effect of the focus on content and place: "Our reorientation has definitely proven itself: Impulse 2015 has been a great success with an enormous resonance! At the main festival venue Ringlokschuppen, we had a wonderful, relaxed festival atmosphere. A broad audience from the Ruhr region and far beyond celebrated ten days full of exciting performances and lively discussions."

And Matthias Frense, artistic and managing director of the Ringlokschuppen Ruhr in Mülheim added: "Mülheim has once more proven to be an outstanding theater city. Apart from the festival center, the Silent University Ruhr as another part of the festival will continue to exist in Mülheim at least until 2017."

In the future, Impulse Theater Festival will take place annually. From June 16 to 25, 2016, Düsseldorf, state capital of North-Rhine Westphalia, together with the FFT will form the main venue of Impulse Theater Festival, alongside the associated partner venues in Cologne (studiobühne) and Mülheim (Ringlokschuppen).

The preconditions for the next edition are good: In the same amount as the NRW KULTURsekretariat, the cities of Düsseldorf, Cologne and Mülheim an der Ruhr will together contribute a total amount of 150,000 EUR. The Ministry of Culture in North-Rhine Westphalia supports Impulse with 50,000 EUR annually. Furthermore the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, Minister of State Prof. Monika Grütters, assured the support of the German Federal Government and therewith recognized the German-wide meaning of Impulse. The Federal Government Commissioner funds the 2016 edition of the festival with 100,000 EUR, with the prospect of long term funding. The Kunststiftung NRW (Arts Foundation NRW) also enables the festival's long term existence by funding Impulse with the amount of 100,000 EUR in 2016.

The Impulse Theater Festival 2015 was organised by NRW KULTURsekretariat in cooperation with Ringlokschuppen Ruhr, Mülheim, as well as FFT Düsseldorf and studiobühneköln. The festival is funded by the Ministry for Family, Children, Youth, Culture and Sports of North-Rhine Westphalia, German Federal Cultural Foundation, Sparkasse KölnBonn, Allianz Cultural Foundation, Goethe-Institut, the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, NPN and VHS Mülheim. In cooperation with Urban Arts Ruhr, Academy of Media Arts Cologne and Zukunftsakademie NRW.

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