

DANCE RESEARCH NRW # 14 in Dortmund

PERIOD: 15.9.-9.11.2014

HOST:

**Dortmund / Theaterfestival
"Favoriten" 2014**

**Begüm Erciyas (concept)
Matthias Meppelink (technical support
and artistic collaboration)**

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH:

"Voicing Pieces I"

Please write a short summary of the intended research in NRW

"Voicing Pieces I" is an exploration of the mere voice and its poetic and political affects. The voice is common to body and language, but it exists independently from both. Bodies and languages are tied together by the voice. It is as well the voice that makes speech – and, therefore, the relation to the other – possible. Accents, hesitations, authority, (dis)respect and cultural differences manifest themselves in the voice. The act of annunciation („I take you as my wife“) has the power to change our reality and our perception of reality. Oaths, testimonies, prayers, but also poems unfold their performative power only when spoken out. The voice doesn't add anything to the content, however the written or memorized text has to be put into use, into practice, articulated by the voice, for it to have an effect. Doesn't the voice exist in direct relation to representation in democracy? (für jemanden stimmen, seine Stimme abgeben, Abstimmung, Stimmabgabe) Political fiction, namely democracy, is a matter of immediacy of the voice; the ideal democracy would be the one where everybody could hear everybody else's voice. In daily life, we delegate, we give voice, we engage ourselves in the name of others and we lend our voice to a cause. I would like to develop a setup, in which I can confront the audience with their own voice, its resistance and its powers. I would like their voice to activate a relationship to an object and I would like their voice to change

the perception of this object. I would like to give the singular audience member a script to read-out-loud (as if in a theater rehearsal) towards an object, an object that gains more and more life and theatricality as it is addressed. Eventually, I would like to emphasise the theatricality of the situation by adding theatrical elements (such as light and sound) and letting the audience find her/himself in a staged situation.

In Dortmund – in collaboration with Matthias Meppelink – the syntax „Voicing Pieces I“ in all its meanings and associations will be researched in public space. Scripts/scores will be developed, which address certain objects, corners, monuments or locations within the public sphere. These scripts/scores will be installed for pedestrians to voice. What effect can the voice of the audience/the bypasser have on the object, the location or the situation? What effect can the voice of the audience have on the reality and imagination of this place? How can the voice of the audience be alienated, modified, replaced or echoed in an attempt to theatricalize the act of reading out loud and bring attention to this moment of (self)-staging?

Is the City of Dortmund or North-Rhine Westphalia relevant in your research? If yes, in what respect?

The proposed project will involve research on several sites within the city. The architectural and social history of the locations will be identified. Significant, as well as insignificant, locations, objects and situations will be chosen to develop a script or vocal score to. The score (a protected piece of paper?), as well as microphones, hardware and speakers, will be installed in different combinations at different locations.

What is specifically outstanding and innovative about the project?

„Voicing Pieces I“ proposes to regard the act of speaking, while simultaneously listening to one's own voice, as a theater. One's own voice becomes the site of the event. One's own voice holds all the power, as well as all the resistance. The

knot in the throat has to be cleared, the adequate volume negotiated. The addressee that cannot speak back, emphasizes this relationship between the speaker and his/her own voice, rather than the relationship of two voices.

How will you proceed?

I want to start by taking walks with locals and urban experts in Dortmund, in order to find potential details in the public space. I will take time with these locations, video-record them and develop a partly-text-based, partly-abstract vocal score for them. I will question on each site, what is needed to bring a sense of theatricality, a sense of transformation into the situation, once the text is activated by a voice. Sometimes this may be through one spotlight that fades in, a ventilator that produces wind, a high-volume-sound that requires the reader to raise their voice or through a live-technical modification of the speaking voice. Together with Matthias Meppelink we will research how to transform and alienate the given voice. Does the audience have to put on headphones, through which she/he will hear his/her alienated voice? Are there speakers hidden on location that make the given voice travel further and further? Will the voice given at location number 1 be the voice heard on location number 2 with a half-an-hour delay?

Which connections to persons or institutions, if so, would you like to establish in Dortmund resp. North Rhine Westphalia to enforce your research?

I would be interested to find an architect or an urban researcher, who could give a tour and further insights into the city's landmarks, its industrial history, and its current state of transformation. I would be interested in taking walks with local artists as well.

What are the results you would like to achieve?

My interest in the voice is due to its being a poetic and political phenomenon at once. Contents of the texts will be compiled from political speeches, multi-

language dialogues, self-written scripts and poetic moments; also voices without sense will be composed. Through citations from unpopular actors, thoughts on „Voicing Pieces I“ in democracy are evoked. The dramaturgy will be built up as such that the line between politics and poetics is crossed unexpectedly several times in an ongoing transformation. Since talking without a conversation partner in a public space is often considered neurotic, finding the right setup, score and places that encourage audiences to actually speak out loud in public will be the main challenge. The text/score should be rooted in changes of the actual situation. For example, an increasing level of sound can give safety for raising the voice.

How and in what kind of format should the results be presented in public at the end of the research?

Audiences will receive a map of the city with the sites and descriptions of the corners, where one can find a score and give VOICE. The piece of paper carrying the score/text will be found in a protected cover, installed into this location. Once the audience starts reading out loud, the imaginary or real effects will become gradually visible. The function, effect and content of each situation will differ from each other. As audience travels from one location to the other, relations between the different sites will emerge.