

**steirischer herbst 23/09 – 16/10/2011**

**Second Worlds**

**Real and unreal parallel systems**

“**Second Worlds**” – the theme of this year’s steirischer herbst – sets out in search of cultural, social, political and psychological parallel worlds: as conceptual alternatives, models of thought, levers for a change of paradigm that suddenly allow us to see things differently. Even with a minor shift of perspective and parameters, things start to slide: adjust the focus and what is clear becomes blurred, what is blurred becomes clear, and we recognise different structures, different layers, different realities. This year’s **herbst exhibition** “Second World” – conceived by the Croatian curator collective **What, How & for Whom / WHW** – uses the potential of possible and impossible second worlds as a projection surface for imaginary and political changes of perspective – but is still firmly rooted in the geopolitical reality of our time. The **herbst conference** “The Patient” revolves around a parallel world in the midst of life. Theorists and practitioners explore the role of disease as an omnipresent second world within the first today, as reality, as metaphor, as a line of development, and as a form of life and possibility.

steirischer herbst opens with the latest work of one of the most important choreographers of our time: in “Cesena” **Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker** merges the separate worlds of musicians and dancers with her Rosas company and the Graindelavoix vocal ensemble conducted by **Björn Schmelzer**. She achieves this by having dancers sing and musicians dance. To music from a world distant in time: the *Ars subtilior* from the late 14th century, that, paradoxically, corresponds to a contemporary understanding of music in terms of its complexity and abstraction. **Gunilla Heilborn’s** “Potato Country”, banal and beautiful, ironic and succinct. With floating humour and gentle melancholy, the Swedish choreographer blends dance and theatre, text and performance into a genre pot-pourri in a loose musical framework. The four male protagonists of a song performance by **Theater im Bahnhof** try to capture the past with the aid of the lyrics and hooks of the songs of their youth – “Time to get ready for love”. How can you get rid of your own body – **Eszter Salamon** asks this question in her new piece “Tales Of The Bodiless”, inviting us to embark on a journey to regions of palpable sensuality: dynamic compositions of vocals, sound, light and space. A bodiless science-fiction choreography with a soundtrack by Cédric Dambrain and Terre Thaemlitz.

The festival centre, designed by the Austrian-Slovenian artist **Maruša Sagadin**, is also a world within a world: as the **festival district**, it spans the area between Südtiroler Platz and Mariahilferplatz in Graz, a gated community that consciously and playfully examines the discrepancy between invitation and exclusion. For four weeks this will be home to a cosmopolitan little town within the city – with a tendency for bigger things. And uncannily pleasant: Oversized illuminated writing on the houses, elongated table runners on the street, its own bar and numerous eateries all around, a club, cinema, hotel and bar, from experimental electronica to exhibition, from party to theory. The hotel, room 113, where Finnish artist **Hans Rosenström**, American performer **Ann Liv Young**, **Orthographe** from Italy, and **Heine Røsdal Avdal** and **Yukiko Shinozaki** from the Belgian performance company deepblue will be staying for a few days. A few buildings down, the shop: Romanian artist group **Apparatus 22** invite you

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to nightmare therapy, Stephen Fiehn and Tyler B. Myers alias **Cupola Bobber** operate a "Public Question Library", and Vienna-based Japanese artist **Michikazu Matsune** opens up his peculiar "Tourist Office" for one week. Dutch theatre-maker **Jan Ritsema** turns the shop into an agora, inviting fourteen artists from twelve countries – including a few familiar faces from various constellations at the herbst festival – to discuss worries, knowledge and actions revolving around the concept of public space – a process that ultimately culminates in the première of "Shakespeare's As You Like It, A Body Part".

For the first time in Graz, this year's herbst allows visitors to plunge into the drastic physical theatre world of Argentinian-Spanish director **Rodrigo Garcia**. His "Gólgota Picnic" is a raging reckoning with Western civilisation, with us. Immoderate and thus similar to the Bible in terms of its force and wild imagery: angels rise and fall, everywhere there is fire, heavens that open, miracles, demons, dead people and unimaginable tortures. And sitting naked at the grand piano amidst this theatrical mission is Marino Formenti, playing Haydn's "The Seven Last Words of Christ". Playing and playing, until the last note has faded. steirischer herbst has invited three young writers with close ties to Graz to reflect on their own models of collaboration in theatre in the text and theatre project "What World?" in very different working constellations: **Gerhild Steinbuch** presents a performance and audio walk around Graz in co-operation with **Julie Pfeleiderer**: "Most beautiful is what is already gone." **Johannes Schrettle** and **zweite liga für kunst und kultur** explain "how we should do it", and **copy & waste** with their author **Jörg Albrecht** bring back their childhood anti-heroes in "Terence Hill's Blue Eyes".

The range of performance works goes on from **Miguel Gutierrez's** artist monologue "Heavens what have I done", to **Lotte van den Berg's** powerfully visual reflection on her own foreignness in Congo, entitled "Les spectateurs", to deep immersion in the virtual world of the Belgian **CREW** company: confronted with the story of Robert Scott's legendary, tragic Antarctic expedition, that seems here to be just as much the history of recent brain research, in "Terra Nova" we travel to the South Pole as much as into our own consciousness. The dividing-lines blur in Eric Joris's sensory theatre. Between technology and bodies, virtuality and reality, inside and outside.

There are many second worlds, as evidenced by the other exhibition projects at steirischer herbst 2011: while **< rotor >** explores the parallel systems of power in society, politics, business and media, **Kulturzentrum bei den Minoriten** discovers a new way to discuss religion in art. **Grazer Kunstverein** dedicates its exhibition to the political power of folklorism, **Camera Austria** takes a critical look at current social concepts of coexistence, while **Haus der Architektur** explores levels of perception in spaces beyond those that are visible, and **Peter Weibel** demonstrates a brutal, very real history of the 20th century in his installation. Artists Elke Auer and Esther Straganz join the Brazilian medium Felipe Campos to look into animism, the belief that objects have souls, in **the smallest gallery – collaboration space**, and **Akademie Graz** invites Danica Dakić from Sarajevo to present her project, that builds bridges between different worlds. The artists invited by **ESC im LABOR** present themselves in a grid of possibilities. German artist Antje Majewski makes the objects from the collection of Universalmuseum Joanneum speak at **Kunsthau Graz**, and Zsombor Barakonyi, Christian Eisenberger and Metka Zupanič enter the in-between worlds beyond social norms at **Pavelhaus / Pavlova hiša**.

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"Hauntings", a project by Christian Höller and Thomas Edlinger, links the visual arts and music programme of steirischer herbst 2011: in an exhibition at **Kunstverein Medienturm**, as a series of concerts in musikprotokoll, and in an evening of film, it explores secret and uncanny presences in media, art and pop. **musikprotokoll** gives insights into the work of younger and older generations of artists working in many different ways with sound, images and space. The "CineChamber" platform invites visitors to a new dimension of audiovision, presenting a smorgasbord of new pieces by Jade, Pita, Subshrubs, Werner Dafeldecker, Lawrence English and Christian Fennesz, among others. In "Icosonics", Austrian composer Clemens Gadenstätter takes a look at gestures in music, while Klangforum Wien, the ORF Radio Symphony Orchestra Vienna, and ensemble recherche contribute a range of orchestral statements – including many world premières and first performances.

**Information and tickets:**

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