Theatre, globalisation and illiberal regimes after 1989

A workshop at the Käte Hamburger Research Centre
global dis:connect

The war in the Ukraine has highlighted the globalising propensities of non-democratic states such as Russia, China and Iran. There is a strong sense that illiberal, global interconnections are being (re)forged. These alternative globalisations are reflected in the dynamics of specific theatre cultures and are rooted in the trans-continental links established during the Cold War. Patterns developed since the 1970s have carried over into the post-1989 period. Western-guided globalisation has hardly been ‘the only game in town’ in recent decades. The workshop therefore raises the fundamental question of how to approach theatre history and non-Western-centric interconnectedness after 1989.

Practitioners and scholars will gather to discuss the relationship between global trajectories of illiberal regimes and their theatre cultures following the Cold War. The workshop engages with a variety of cases from the illiberal spectrum – from one-party states to theocracies and various forms of authoritarianism (competitive or one-person rule). The proceedings will focus on genealogies, commonalities and differences among various global engagements. We explore the role of theatre in the international configuration of illiberalisms in the post-Cold War world.

Concept and organisation:
Viviana Iacob

Käte Hamburger
Research Centre
global dis:connect
LMU Munich
Maria-Theresia-Straße 21
81675 Munich
gdc@lmu.de

7–8 September 2023
7 September

14:00 – 14:30  Registration

14:30 – 15:30  Introduction & keynote
   Workshop introduction
   Viviana Iacob (gd:c fellow)
   Theatre and illiberal democracies: institutional (dis)continuities
   Christopher Balme (gd:c director)

15:30 – 16:10  Q&A

16:10 – 16:30  Coffee break

16:30 – 18:00  Panel 1 Bridging socialist and illiberal theatre
   First session
   Independent theatre in China: a case study
   Christoph Lepschy (Mozarteum University Salzburg)
   Tamed voices in clash
   Ziad Adwan (TANWEEN Company for Theatre and Dance)

17:10 – 17:20  Break

Second session
   Comparing socialist and illiberal theatre policy
   Róbert Takács (Institute of Political History, Budapest)
   A bastion of Enlightenment between freedom and repression: the Influence of illiberal forces on the independent performing arts in Europe
   Thomas Fabian Eder (Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich)

18:00 – 18:40  Discussion
   Moderator: Nic Leonhardt (gd:c fellow)

8 September

10:00 – 11:00  Panel 2 Theatre as counter-culture
   Akram Khan in Hong Kong via Zoom
   Rashna Darius Nicholson (The University of Hong Kong)
   An enemy of culture: theatre and Iran's Islamic Republic policies after 1989
   Azadeh Ganjeh (University of Hildesheim)
   The post-Cold War politics and aesthetics of Islamic theatre in Turkey and its connected geographies
   Gamze Tosun (Kadir Has University, Istanbul)

11:00 – 11:45  Discussion
   Moderator: Olya Petrakova (Exeter University)

11:45 – 13:00  Lunch

13:00 – 14:00  Panel 3 Experiment and illiberal politics
   Staging other Russias: reassessing the theatre laboratory in Putin’s regime
   Bryan Brown (Exeter University)
   Performing social and political criticism through metaphors
   Andreea Chiriţă (University of Bucharest)
   Tracing the cultural economy of indigeneity: a case study of the theatricalisation of an exorcism ritual via Zoom
   Devika N Menon (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)

14:00 – 14:45  Discussion
   Moderator: Róbert Takács (Institute of Political History, Budapest)

14:45 – 15:00  Coffee break

15:00 – 16:00  Concluding remarks
   Plans for the future