

Æstetisk Seminar

Peter Boenisch

Contests over a privileged praxis: Institutional transformations in contemporary European theatre

Our AUFF-funded research project *Reconfiguring dramaturgy for a global culture: Changing practices in 21st Century European theatre* investigated current attempts to reposition (mainly publicly funded) theatre institutions within a shifting socio-cultural context. In this new “post-representational” reality, as art scholar Nora Sternfeld calls it, traditional ‘high art’ institutions like museums and theatres no longer affirmatively represent cultural capital, civic *Bildung* and national prestige, and instead of being able to rely on the subscriber patronage of middle-class, educated, White audiences, they must confront a globalised, mediatised, politically split plural public sphere. In this lecture, I will less focus on concrete institutional case studies, but instead concentrate on principal conceptual and theoretical insights that emerged from their analysis. In particular, I will focus on the potential of an extended dramaturgic analysis to identify the shifting institutional values, and moreover to analyse the contest over the institution as a public space of appearance and of public communication. Far more than mere organisational restructuring, the institutional transformations we have investigated reveal such a “post-representational” renegotiation of the role of theatre as institutionalised cultural *praxis*, in a strict Arendtian sense: as not (only) facilitating the production of theatre art works, but as a crucial mediating practice-process qua its institutional expository agency. We here can glimpse the transformation of theatre institutions from their role as bulwarks of national cultural identity towards becoming negotiators of common societal (inter-)relations that Arendt termed (human) “inter-esse”: the neither expressive nor affirmative *being in-between* that is a fundamental prerequisite for the engagement with the complex, plural reality of the present.

Torsdag den 19. september 2024, Kl. 14:15

Kasernen, bygning 1584, lokale 124

Alle er velkomne / All are welcome