

steirischer herbst 2013

Liaisons dangereuses: Alliances, misalliances and false friends

20/09 - 13/10/2013

"Alliances, misalliances and false friends: Liaisons dangereuses", the leitmotif of this year's steirischer herbst looks at the nature of dangerous relationship cocktails, of connections which, for all their fragility, are passionate, explosive and always powerful. A "liaison", from the French perspective, is much more than a flirt or a love affair: it can be applied to connections, relationships and their transformation – in society, art and culture and in both the private sphere and in politics. While one year ago, steirischer herbst focused on the role of art in society-changing moments, we now proceed to consider the following: what coalitions and compromises are entered into in order to carry through visions and goals? What relations of dependence open up? What scales and disparities are reflected in old boy networks, "forced marriages" of all kinds? What if the line between coalition and corruption gets thinner and thinner? And, in the end, what are the constellations in which we could finally make headway? As always, it is more the questions than the answers that move us. And, as always, these questions will feature recurrently in the steirischer herbst programme – playful, direct – and often associative.

Connections and selection criteria are characteristic of the multiple steirischer herbst opening in 2013 – in a wide variety of ways and at many different venues, featuring performance, visual art, and architecture: the Belgian artist **Kris Verdonck** presents "H, an incident", his vision of the absurd universe of Daniil Charms (Harms), a Russian poet who opposed Stalin's terror regime with a bizarre, poetic world. Parallel to this, Vienna-based French choreographer **Anne Juren** will première her interpretation of Kafka's "Amerika" and Martin Kippenberger's Amerika installation – "Happy End" – while Norwegian **Amund Sjølie Sveen** presents his new performance lecture "Economic Theory for Dummies", a crash course in the finance industry. The herbst exhibition "Liquid Assets" opens in between and takes a look at the mysteries and dark sides of largely virtualised global cash flows and later in the evening, steirischer herbst invites everyone to the opening of this year's **festival centre**: for four weekends, the former customs house and the adjoining Explosiv youth culture centre will be occupied. The German-French landscape architect team **atelier le balto** transforms what was once the central trans-shipment centre near the main railway station into Ex-Zollamt, a vibrant centre for numerous artistic events: the herbst exhibition "Liquid Assets", the "Close Link" installation, unpredictable artist evenings, cinema afternoons over coffee and cake, an open workshop by **Lisa D.**, a swap meet by **Modezirkus**, numerous live concerts, and a participatory project by **Susanne Kudielka** and **Kaspar Wimberley**.

This year's **herbst exhibition**, curated by **Katerina Gregos** and **Luigi Fassi**, starts out from this year's leitmotif to examine the changed relationships of a finance industry that takes place in virtual space to those real conditions which – committed as it is only to maximum profit and not to the public good – it defines so tangibly and profoundly: "Liquid Assets. After the transformation of capital". Following on from this topic, the **herbst conference** "Liaisons dangereuses" on the third weekend of the festival offers a framework for reflection to explore dependencies in politics, the finance industry and society, setting out in search of emancipatory alternatives in times of uncertainty. The installation "Close Link", that opens at Ex-Zollamt on the second weekend of the festival, focuses on the extraordinary relationship systems and extreme situations that arise when people find themselves in isolated states

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of consciousness due to illness. The artist duo **hoelb / hoeb** use an experimental artistic set-up to explore spaces and everyday activities that characterise close relationships to persistent vegetative state patients, to people living with a mental or physical impairment, albeit demonstrating personal feelings rather than those of others.

You'll come across them again and again and everywhere – those liaisons in and on this year's leitmotif: for example in **Andreas Siekmann's** pictograms, that define the visual image of the festival, or in the steirischer herbst partner institutions' exhibitions spread out across the city. **Grazer Kunstverein** presents four exponents of contemporary art, four attempts to make new contexts visible by abstracting social conditions, first and foremost the latest works of New York artist Doug Ashford. "Beninese Solidarity with Endangered Westerners" is the name of artist Romuald Hazoumé's NGO founded in Africa which focuses on the inversion of familiar conditions at **Kunsthau Graz**. **Camera Austria**, in turn, examines to what extent the institutional framework of art can be turned into a locus of political discourse and invites three initiatives from different countries – *Beirut* from Egypt, the Serbian Kontekst collective, and Ogms from Bulgaria – to engage in "Unexpected Encounters". "I share, therefore I am" – the impact of digital technologies on interpersonal relationships is the starting point at **ESC im Labor** for an experimental set-up about artists and their chosen tools. In a one-year project, <rotor> reflects on "Measures of Saving the World", presenting positions between radicalism and compromise in its exhibition. In "... Was ist Kunst? ...", **Künstlerhaus, Halle für Kunst & Medien** examines exemplary positions from the partly historical avant-garde of former Yugoslavia to current art productions in this region, while **Pavelhaus** focuses on Hungary's contemporary art scene, comparing the tense relationship of artists to the Orbán regime with opposition against the communist regime: "Out of the Museum and into the Street".

The various performance works – a plethora of (world) premières – investigate and forge new relationships and alliances: the Italian artists' collective **Dewey Dell** join the theatre maker and playwright Kuro Tanino and the Japanese drawing artist Yuichi Yokoyama for their latest piece, "Marzo". A perfect marriage of choreography, costumes, light and music gives rise to a space far removed from reality. In her solo performance "Abecedarium Bestiarium", **Antonia Baehr** explores disconcerting relationships between animals and human beings, and Swiss-Italian **Massimo Furlan** sets out in search of a sporting icon of his youth in a commissioned work. He takes Arnold Schwarzenegger's career, that started out in a weight room in the cellar of the Liebenauer Stadium in Graz, as the background for "Gym Club", a study of the culture of bodybuilding. Experimental filmmaker **Daniel Kötter** and composer **Hannes Seidl** investigate the fundamental conditions of social action against the backdrop of the global financial crisis – the economy of acting with money, symbolised by the banker's profession. Kötter and Seidl are bringing representatives of this profession on stage for "Credit". Swiss theatre-maker **Boris Nikitin** examines self-fulfilment 2.0 in a co-production of steirischer herbst and Schauspielhaus Graz: "Don't be Yourself!" investigates the social connections entered into by people in peer groups, cliques and self-help groups today. The two Japanese dancers **Fumiyo Ikeda** and **Un Yamada** share a special relationship: for some time now they have been exchanging one word a day by email, thus developing a joint vocabulary of more than 900 words which serves as the basis for their "amness" improvisation.

Some liaisons at this year's herbst last just one night: every Saturday night, the **Double Feature** series features an exclusive performance by two international bands at the Ex-Zollamt / Explosiv. Ahead of

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this, two artist groups will meet up in the neighbouring hall of the festival zone for a **One Night Stand**, organising an evening together – monochrom with the Lord Jim Loge, for instance, the Rabtaldirndln with Ann Liv Young, or RESANITA with atelier le balto. Thursday evening at the festival centre is earmarked for various live acts, curated by the Graz-based **Interpenetration** label for steirischer herbst, while **Forum Stadtpark** invites visitors to a night in a bunker – a seemingly oddly assorted group of people waiting together for the end after the disaster. **musikprotokoll**, now forty-five years old, is another history of *liaisons dangereuses*. It loves risky relationships, explores uncharted acoustic territories, and engineers bold first meetings – this year, for example, between the electronic musician and producer Patrick Pulsinger and the Vienna RSO, or the composer Angélica Castelló and biologist Heike Vester. Parrots are the receivers of the sounds created by the alien productions artist collective, in whose “metamusic” project they radically rethink the relationship between art and nature. This and many other works, for instance by Robert Lepenik & Winfried Ritsch, Heimo Lattner, Trio Zebra, Klangforum Wien, will be billing on the musikprotokoll weekend.

A number of artists will focus on the connection to rural surroundings in this steirischer herbst, setting artistic accents at specific points around Styria. While performers Robert Steijn and Frans Poelstra, alias **united sorry**, get up to their theatrical mischief – “the forest project” – in the woods of Peggau with a company of young international performers, **Theater im Bahnhof** joins **Gaststube theater Gößnitz** to stage Hans Lebert’s novel “Die Wolfshaut”, with the performance touring various pubs around Styria. Quite different to **Ann Liv Young**, who will be on the road in Styria with her truck in the guise of her blonde-dyed alter ego “Sherry”, offering curative “Sherrapies” to those in need of help. The New York performer will also be presenting all four instalments of her latest piece “Sleeping Beauty” at the festival. Gently and playfully, she focuses on a figure from the world of fairy-tales, investigating why Sleeping Beauty comes across as so two-dimensional and passive in conventional stories. The Argentinian theatre and film-maker **Federico León** has chosen around 100 people in Graz for his production “Las Multitudes”: children, youngsters, young adults, adults, and senior citizens. Together with them he develops a simple love story into a poetic, touching tableau of generations interwoven with subtle humour to round off the festival.

Information and tickets:

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