



UpSideDown Circus and Space International Conference

June 28–30 2017, Münster

Zirkus | Wissenschaft

| Welcome!

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the University of Münster, I would like to welcome you to **UpSideDown—Circus and Space**, the second international conference dedicated to circus arts organized by the research project Zirkus | Wissenschaft!

I cordially invite you to participate in what promises to be stimulating conversations and collaborations on “Circus and Space”, which will be enriched by entertaining evening events hosted by our partners *GOP. Varieté-Theater Münster* and *Cirque Bouffon*.

In addition, please enjoy the traveling exhibition *Clowns* by Franzi Kreis; take advantage of the contemporary forms of conference recordings provided by *Die Zeichner*; read students’ reflections on the conference at www.kulturproleten.de; post a tweet on our twitter account *#UpSideDown17*; discuss your experiences of being a woman in circus and science; take a look at the creation process of an international bibliography of circus; and become part of the emerging network of circus researchers!

All the best,

Franziska Trapp
And the Team

| Conference Schedule

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28 2017

Opening

University of Münster – Aula im Schloss | Schlossplatz 2

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|-------------|--|
| 13:00-14:00 | Registration |
| 14:00-14:30 | Opening Remarks |
| 14:30-16:00 | Opening Keynote Circus, a Sense of Gravity Prof. Dr. Paul Bouissac (University of Toronto) |
| 16:00-16:30 | Coffee Break |

Circus and Performance Spaces

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|-------------|--|
| 16:30-18:00 | Ring, Theatre and Street <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Natalia Kloos (CRAL/EHESS, Paris) Circles in Action. The Circus and the Ring▪ Ayal Prouser (Columbia University, New York) Innovation and Innervation. Approaching Contemporary Circus through Critical Theory▪ Dr. Veronika Stefanová (CIRQUEON, Prague) Space between Circus and Theatre |
| 18:00-18:30 | <i>Traveling Exhibition by Franzi Kreis Photography</i> |

Evening Program

GOP. Varieté-Theater Münster | Bahnhofstraße 20

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|-------------|----------------------------|
| 19:00-20:00 | GOP. Dinner |
| 20:00 | GOP. Show <i>Impulse</i> |

THURSDAY, JUNE 29 2017

Circus Bodies and Space

Cirque Bouffon – Big Top | Am Schlossplatz

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|-------------|--|
| 09:00-10:30 | Keynote Verticality, Circularity, Gravity in Circus: Performative, Dramaturgic, Scenographic and Industrial Applications Prof. Dr. Philippe Goudard (Paul Valéry University, Montpellier) Presentation in collaboration with Sandy Sun, Trapeze Virtuoso and Choreographer |
| 10:30-11:00 | Coffee Break |
| 11:00-12:30 | Performance Analysis and Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prof. Dr. Maren Conrad and Franziska Trapp (University of Erlangen/University of Münster) Circus and Space – Semiotics of Performance ▪ Dr. Anne Hemkendreis (Leuphana University of Lüneburg) “Between the Lines”: On the Capability of the Body to Draw in Space ▪ Sebastian Belmar (Paul Valéry University, Montpellier) Understanding Circus Performances as an Art of Space ▪ Helen Embling (Deakin University, Melbourne) Aerial Rope, Vertical Impact. From Ballet to Parkour, Vertical Nomads |
| 12:30-14:00 | Lunch |
| 14:00-15:30 | Circus Practice and Space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jimmy Gonzalez (Juggler; Spain and Montréal) Juggling in Space ▪ Dr. Agathe Dumont (CNDC, Angers) Verticality, Gravity, Sense of Balance: Transmissions and Transfers between Dance and Circus ▪ Dr. Stine Degerbøl (University of Copenhagen) Circus, Moving Upside Down, What Does it Do to the Artist? ▪ Katie Gardner (University of Oxford): From the Chapiteau to the Gallery: Renegotiating Spatial Constructs in Catalyst's <i>Amygdala</i> |
| 15:30-16:00 | Coffee Break |

Keynote Lecture

University of Münster – Aula im Schloss | Schlossplatz 2

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|-------------|--|
| 16:00-17:30 | Keynote Netherspaces; Collaborative Spaces: Performance Research and Circus Practice Prof. Dr. Patrick Leroux (Concordia University, Montréal) |
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Strategic Planning Session

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| 17:45-18:30 | International Bibliography Circus – Status Quo, Possibilities and Challenges International Circus Documentation Centres: <i>Cnac</i> , <i>Artcena</i> , <i>Circusinfo Finland</i> and <i>Circuscentrum Belgium</i> |
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Evening Program

Cirque Bouffon – Big Top | Am Schlossplatz

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| 20:00 | Cirque Bouffon <i>Lunatique</i> |
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FRIDAY, JUNE 30 2017

Circus and Cultural Spaces

Cirque Bouffon – Big Top | Am Schlossplatz

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|-------------|--|
| 09:00-10:30 | Rising and Breaking Boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ilaria Bessone (University of Milan, University of Turin) Circus Bodies and Cultural Spaces Jonas Eklund (Stockholm University) Breaking Boundaries – Exploring and Defying Borders and Limits with <i>Circus Cirkör</i> Dr. Jessica Kendall (University of London) The Agent and the Artist: A Cultural Construction of 'African' Circus Performers across China, Europe and Ethiopia Franzi Kreis (Photographer, Vienna) Between Earth and Space – The Harlequin Family |
| 10:30-11:00 | Coffee Break |
| 11:00-12:30 | Creating Cultural Spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ante Ursić (UC Davis, University of California) Circus and a Settler Grammar of Place Sebastian Kann (Utrecht University) Circus Technique. Disorganizing Power and the Space of "Free Expression" Roy Gomez Cruz (Northwestern University, Evanston) <i>Festival de Circo en Mazunte</i>: Circus Festivals in Mexico as Contact Zones of Transnational Encounters Kristy Seymour (Griffith University Gold Coast Campus, Australia) The Spatiality of Australian Contemporary Circus |
| 12:30-14:00 | Lunch |
| 14:00-15:30 | Keynote Cheerful, Nostalgic, Melancholic: Circus Moodiness as Cultural Space Prof. Dr. Peta Tait (La Trobe University, Melbourne): |
| 15:30-16:00 | Coffee Break |

Conclusion and Outlook

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| 16:00-16:30 | Graphic-Recording-Conclusion |
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Interdisciplinary Workshop

University of Münster – Festsaal | Schlossplatz 5

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| 16:30-18:00 | Women Circus Work Gender Female Students and Speakers |
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Closing

Restaurant Mocca d'Or | Rothenburg 14-16

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| 19:00 | Reception: Restaurant Mocca d'Or |
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| Review

Review | Semiotics of the Circus 2015

1st International Conference on Circus Research; held in Münster, Germany 2015

Le cirque bouge, bougez avec lui!

Circus | France in the 1970s:

The traditional circensic code is no longer constitutive of the evolving *New Circus*. The artists of the contemporary genre are no longer the offspring of circus families but graduates of state-recognized circus schools; animals have been mostly banished from programs and the tent is no longer the exclusive performance space.

The new circus performances are based on traditional circus disciplines (acrobatics, object manipulation and clownery) and supplemented by theatrical and choreographic elements. Its goal is no longer to underline the superhumanity of the artist and the particularity of the tricks through a Babylonian structure, which sketches the elements according to difficulty, but rather to respond to current social and political issues, to create art and to narrate. Therefore, the fundamental process of meaning creation in circus has changed.

Zirkus | Wissenschaft – Semiotics of the Circus

In April 2015, this development in the circus genre became the focus of over 70 researchers, artists and professionals from 17 different countries, who came together to discuss how and under which conditions meaning is produced and transmitted in the so-called *New* and *Contemporary Circus* and the ways in which these constructions of meaning depend on *Traditional Circus* performances.

The presentations were as diverse as the genre itself: In juxtaposing historical, ontological, semiotic, economical, anthropological, neurological, praxis-related and artistic approaches, we created a kaleidoscopic overview of the main discourses related to the semiotics of the traditional, new and contemporary circus.

What is circus (Guy)? In what way is circus based on artefacts and cultures from earlier periods (Goudard)? What are Traditional Circus' ritualistic values and functions (Bouissac)? How are circensic archetypes and codes established in Traditional Circus performances and abandoned, transformed or recycled in New and Contemporary Circus performances (Benoist, Rein, Vimercati)? How do circus performances and disciplines relate to social and political reality (Ursić)? How do New and Contemporary Circus performances reproduce, reinvent or invent the idea of circus (Trapp, Eklund, Görgen)? How do circus aesthetics develop from the artists' perspective (Sun, Extreme Symbiosis)? In what ways have circus professions and practices changed (Kreusch, Damkjaer)? These questions have been answered by exploring the relations between Traditional, New and Contemporary Circus.

For further information please, see www.zirkuswissenschaft.de

| Preview

Preview | UpSideDown—Circus and Space 2017

“In acrobatics, we say that we are lost, that is, we do not know whether it’s the top or the bottom, whether we are climbing or falling.” With these words, the circus performance *Acrobates – une histoire d’art et d’amitié* (France) opens by drawing attention to one of the major characteristics of circus: its special relation to *space*. The significance of space in circus is ubiquitous: *Gravity & Other Myths* (Australia) visualizes the spatiality of circus in their company name; *Gandini juggling* (UK) entitled their current show *4x4 Ephemeral Architectures*; the performance *Hans was Heiri*, created by *Zimmermann & De Perrot* (Switzerland), is based on spatial scenic research; and in the cyr wheel act by *Aimé Morales* (Venezuela), the apparatus within the diegesis is used as a boundary to a mythic world. According to Paul Bouissac, it is even possible to attribute to circus “*a sui generis* spatial semiotics.” Over the last centuries the circus arts have been performed at different spaces such as the ring, the stage and the street, highly affecting the public’s reception. Circus artists and shows are able to travel throughout the world and adapt to the prevailing cultural paradigms. Circus disciplines take up the width, depth and height of three-dimensional space. Circus bodies defy gravity by turning themselves upside down.

This conference examines the question of space in the context of traditional, new and contemporary circus through the lens of semiotics. Fields such as Liminal Spaces, Theories of Place and Space, Borders and Border Crossing, Performing in and Mapping Space, and Transnational Spaces may also be considered. Its aim is to deepen the knowledge obtained at the previous conference, “Semiotics of the Circus” (2015).

Panels:

- I. Circus and Performance Spaces
- II. Circus Bodies and Space
- III. Circus and Cultural Spaces

Work cited: Bouissac, Paul: Semiotics at the Circus. De Gruyter: Berlin/New York 2010. p. 11.

Abstracts

Opening

Prof. Dr. Paul Bouissac | Circus and Space: A Sense of Gravity

The space of the circus can be described and analyzed in terms of geometry and topology. These approaches apply to the variable surfaces it occupies when it takes over a portion of public or private space within which it inserts itself temporarily. Topology is relevant to the specific way in which the parts of the space occupied by the circus are related to each other irrespective of their particular dimension or abstract geometrical properties. Topology is the domain pertaining to the differentiation of values. It introduces the semantic dimensions that oppose the notions of in vs out, center vs periphery, figure vs margins, high vs low, profane vs sacred, territorial vs open, and the like. However, as interesting as this approach may be, there is nothing specific about this spatial conceptualization of the circus. This kind of analysis, both geometrical and topological, is relevant to practically all social institutions that are embodied in social space and imply continuous movements, step by step, for exploratory or transitory purposes.

The specific space of the circus is the four-dimensional space of gravity. This is not an abstract consideration but, on the contrary, the very essence of its existence. It is the domain in which everything has weight and falls if it is not maintained in its stable position. In ordinary life, we take that for granted and we forget that the mere fact of walking is a constant loss and gain of balance. This paper will discuss the circus from the point of view of its verticality and the challenge that gravitation represents for survival on the planet earth. Gravity or gravitation (from the Latin *gravis* = heavy, serious) can be expressed by mathematical equations or, more concretely, by weights and measures, but it is also an existential condition which can be identified with the human condition itself. The circus is the node where all these factors merge to produce not only a physical and biological event, but also a deeply existential and symbolic experience.

Circus and Performance Spaces

Natalia Kloos | Circles in Action. The Circus and the Ring

In 1950, Fernand Léger, enthusiastically exhorting readers to go to the circus, draws attention to the singularity of this aesthetic experience, especially regarding its architectural shape: “You leave your rectangles, your geometrical windows and you go to the land of circles in action. [...] Roundness is free. It has no beginning and no end.”¹

¹ Fernand Léger, *Cirque*, Verve, 1950; translated in *Fernand Léger - The Later Years* -, catalogue edited by Nicolas Serota, published by the Trustees of the Whitechapel Art gallery, London, Prestel Verlag, 1988, p. 41.

Such a praise articulates both the intuition of a perspective displacement due to the ring device and the fantasies which arise from it. Since then, the circus' circle has never ceased being the subject of comments and aesthetic, if not ontological, disputes (is it essential to circus?). In these debates, two entangled topics collide: the spectacular effects resulting from the circular form invoke a political imaginary.

Some would say that the ring embodies the “perfect panopticon”, therefore taking part in the tradition of antique circus games and feeding the image of artistic bodies as sacrificed bodies—all exposed in a sort of arena where risk is central. This analysis is based precisely on the same point which leads others to argue that the ring is an eminently democratic architectural form: the so-called equal distance between each spectator and each action taking place in the centre of the ring allows a global view for everyone. But these conclusions are inaccurate: in the circus, each spectator sees alternately a portion of the action as artists wheel around. According to the spot chosen, one will have a better view of the tightrope walker or the swinging of the trapeze. When one takes a closer look at the spectator’s place in the circular device, it is precisely the piecemeal experience which is really shared by all. Far from a panopticon, it is rather a fragmentary world which can be seen. This observation and its aesthetical—therefore ethical and political—consequences will be questioned on the basis of spectacular analyses (mainly from Johann Le Guillerm’s *Secret*, Fragan Ghelker’s *Le Vide. Essai de cirque* and Vimala Pons and Tsiriaka Harrivel’s *Grande*). What does the circular device produce?

Ayal Prouser | Innovation and Innervation. Approaching Contemporary Circus through Critical Theory

Calling primarily on theorists associated with the Frankfurt School and their contemporaries (Brecht, Adorno, Benjamin, Bloch, Eisenstein, etc.), my paper argues that by leaving the ring and entering into theatres, Contemporary Circus has all the formal and cultural elements to, as Walter Benjamin says, “innervate” its audience. Interestingly, many theorists and artists from the Frankfurt Era within the realm of critical theory and Marxism make offhand comments about circus. Most are positive. Adorno says that a single trick from a circus performer has the power equal to a complete work of art to transcend the audience. Ernst Bloch calls circus “the only down-to-earth, honest performance.” Though not an entirely explicit reference, Brecht calls for more sports in theatre, or an athletic art, a common categorization of circus. For Ernst Bloch, part of the honesty and innervating capacity of circus is rooted in the space in which circus was performed, a ring with no walls or barriers—a veneration of circus’ ability to allow people to enter their space regardless of origin. Bloch further praises circus for its peripatetic nature: he shows an admiration for circus’ ability to travel—seamlessly and, seemingly—without politics from space to space. This of course was all referring to traditional circus.

Employing the same Frankfurt era approach (i.e., circus theorists such as Peta Tait) and semiotics, this paper strives to investigate the ontological and epistemological changes which occur with the transition from ring to theatre. As a case study, I will analyze the show *TRACES* by the Montreal-based troupe, Les Sept Doigts De La Main, which was also influential in the United States contemporary circus scene (also an appropriate name

when utilizing theorization of habit and innervation by Benjamin). Using this show as text, I argue that a theatre-based circus show, even more so than its ring-based predecessor, has the ability to act as a habit-forming *Spielraum*. It catalyzes innervation and what would be deemed a positive outlook on the world by Marxists and critical theorists of the first half of the twentieth century. This is primarily achieved through visible labor, which is directly connected to a cornerstone of circus, human exceptionalism. *TRACES* applies Brechtian techniques similar to Epic Theatre, as well as other techniques about which Brecht theorized but did not necessarily apply. A combination of repetition and invoking yet rejecting cultural understandings of circus and theatre is another syntagm within the innervating paradigm. Together this establishes a unique grammar and language specific to contemporary circus. In regard to its relationship to borders and the changing of space, from a ring to an often bourgeois theater, circus has been epistemologically transformed, and with the change from traditional to contemporary has ontologically transformed, and this paper will assist in the theorizing of this affect.

Dr. Veronika Štefanová | The Space between Circus and Theatre

How is a performance space capable of affecting the meaning of the performance and the perception of the audience? How will the theatre and circus discourse change when their natural performative environments are altered, i.e., when circus is staged in a theatre and theatre takes place in a circus? In my paper I will attempt to examine the question of the space between circus and theatre through the lens of semiotics. I will focus on two key Czech theatre performances and on one circus performance which is widely considered to be the first Czech contemporary circus performance ever staged.

In 1974, the Czech actor, director and clown Ctibor Turba erected a circus tent in Letná Park in Prague, a location once used for the big tops of traditional circus companies. In this small, patched-up circus tent, the playwright placed a theatrical production entitled *Clownery*. This was perhaps the first time that circus poetics appeared on the Czech stage in such a sophisticated conceptual form. Even then, Ctibor Turba understood the circus tent and the circus ring as a purely theatrical space. The purpose of *Clownery* was to communicate the circus topic and form in a theatrical dramatization of individual clown characters. The director thus transformed the traditional circus area, i.e., the ring, into a theatre environment. The actors' actions thus transformed the ring of Circus Alfred into a theatre stage. For Turba the clown was a figure, character, type and theatrical material, a means to portray his notions of the essence of humanity. What is more, his productions featured the clown as an exaggeration of humanity, a truly metaphorical representation of human nature.

A procedure similar to Turba's was employed by the Forman Brothers Theatre in a production entitled *Freak Show* (2009), staged in a brand-new circus building. The production is a model example. In it, circus becomes a theatrical theme and the circus elements of the production become inspired by circus and its symbolism. In the productions of *Clownery* and *Freak Show*, the sign system of the circus is transformed into the sign system of the theatre. On the other hand, *The Flow of Time* (2004) takes place in a purely theatrical space with a frontally arranged stage. Director and company

leader Pavel Št'ourač spent years in search of a form which would allow him to merge circus and theatre. The production utilizes primarily as means of expression puppet and shadow theatre procedures as well as elements of nonverbal theatre, aerial acrobatics and artistic cycling. The lecture aims to introduce how Contemporary Circus productions blend circus and theatre aesthetics, how the sign system of the circus interacts with the sign system of theatre and how this leads to the enrichment of the meanings of these two close art forms.

Circus Bodies and Space

Prof. Dr. Philippe Goudard in Collaboration with Sandy Sun | Verticality, Circularity and Gravity in Circus: Performative, Dramaturgic, Scenographic and Economical Applications

After reviewing briefly the fundamental physiological, aesthetic and symbolic components of circus forms and performances, this presentation will focus on the roles which two creators and researchers gave to verticality, circularity and gravity in several of their contemporary circus creations.

Sandy Sun, lead ace of the trapeze, will show the place of these constants in her acrobatic, performative and choreographic writing in several of her acts (1980, 1984) as well as in her pedagogy (2005).

Philippe Goudard will propose a dramaturgic and scenographic approach of several opus of his works: *Le cirque intérieur*² is bound with the circular show, but borrows frontal and circular devices from the theatrical architectures and *cirquesques*; *Empreintes*³ explores the sound space of bodies, apparatus and reception of the audience; *Le Cirque Nu*,⁴ a scenographic, musical, sound, performative proposal, is based on a cyclic dramaturgy; *Transversal Vagabond*,⁵ an ultralight, adaptable circus, whose dramaturgy is based on the concepts of mobility, interculturality and adaptability, as well as on an alternative economic model, creates a wider diffusion space. Finally, the metaphor of the top and bottom will be explored in several extracts of Goudard's own clowns works, such as *Motusse and Paillasse—Clowns*⁶ and *Ups and downs*,⁷ and in other artists' clowns works on stage or screen.

Franziska Trapp and Prof. Dr. Maren Conrad | Circus and Space – A Semiotic of Performance

In her first *Open Letter to the Circus*, contemporary circus dramatist Bauke Lievens writes: "Circus acts always interrupt the narrative. It is simply not possible to combine the two in one smooth whole. At the moment of physical danger (of presence), the story

² *Le cirque intérieur* (1984, 1985)

³ *Empreintes* (1993)

⁴ *Le Cirque Nu* (1995)

⁵ *Transversal Vagabond* (2006)

⁶ *Motusse and Paillasse – clowns* (1975, 1985)

⁷ *Ups and downs* (2009)

(the representation) simply stops.”⁸ Success or failure of circus narration crucially depends on the success or failure of movement through space and interaction with this space, i.e., it depends on the performance of an acrobat. In the moment of failure, the circus performance ultimately refers back to itself, because its media-specific materiality is foregrounded, laying bare an aesthetics of risk. In stark contrast to literary and filmic artefacts, space itself is the main premise of the performance, thus functioning as the central enabling constituent for the construction of the circus as a secondary semiotic system in the sense of Jurij M. Lotman. This paper regards the movement of the acrobat through the stage space as constantly threatened by failure, and seeks to conceptualize this specific form of spatial interaction, which leads to the emergence of narrative and meaning through its successful completion.

Dr. Anne Hemkendreis | “Between the Lines”: On the Capability of the Body to Draw in Space

The term “alignment” is central to contemporary circus. When put into a historical context, it marks an aesthetic category, referring to the dependency, connection and division of subject and space. Two major concepts of space underlie this assumption: the architectonic space, on the one hand, and the performative space, on the other, which includes the viewer as a creating force. But what happens when physical lines and spatial vectors become a playground of contortion, displacement and rotation in contemporary circus performances? Is this a manifestation of classical ideas of beauty in an ideal space or does it signify a broken and disoriented body? Could the redefinition of alignment and the play with its form serve the purpose of including circus art into an aesthetic development in which the line becomes a symbol of the transcendent (Antiquity/Medieval Times), of excess and splendor (Pre-modern Times), of inwardness and infinity (Modern Times) and lastly of abstraction, thereby always reflecting the relation between human beings and their surroundings?

Based on the methods of image research and dance studies this paper wants to explore the conscious utilization of the line in artistic performances in its faculty to define the body in space, while putting a special focus on the actual circus scene of Berlin. In doing so, the three major characteristics, meaning the curve, the angle and the straight line, are being taken into consideration regarding the dissolution of inside vs outside, body vs space and shape vs form. This leads to the assumption of an intended shift of the viewers’ perception from a manifestation of the artistic body as an ideal or broken character on the one side and the body’s potential to extend in an infinite space beyond any limitation or rational definition on the other.

This becomes clear for example in Ana Jordao’s performance “Between the lines”.⁹ Here, the rope is not used to undertake supreme tricks but to scrutinize its ability to signify gravity, coordination and direction. In one of the first sequences, the rope becomes a staircase which the artist uses to climb up and down simultaneously. This main feature of the circus (as world being put upside down) is further exemplified in the rope being

⁸ Lievens, Bauke: Open Letter to the Circus. The need to redefine. <http://www.e-tcetera.be/first-open-letter-2>

⁹ See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rWvpEtFiQwY>.

arranged as a circle. Thus, it reinterprets the theatre stage as a circus ring while at the same time it is used by the artist to walk out its inner scale. Lastly, being postured as the outline of a body, the viewer is reminded of a missing person and directly entangled into a question of presence and absence. To sum it up, this paper explores the fundamental challenge of our understanding of reality in reference to the body's relation to space, as one of the major topics of contemporary circus. Consequently, it inquires into the cultural and aesthetic conditioning of our perception.

Sebastian Belmar | Understanding Circus Performance as an Art of Space

What kind of space is produced by contemporary circus production? Space for acts of resistance or for art hybridization? Ever since the theory of relativity was published a new conception of time and space was established, modifying art production into vertiginous levels of creation. These ideas were crystallized, for instance, at the Bauhaus School, where Oskar Schlemmer arrived in 1920 and considered ideas of harmony between sounds and colours in the same way as Kandinsky and Shomberg. To complete his work, he used the new technologies associated with the universal law of art appearing from the measure and rhythm of the human body. To reconsider scenic representation, he used popular elements from the music hall: cirque, cabaret acrobats, marionettes, etc. His work considered scenic phenomena as a place to crystallize the arts. The mathematics of the body reveals the corporal dynamic of movement, entering the fields of gymnastics and acrobatics. If we imagine that we could see the impression left in space by the trajectories of the moving body, we could appreciate a plastic representation in which we could expand the plane surface of the grown into a consideration of a sterometrical space. Laban also represented this conceptual idea during the same period. His achievements in the fields of movement notation, choreography and the architecture of the body in movement help us to communicate movement experience.

If we consider the ideas expressed by Schlemmer about scenic performance, this should be considered as an art of absolute precision, presenting the latest technologies: mobile stage (horizontal and vertical), turning stage, moving ground (like running machines), elevators, mapping projections, etc. Most important is how the different space data, height, width and length are combined and connected with the measure of the bodies on the stage, and how the movement trajectories create different tensions and dramas in space. Space is composed of different forces, material and times to become the genesis of an architectonic movement, which can be better developed within the open boundaries of circus.

After discussing the circle phenomenology, the different attitudes become apparent, such as the one from Johan le Guillerme of Cirque ici, who defends the position that the circle is the natural form of human gathering and that it is not possible to think of the circus outside of the circular configuration. However, present day circus performance has proven its adaptability, offering different possible representations: it may be site-specific, or take place in a theatre or cinema, among others. Most importantly, this place of representation offers the possibility of questioning and creating different spaces, of going even further than 3D consideration, capable of producing a spherical space of

presentation, almost in levitation. These possibilities can only be explored by a special kind of body.

After investigating the formation of circus performance, it is striking how this specific technique not only develops a physicality which is able to explore the limits of human movement in different spatial configurations, but also questions the psychological limits of humans facing risk: falling, vertigo or even death. A specific kind of dramaturgy might emerge as evidence of this dilemma. This problem, which has become a focus of interest of our days could be considered in light of specific parameters which are fundamental to circus language: Verticality, equilibrium and repulsion. These physical notions define physical and psychological engagement and are also necessary to discover different transpositions, to develop a poetic representation, to compose the dramatic plot of a given creation. This point opens up the possibility to present, explore and discuss different creative processes, such as Aurelien Bory (Cie 111) and his trilogy (*IJK*, *Plan B* and *Plus ou moins l'infini*), Kitsou Dubois, Martin Zimmerman, among others.

Helen Empling | Aerial Rope, Vertical Impact. From Ballet to Parkour, Vertical Nomads

Circus semantics have evolved in recent years following new trends and types of apparatus. In aerial terms, the notion of “verticals” has emerged, which encompasses “tissu” alias aerial silk or aerial fabric, “corde lisse” alias the rope and the various forms of multicordes; moreover, there is also the hanging pole and the Chinese pole. Another recently identified and designated aerial category is that of “single points aerials”, which includes, among others, “lyra” alias aerial ring, dance trapeze, straps and the aforementioned verticals (except the Chinese pole). How does this new terminology resonate in terms of semiotics and cultural spaces? The object of this paper will not be to itemize the protagonists of the above categories but rather to analyze the underlying philosophy of the techniques and performance styles, with an emphasis on the arguably current tenor of the genre, that is, the corde lisse.

Once upon a time—only a few decades ago when the New Circus emerged—there was the Spanish web, *la Corde*. Even though the stars of this art form, such as Lilan Leitzel, displayed extraordinary strength, skill and energy, this specialty was an essentially feminine, motion-assisted work, often used to cover the striking of a cage in Traditional Circus. Then came the 1991 vertical aggression of Ramon Fernandez in *Metal Clown*, one of the most influential acts in the evolution of the corde lisse. Contemporary rope techniques have a wide range of influences from the Indian *mallakhamb* to flying and swinging trapeze techniques and breakdancing, often as different interpretations of the same skill. The common space is the rope. Referents, verticality, symmetry and gravity are questioned as an intrinsic part of the rope work within a rapidly increasing search for flight and new forms of artistic expression.

A philosophy of exchange and apprenticeship has led to a nomadic culture based on what could be characterized as “*Les Compagnons du Tour du Monde*” as per the elite traditional apprenticeship model the “*Compagnons du Tour De France*”. The Tour includes international rope meetings and rope battles featuring in rock concerts. Settings are urban and natural environments, challenging norms and fear in a parkour-like perspective. This

culture does not assume a specific layer of circus, traditional or contemporary. The space is the rope and its associated philosophy, defining a new minimalist nomadic architecture that transcends existing culture, generating its own cultural space. The question arises, *Beyond the notion of language or art form, can specific skills or categories be considered as a cultural philosophical space within an increasingly conscious form of virtual circus architecture?*

Works cited include Philippe Goudard, Katie Lavers, Peta Tait, David Belle, Georges Hebert, Camilla Djamkkaer, Anna Halprin, Deleuze et Guattari, Vidler and De Botton, among others; companies referred to include Compagnie Sens Dessus-Dessous Circa, Gravity and Other Myths, By A Thread, The Element of Consequence and Compagnie du Poivre Rose.

Circus Practice and Space

Jimmy Gonzalez in an Interview with Riikka Juutinen | Juggling in Space

Jimmy Gonzalez, a professional circus artist with international experience, will discuss juggling and the meaning of space.

- As a juggler, you use space both vertically and horizontally. What kind of effects do the restrictions of space have on the creation process of your performances?
- How do different venues—i.e., the traditional circular stage or frontal seating arrangements—affect your performances and the creation of them?
- What do you think of the use of the juggler's own body in the performance? How does it become a “circus body” that performs on its own terms, uses the space and interacts with the audience?
- And, simply, how do you use space in your performances to create performative spaces and meanings?

Dr. Agathe Dumont | Verticality, Gravity, Sense of Balance. Transmissions and Transfers between Dance and Circus

“To rise, to stand, to move: no movement is performed without involving gravity, without a dialogue with gravity” explains Ushio Amagatsu,¹⁰ choreographer, pedagogue and emblematic figure of Butô dance. Whether on the ground, in the air or in weightlessness the body is always anchored to a point. Gravity is a physical phenomenon that no one can escape and it acts almost as a landmark. If the body defies gravity, it constantly brings it back to its physical reality. If someone imagines himself going higher, gravity carves his gestures and imprints its mark on his figures. Looking at two arts, dance and the circus, we could tell that they do not work in the same body or in the same spaces. The dancer will turn his attention to the horizontal, he will try to perceive the dimensions of the plateau and he will test the quality of the floor. The circus artist will raise his eyes towards the vertical, the heights of the stage, he will see above the three dimensions of

¹⁰ Ushio Amagatsu, Dialogue avec la gravité, traduit du japonais par Patrick De Vos, Arles, Actes Sud - Papiers, coll. « Le souffle de l'esprit », 2000.

space to “measure” the void.

Going further in what builds our habit of gravity we can identify “sensations” of gravity from very common gestures to high technical circus skills: something that falls from our hands, missing a step, climbing on a Chinese pole, a rope or suspended from a trapeze or a hoop. Hubert Godard theorized and analyzed this conflict between the body and gravity in order to determine the parameters, both functional and expressive, behind our posture and our gestures. From a symbolic point of view, he speaks of the construction of the gesture in a ground/sky axis determining our consciousness of the body. For him, this “dialogue with gravity” is our gravitational identity, our posture bears our history, our affects. “In each posture, in every gesture, we read the psycho-physical organization that has founded our verticality, to gravity”, says Hubert Godard.¹¹

Therefore, how far can we challenge gravity? Working in another space as circus artists usually leads to renounce, in a way, our spatial and corporeal organization. In the conquest of this otherness, the game with gravity oscillates between the fear of jumping into the void and the enjoyment of the imbalance. Through kinesthetic empathy anyone who watches (the audience watching a show, the teacher watching his/her student) faces a body that plays on its emotional ability to receive or perceive gravity. Through the words of contemporary circus artists and circus arts teachers, we will examine the perception of these stakes of perception of verticality and gravity and the ways of transmitting the “sense” of balance both from a sensitive point of view and from the point of view of movement analysis. Interviews with teachers and circus artists in the framework of their activity have shown that the approaches to these issues are diverse. Sometimes the accent will be on the anatomy and the physiological or bio-mechanical mechanisms of the body, sometimes attention will focus on sensations.

Dr. Stine Degerbøl | Circus, Moving Upside Down. What Does it Do to the Artist?

A poem dedicated to the man who “invented” the flying trapeze, French Jules Léotard (1838–1870), goes like this:

Off again. – Oh, what a sight! Few could jump so great a height. Still more strange, I do declare, he’s turning over in the air! There he goes, - head over heels! Don’t you wonder how he feels? ¹²

The poem seems to formulate an essence that highlights the artist’s relation to space, and capacity. Great academic research has been done on how aerial acts affect the public’s reception.¹³ The embodied sensations of the audience have been the focus, whereas this presentation would like to emphasize the embodied sensations of the artist and thereby add to research taking the artist into account as a subject.¹⁴

Circus is a relevant object of research for cultural studies, including pedagogics and

¹¹ Hubert Godard « À propos des théories sur le mouvement », Marsyas. n° 16, Paris, Cité de la Musique, December 1990.

¹² Dean & Son, 1862 In.: Lartigue, 2009, p. 85

¹³ Tait, 2005

¹⁴ Zaccarini, 2013

didactics. For this occasion, the following questions are the point of departure: Don't you wonder how it feels to be the artist, to defy gravity, to turn upside down and to widen, deepen and heighten the three-dimensional space? Don't you wonder how the artist feels when exploring the space? Don't you wonder what it takes to get to achieve a movement repertoire which makes an artist an artist? Don't you wonder what the artist might learn in addition to exploring the space? Don't you wonder how the artist might learn to establish such a movement repertoire? Taking into account theories on embodied learning¹⁵ and creativity¹⁶ these issues will be elaborated, with some consideration of didactics¹⁷.

Kathie Gardner | From the Chapiteau to the Gallery: Renegotiating Spatial Constructs in Catalyst's *Amygdala*

This paper will present research conducted during a collaboration with Catalyst (France) from March 20-26, 2017. The company is currently preparing their full-length piece *Amygdala* for an upcoming summer tour throughout Italy, and I am joining them as a researcher-in-residence during a creation intensive. The proposed paper will examine Catalyst's creation process, present video and photographic documentation of a work-in-progress performance of *Amygdala* and offer a brief analysis of the research collaboration between myself and Catalyst.

Spatiality is central to the creative impetus behind *Amygdala*. The piece aims to situate the performers into a space that renegotiates what it means to corporeally occupy, use and deconstruct the spaces bodies inhabit and, ultimately, affect. The circus artists (Rosario Amato, Natalie Oleinik and Marina Messogiorno-Brown) explain that "the concept for this project is to cross the boundaries between circus and visual arts to create an immersive space that reflects the human presence in the natural world."¹⁸

Drawing from Richard Leppert's concept of the performing body as both *sight* and *site*, I am interested in the following questions: How do the artists challenge / adapt / deconstruct expectations of circus bodies inhabiting specific spaces? How do the artists construct physical and conceptual perceptions of spatiality through their corporeal use of space? What is the relationship between corporeal and non-corporeal objects in the performance space? How do the artists plan to immerse / retrain / focus the audience to perceive physical, conceptual and architectural realizations of space? What are the spatial uses of the body that reveal the circus body as a nexus for complex spatial identities? It is my aim that this research partnership with the artists of Catalyst will provide further insight into how meaning is spatially constructed and conceived during the creation period in contemporary circus arts.

¹⁵ Antilla, 2007, 2008; Barbour 2001; Stelter, 2002; Whitehead, 2001

¹⁶ Biesta, 2014

¹⁷ Hiim & Hippe, 2007; Klafki, 2016

¹⁸ www.catalystcircus.com

Prof. Dr. Louis Patrick Leroux | Netherspaces; Collaborative Spaces: Performance Research and Circus Practice

There are performance spaces—circular, focalized, observed by audiences who occupy their own active spaces of reception. There are discursive spaces, aesthetic postures, institutional positions. There are spaces aligned horizontally or vertically according to scenographic or acrobatic logic. There are spatial mobilities of families and clans and circus professionals. But what of the “netherspace” of academic inquiry which flirts with creation; what space can we allow for research-creation as seen through the scope of action-research? Can such a space resist dilettantes and creators in search of a venue? Must such a space resist them? What space can one define for research that isn’t strictly academic, nor industrial in ambition, but that allows for the study of processes while acknowledging a constructive contamination of this study space by its very self-reflexivity and agency?

Through my current explorations in the poetics and circus of circus dramaturgy in the context of the National Circus School in Montreal and other recent explorations with other companies and artists, I’ll attempt to define and perhaps defend a space for pure, experimental research as it can benefit industry and artistry no doubt, but also as it can become its own sustained performative act.

Rising and Breaking Boundaries

Ilaria Bessone | Circus Bodies and Cultural Spaces

Among the many contemporary bodily practices, contemporary circus is particularly interesting because, at least in Italy, it still lacks codification, formalization and fixation of learning paths, specific aesthetic and performative standards and body techniques which characterize sports and ballet; it still relies extensively on creativity, improvisation, personal skills and the views and experiences of the practitioners.

This enables a high diversity and variability of notions of what an “ideal” circus body is, and how it is to be achieved, across sectors, institutions, approaches and individual practitioners engaging with contemporary circus practices. Moreover, the body in circus is present in a peculiar way, opposite to the “asepticised” and “abstract” body,¹⁹ shaped by broader social trends.

The interviews on which I based my PhD research included the question of whether circus practitioners may be recognized as such outside the circus space—while walking in the street, or drinking coffee in a bar, for instance. The responses pointed to elements of style and attitude, and highlighted different “typologies” of circus people, which were related to environment, age and other subcultural references. The expressive, symbolic and distinctive function of style—in its components of image, argot and demeanour²⁰—was thus reasserted in the community of circus practice. Style as a “focal concern” helps

¹⁹ Marzano-Parisoli, M. M. (2002). *Penser le corps*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.

²⁰ Brake, M. (2003). The use of subculture as an analytical tool in sociology. In Comparative youth culture. The Sociology of Youth Cultures and Youth Subcultures in America, Britain and Canada. London and New York: Routledge

practitioners to orient themselves and establish subcultural, internal and external boundaries.

However, despite the predominant style of the hippie circus person, circus practice mostly remains a “secret” that only well-trained eyes can decipher. Thus, the marks left by circus practice were searched by the respondents more in depth than clothing or hairstyle, on the skin (in the form of calluses, bruises, scars), muscle shape and size, or deeper still, in ways of interacting, seeing the world and feeling, such as a communitarian spirit and “family-like” environment, a kind of “craziness” and anarchy which doesn’t exist in competitive sports, and a higher sensitivity. In this paper I will focus on how circus practitioners draw cultural spaces and boundaries through the embodiment and transmission of a specific knowledge and expertise, which in circus is still mainly tacit and bodily, and the reflexive construction of an adequate “circus self” through body, emotion and authenticity work.

Jonas Eklund | Breaking Boundaries—Exploring and Defying Borders and Limits with Circus Cirkör

In 2015 the number of displaced people in the world reached an all-time high. As more than 65 million people were forced away from their homes and refugees were drowning in the Mediterranean Sea in an effort to reach safety, nations around the world began closing their borders.

Circus has a long tradition of celebrating diversity—mixing nationalities as well as cultural expressions—in the acts and its aesthetics. Throughout history traveling circuses have defied borders and limits both in the geo-political world and in their acts. In Sweden the leading circus company, Cirkus Cirkör, is engaged in social matters and uses circus as a tool to break boundaries. In 2015 Cirkus Cirkör celebrated its twentieth anniversary with the show *Borders*, which dealt with the current refugee situation in the world. With the use of strong imageries of oppression, combined with spectacular acts, they evoked mixed emotions of celebration and distress in the audience. In 2016 the following show *Limits* further investigated circus as an arena for a public discussion of boundaries and the situation in the world. Cirkus Cirkör uses circus to engage and inform audiences of the ongoing humanitarian crisis, relating it to darker times of history and showing that both borders and limits are human constructions—another world is indeed possible. In view of these shows, I place myself in the audience and analyze the use of the body, the acts and the stage and how the boundaries in the world are challenged.

Dr. Jessica Kendall | The Agent and the Artist: a Cultural Construction of “African” Circus Performers Across China, Europe and Ethiopia

Recent years have seen both the growth of “African” circus as a unique niche within the broader global economy of spectacle, as well as the rise of Ethiopian circus performers working as independent players within an increasingly international circus industry. This paper explores the relationship between the agent and the artist in the practice of constructing innovative and cultural “African” circus bodies that appeal to a global market. The creation of circus performances involves intimate and innovative

collaborations between circus performers and the “agents” they work with, including individuals, proprietors, agencies, companies and local and/or foreign governments. In fact, in a global world, a circus performer is dependent upon these mediators as essential mobilizers in the act of building a successful international career. In the case of Ethiopian circus performers who are attempting to build better lives for themselves and their families through working hard with their bodies and increasing their own market value and mobility in the corporeal economy of circus, the stakes of the collaboration between artist and agent take on a particularly cultural tone.

This paper is based on data collected during 12 months of multi-sited fieldwork through six different countries in which I tracked the movements of a troupe of six Ethiopian circus performers as they trained in China on an acrobatics cultural exchange and subsequently performed in an “African” themed circus production in Europe. I examine how the troupe’s various on-the-ground collaborations with agents innovated and developed their acts into a culturally symbolic so-called “African” style that was highly marketable in Europe. I further consider how one particular key agent—a former circus performer from Zimbabwe—was emblematic of what Nikolas Rose calls an expert of subjectivity; an authority on the cultural micropolitics of “African” circus who helped the troupe creatively channel their extreme embodied habituses into a cultural product that they could truly call “their own”.

Franzi Kreis | Between Earth and Space—The Harlequin Family

There is a space of magic and chaos, upside down. As an ancient character of the Italian commedia dell’arte, Harlequin is distinguished by the quality of a never-ending role-play connecting him to the universe. Similar to the joker in a game of cards, Harlequin changes his function and how he acts, his energy lies in the friction between antithetic poles. Inspired by the idea of Harlequin, the portrait project *Clowns* documents the photographer Franzi Kreis’ encounters with people who combine clowning, circus, dance, surrealistic bodies, drag, or shamanism to enter the spaces that are in-between. The ongoing traveling exhibition has been shown at different venues including festivals, such as *La Strada* Graz (AT 2015/16), *Festival d’Aurillac* (FR 2016), *Festival Novog Cirkusa*, Zagreb (HR 2016) or *Cirkopolis Festival*, Prague (CZ 2017).

Creating Cultural Spaces

Ante Ursić | Circus and a Settler Grammar of Place

For my presentation, I start with the premise that a neutral space as such does not exist. Space is always invested with power. Power relation can work in alliances, alongside each other and/or in opposition to each other. As a practitioner and scholar working and studying in North America, I am especially interested in the questions of complicity of modern circus within the colonial project. Rather than thinking of circus only as an innocent and poetic art form, I contemplate how circus practices express a grammar of place which the native scholar Mishuana Goeman describes as “settler colonialism”.

Drawing on Michel De Certeau, Goeman suggests that one must address the power relations in a mapping process of space. It gives “authority to some grammars, while

denying, erasing and overlaying others.”²¹ A *settler grammar of place* assumes a space which is so to speak “empty”. Space is a blank surface, which must be surveyed, controlled, exploited; it is something to earn profits from. Through *settler grammar* space becomes a place through repetitive practices of everyday life that gives settler places meaning and structure²². This practice is ideologically marked. A settler colonial logic must disavow a *native grammar* of place, which is premised on a deeper temporal and spatial sense of belonging; it must render the native presence invisible in order to instantiate and legitimize its logic, its structure, its grammar. Further, a “settler grammar assembles an absence of violence in ongoing Native-white relations.”²³ Can we think of circus as an artistic endeavor which attempts to dominate space, both vertically and horizontally, and thus serves as a critical instantiation of the colonial *settler grammar*, which renders every space as a place to be conquered, to be owned or to be marked? How can circus engage self-critically with its complicated relationship to space and place? What are the latent acts of violence produced by modern circus practices? How can it turn spatial power relation upside down?

Sebastian Kann | Circus Technique, Disorganizing Power and the Space of “Free Expression”

“It is better to do nothing than to contribute to the invention of formal ways of rendering visible that which Empire already recognises as existent.”²⁴

“If we understand the political in the sense of the *polis*, its end or *raison d'être* would be to establish and keep in existence a space where freedom as virtuosity can appear.”²⁵

In what ways can space be a matter of concern for contemporary circus performance? In this paper, I deal with the *space of free expression*: today, circus’ most hotly contested terrain. This material and discursive space is defined and produced by the contemporary circus apparatus (in the Foucauldian sense), understood as the unity of our institutions, our workspaces, our techniques and our conventions. Does this apparatus effectively open a space of freedom? And if not, how might we constitute the circus apparatus differently?

As one way to begin answering this question, I attempt here to conceive of technical research in circus as a poetic and a political practice: poetic in the Greek sense of constructive, and political in the specifically Arendtian sense. For Hannah Arendt, politics is the performative process by which spaces of free expression and virtuosic expressions of freedom co-constitute one another. In this framework, the political ensures the possibility of action free from material necessity. I understand Heidegger’s *Gestell* (technological “enframing”) as the opposite process—antipolitical—whereby

²¹ Simpson, Audra, and Andrea Smith 2014. *Theorizing Native Studies*. Durham: Duke U Press, Print. p. 236.

²² c.f. Simpson, Audra, and Andrea Smith 2014. *Theorizing Native Studies*. Durham: Duke U Press, Print. p.237.

²³ Simpson, Audra, and Andrea Smith 2014. *Theorizing Native Studies*. Durham: Duke U Press, Print. p. 260.

²⁴ Alain Badiou, ‘Fifteen Theses on Contemporary Art’, 2005

²⁵ Hannah Arendt, ‘What is Freedom?’, 1960. In *The Portable Hannah Arendt*, ed. P. Baehr, p.438-461. 2000. New York: Penguin Books.

bodies and objects are divested of their freedom and made to serve as resources or commodities. Seen through this lens, circus practice has political potential inasmuch as we can radically differentiate technique from technology, the space of free expression from mere geometric spatialization.

If the very notion of political circus practice seems strange, this can only be due to the largely antipolitical and antipoetic nature of today's circus field. I contend that contemporary circus channels, disciplines and delimits the possibilities of the body, appropriating and instrumentalizing its transformability. Circus artists are proud of their "signature tricks", which function as their calling-cards and proof of their uniqueness, but on some level these tricks are all the same, insofar as they all used as markers of the body's commodity-value, and all produce more or less the same feeling in a spectator: awe. As such, circus today is perhaps the most literal example of the way post-Fordist capitalism seizes and commodifies self-differing. It also presents a formidable set of technical tools for resisting that seizure: "possessed by the power of the radical outside, [the body of technical practice] discovers a breathtaking power 'inside' itself, which makes it step beyond the limits of 'human'".²⁶

If circus is to emerge as an important artistic voice in the 21st century, it is essential that we reclaim circus technique as a space of free expression. Space is not the nothingness of vacuum but rather pure potentiality as such, and the re-injection of space in circus practice is predicated on what Boyan Manchev calls disorganization: the jumbling-up of functions, the blurring of forms and the re-appropriation of the body's contingency. This paper explores both the theoretical groundwork I've begun to outline above and practical examples of disorganizing exercises, drawn from aerial and acrobatic practice. I conclude that the very notion of the "trick" must shift if circus is to be taken seriously as an expressive practice.

Roy Gomez Cruz | Festival de Circo en Mazunte: Circus Festivals in Mexico as Contact Zones of Transnational Encounters

In February 2015, I conducted ethnographic research at the 5th edition of the Festival de Circo of Mazunte, one of the most important circus gatherings in Mexico. Mazunte is a small town next to the beach on the Pacific coast in Oaxaca, Mexico. Almost no human population existed in Mazunte until the 1970s, when a small community of sea turtle hunters settled there. By the 1990s, the Mexican government banned the trade of turtle. At the edge of economic collapse, Mazunte's local community was assisted by environmental groups to transform the village into an eco-friendly tourist centre. As part of these initiatives, annual events and cultural gatherings were organized to attract tourism, including the Spring Equinox Festival, an international dance and jazz festival and the Festival de Circo en Mazunte.

For the duration of the festival, Mazunte was transformed into a living circus town. During the day, approximately five-hundred people—including circus professionals,

²⁶ Boyan Manchev 2006, 127. 'Transforme: the Body of Event'. In *Dance*, ed. André Lepecki, p.125-127. 2012. London and Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press.

amateurs and circus aficionados—took part in more than thirty circus workshops and a couple of collective-creation projects and daily public performances. My paper explores the ways in which the circus festival transformed Mazunte into a *contact zone*, a concept coined by Mary Louise Pratt to refer to “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical power.”²⁷ As a contact zone, I describe the liminal spaces opened by the circus festival that mobilize transnational exchanges and intense encounters between the local community of Mazunte, foreign professional circus artists, Mexican street-performers, yogis, backpackers and members of distinct sub-cultural troupes. By Looking at these social, cultural and artistic encounters and reflecting on the tensions and escalating conflicts that arose among them, I argue for the potency of circus festivals to transfigure the spatiotemporal configuration of localities and, particularly in Mazunte, expose the asymmetrical power dynamics of post-colonial relations, structural racism and class inequality in Mexico.

Kristy Seymour | The Spatiality of Australian Contemporary Circus

An excerpt from my doctoral research into Australian contemporary circus, my paper explores how contemporary circus as an artform, and particular acts of circus, transform or change the social coding of the spaces they occupy. To gain an insight into the Australian milieu, I will be sharing two short case studies from the Australian sector: Gravity and Other Myths and The Garden of Unearthly Delights (Adelaide Fringe).

Working with ideas of creative chaos and an argument that circus needs to foster a chaotic space for its chaotic creative process, my research investigates the kinds of spaces in which circus takes place; how the artists using those spaces interact with each other as well as with the space itself; how spatiality contributes to performance and how audiences react to/in different spaces.

Using Deleuze and Guattari’s²⁸ concept of the rhizome, Doreen Massey’s *For Space*²⁹ and Elizabeth Grosz’s *Space, Time and Perversion*,³⁰ I will discuss how the performance space operates smoothly enough to create the illusion of disorder. And I ask how circus artists also design the uses of space so that amid the chaos of color and movement, the same audience can experience moments of breath-holding stillness, as a single act or artist enters the apparently completely smooth space of life and death risk—such as flying through the air, or hanging by the smallest of connections, or balancing on a tightrope. That apparently smooth space is, of course, the most striated, or highly ordered, of all circus spaces in terms of highly disciplined skills, endless rehearsal, safety considerations, calculated risks—striations that remain invisible to audiences. Through these case studies I aim to begin to uncover how the spatiality of Australian contemporary circus has contributed to Australia becoming a leader and innovator within the international contemporary circus milieu.

²⁷ Pratt, Mary Louise. “Arts of the Contact Zone.” Academic Discourse: Readings for Argument and Analysis. Ed. Gail Stygall. Fort Worth: Harcourt College Publishers, 2000. 573-587.

²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari : 1987

²⁹ Doreen Massey : For Space (2005)

³⁰ Elizabeth Grosz: Space time and Perversion (1995)

Prof. Dr. Peta Tait | Cheerful, Nostalgic, Melancholic – Circus Moodiness as Cultural Space

This paper considers how circus sets up a cultural space with its moods and in collaboration with music. Perhaps mood is not what comes immediately to mind for circus but it can be argued that the aestheticized space of circus sets and resets mood in each act and throughout the show. Through a variation in the program and the music, the circus show re-establishes an overall mood and it deviates from the cheerful mood most noticeably with an aerial act that conveys poignancy. While staging a cheerful mood has been fundamental to the success of traditional circus, recent circus and its music offer a far wider range of moods including that of melancholy. Such moods create connections to recent political spaces within culture.

Mood is considered to be an intangible quality that is neither focused nor directed,³¹ but it can be perceived in its aesthetic production. Jonathan Flatley³² identifies a type of aesthetic mood in which it is possible to recognize the elements that produce mood before it evaporates, and it is the process of trying to hold onto that elusive quality after it goes that becomes a feature of mood. The paper encompasses the productions of Circus Oz and Cirque du Soleil in its analysis of circus nostalgia in *Cirque 1903*, cheerful exuberance in *Cirque de la Symphonie* and melancholic sadness and anguish in Circa's *Il Ritorno*.

³¹ Felski, Rita, and Susan Fraiman. "Introduction." *New Literary History* 43.3 on Mood, (2012): v–xii.

³² Flatley, Jonathan. *Affective Mapping*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Strategic Sessions

International | Bibliography | Circus – Status Quo, Possibilities, and Challenges

International Circus Documentation Centers: Artcena, CircusInfo Finland, Circuscentrum Belgium, Cirqueon and Centre de ressources documentaires du Cnac.

Though circus research is conducted by many scholars all over the world, there is often an absence of circus research overviews. How can we share information of circus-related themes gathered by individuals and research groups with students, journalists and other scholars? What are the needs of the international community of circus researchers in view of networking and sharing information? Is there a need for an online international bibliography or a research network in the future?

Women* | Circus | Work | Gender

Female Students and Speakers

Structural discrimination is a phenomenon faced by women* (i.e., or anyone who is not male or does not identify as heterosexual) on a daily basis.³³ Although legal equality and a general understanding of sex equality is the norm, there is still an underlying framework which favors heterosexual men and controls all public and private spheres of life. In academia, only twenty percent of German professors are female,* although forty-five percent of PhD graduates are women*.³⁴ But unequal treatment of the sexes in practice is not limited to academia. Sexism, the interactional and structural discrimination of women,* also reveals itself in gender stereotypes that are latent in our tacit understanding of what men and women are “supposed” to do. Circus, as an alternate space in society, may be an especially productive site of contestation of gender norms. Prevalent concepts of gender are negotiated as the body—another prominently visible dimension of gender—is, quite literally, put in the spotlight. Gender stereotyping is evident in every aspect of the circus, from performance to the art industry:

The number of female roles takes up no more than 45% of the contemporary repertoire. It seems that women remain an ideal of an eternal male concept: mother or whore, muse or a witch, and, above all, a victim. And last but not least, on average actresses earn 30% less than the actors.³⁵

In contrast, researcher Anne Quentin lists a few statistics of male activities in the circus and art industry:

³³ Hence the “*” after gendered words, indicating that gender is by no means only binary, but should rather be understood as a spectrum of possible variations.

³⁴ Statistisches Bundesamt. "Frauenanteile an Hochschulen in Deutschland nach akademischer Laufbahn im Jahr 2015." <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/BildungForschungKultur/Hochschulen/Tabellen/FrauenanteileAkademischeLaufbahn.html>, accessed June 14, 2017

³⁵ Anne Quentin. “From Traditional to New Circus: Women’s Place and Aesthetics.” In: Ivan Kralj (ed). *Women & Circus*. Zagreb, 2011, p.118

Men as heads of management at:

- 92% of drama theatres
- 89% of music institutions
- [...]
- 59% of national choreography centres
- [...]
- 78% of dance productions were choreographed by men³⁶

These content-related findings were already examined closely at the conferences “Women and Circus” (2009) in Zagreb and “Semaine du Cirque: Femmes du Cirque” (2014) in Montpellier. Our panel discussion “Women* | Circus | Work | Gender” seeks to build on the productive results of the two conferences by taking a closer look at the level of structural discrimination in the careers of women*: What kind of structures and/or mechanisms work against diversity/equality in circus (studies)? What kind of personal experiences do female* artists and scholars in circus (studies) have in terms of discrimination? And, with regard to space: What kinds of spaces can women* occupy in circus and circus studies? How can women* in academia increase awareness of sexism in the circus and call attention to these structural struggles?

In this panel discussion, we aspire to illuminate these structural inequalities and develop strategies against them. We seek a productive exchange and hope to increase connections between women* working in academia and circus.

Schedule

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| 16:30 – 16:40 | Opening Remarks and Introduction Franziska Trapp and Elisabeth Zimmermann (WWU Münster) |
| 16:40 – 17:15 | Panel Discussion: Various Female Speakers from Academia / Circus Artists Prof. Dr. Peta Tait, La Trobe University Melbourne Prof. Dr. Maren Conrad, University of Erlangen Ilaria Bessone, University of Milan/University of Turin Alix Michell, University of Münster Charlotte de la Bretèque, Cirque Bouffon |
| 17:15 – 17:45 | Speed-Dating-Workshop |
| 17:45 – 17:55 | Results |
| 17:55 – 18:00 | Wrap-up |

³⁶ Ibid., p. 119

Saving the Discourses

Die Zeichner

The knowledge and dialogue produced at the conference should not be recorded by conventional means alone. A so-called graphic recorder logs the lectures visually during the conference, thus turning the core statements of the lectures and discussions into words and pictures. Under the terms “Sketchnoting”, “Graphic Recording” or “Visual Facilitation”, fascinating fields of application have emerged in recent years for better learning, mediation and collaboration; an approach which shares the innovative vision of the research project Zirkus | Wissenschaft.

Kulturproleten

Kulturproleten.de is a culture blog which was founded by 5 students of the department “Cultural Poetics of Literature and Media” at the University of Münster: Jürgen Gabel, Kilian Hauptmann, Jasmina Janoschka, Theresa Langwald and Alix Michell. Since going online in August 2015, they have published numerous essays, articles, cut ups, etc., concerning “culture as text”. After their first issue-specific series of articles, which is about alternative masculine identities, they now have a second project: In addition to publishing about “UpSideDown—Circus and Space”, they will also publish a number of student essays written about the conference; these essays may be seen as a theory-based addition to the lectures and discussions of the conference.

www.kulturproleten.de

Related Events

Franzi Kreis | Traveling Exhibition *Clowns*

The portrait project *Clowns* documents the photographer Franzi Kreis' encounters with people who combine clowning, circus, dance, surrealistic bodies, drag or shamanism to enter the spaces that are in-between. The ongoing traveling exhibition has been shown at different venues including festivals, such as *La Strada Graz* (AT 2015/16), *Festival d'Aurillac* (FR 2016), *Festival Novog Cirkusa*, Zagreb (HR 2016) or *Cirkopolis Festival*, Prague (CZ 2017).

GOP. Varieté Theater Münster | *Impulse*

Beats, dance and body art. On the pulse of time, to the beat of life: Experience the dynamic, powerful encounter of rhythm, body art and dance! *Impulse* is a show that breaks the boundaries, lets the soul swing. It provides an unforgettable overall experience of music, images and movement, staged by extraordinary dancers, acrobats and instrumentalists. A young ensemble that unites the joy of lifting genre boundaries and dares to make new ones. Delicate melodies, fat beats—the sounds of the show are pure, live and specially arranged by director Nikos Hippler. Spectacular is also the backdrop: Unusual scenarios of projection and sound will surprise you. *Impulse* is modern stage art at its best.

Cirque Bouffon | *Lunatique*

A sleepwalker gravely moves through the night. A being that changes the emotions and sensations with the change of the moon, experiences whimsical situations with dreamlike magic. Curious and magical. The enchanting production in the style of the Nouveau Cirque takes the audience into a poetic dream world. Frédéric Zipperlin has once again taken a deep step into the trickery of sensual seduction and set a new work of art that captivates the audience with his award-winning international artists' ensemble. Acrobatics, body art, comedy and music at the highest level are the main elements of the new show of Cirque Bouffon. The lushly beautiful, sensual sad, balladsque and rocking compositions of the musical conductor Sergej Sveshinski give *Lunatique* an extraordinary garb.

Contributors

Sebastian Belmar holds a PhD degree of Circus Dramaturgy, which was overseen by Mr. Phillippe Goudard at Paul Valery University, Montpellier III. He is a movement and creation teacher at Centre des Arts du Cirque Balthazar and at ENSAD Escole National des Arts Dramatiques de Montpellier. Belmar studied architecture and circus techniques at the National School of Circus, Rio de Janeiro, and at the International School of Theatre of Jacques Lecoq, Paris. Belmar's work as choreographer reflects his knowledge of architecture and movement in the field of circus performance. Most of his creations have been developed in collaboration with other international artists such as David Zambrano, Ultima Vez, Dot 504 and Royal de Luxe, among others.

Ilaria Bessone is currently completing a PhD in sociology and methodology of social research at the Graduate School of the Social and Political Sciences at the University of Milan and Turin in Italy. Bessone's research explores the contemporary Italian circus field and community of practice, and her interests draw on years of circus practice as a performer, teacher and researcher in Italy and abroad. She is currently the coordinator of the research program AltroCirco, a national project for the development of a social circus in Italy.

Prof. Dr. Paul Bouissac is Professor Emeritus at the University of Toronto (Victoria College). His teaching and research bear upon semiotics and linguistics. He is the author of five books on the ethno-semiotics of circus spectacles. He has published and edited works on gestures, iconicity, non-verbal communication and prehistoric visual representations. He edited the Oxford University *Encyclopedia of Semiotics* (1998). He is currently Editor of the Bloomsbury Academic series "Advances in Semiotics".

Prof. Dr. Maren Conrad studied German literature and media, Scandinavian culture, and psychology from 2004-2008 at Kiel University, Germany. From 2008 to September 2011, she was a lecturer at the Institute for German Literature and Media at Kiel University and wrote her PhD thesis, which deals with the rise of the fantastic in German ballads. In 2011/12 she worked as a DAAD-lecturer at the Department of German at University College Cork, Ireland. From 2012-2017 she was the coordinator of the Graduate School "Practices of Literature" and Postdoc at the college "Literaturtheorie als Theorie der Gesellschaft" at the University of Münster. Since April 2017 she has been a full-time professor of German literature at the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg.

Dr. Stine Degerbøl is the holder of a PhD from the Department of Nutrition, Exercise, and Sports at the University of Copenhagen. Her academic dissertation was titled *Encountering Contemporary Circus. Exploring arts-based research methods*, Degerbøl seeks to understand the embodied learning of contemporary circus students.

Dr. Agathe Dumont has a PhD in performing arts; she is a dancer, freelance teacher and researcher. Her theoretical and applied research focuses on dance and circus performers, especially the issue of their training. She currently teaches theory and practice in dance and circus arts (in the sport sciences and performing arts) at

universities and higher artistic educational institutions. Her research has been presented at various conferences (IADMS, WDA, AFRAPS, etc.) and published in several scientific publications. She also conducts research for various cultural institutions and art schools (Académie Fratellini, CircusNext, the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools), and she recently wrote a book about a hip-hop company. At the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools, she is currently working on the INTENTS project, “Definition and recognition of the profession of circus arts teacher, continuing training and innovative educational tools”, by writing pedagogical guides containing the expertise, issues and teaching methods shared during the continuing training sessions of the project.

Jonas Eklund has been a doctoral candidate since 2013 in theatre studies at the Department of Culture and Aesthetics at Stockholm University. He is currently writing his dissertation on the audience’s reactions to the body on stage in burlesque, circus and freak shows using aspects of phenomenology as a theoretical approach. He obtained an MA in theatre studies from Stockholm University in 2012, in which he wrote his thesis on audience reactions to Nils Poppe and his comical acting, analyzed through a phenomenological point of view. He has taught classes on Swedish popular theatre during the 20th century at Stockholm University and on phenomenology at DOCH (School of Dance and Circus).

Helene Embling jumped into the circus world from civil engineering and architecture at the first opportunity, joining the opening of the French Circus Schools and becoming an instant aerialist. Works in Classical Circus in Europe led her to Australia. Her aerialist professional life since has included multiple aerial performances among others, with the Sydney and Perth International Festivals, the Dance and Theatre departments of WAAPA (Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts), NICA (National Institute of Circus Arts) and Voyage de la Vie in Singapore. She is currently undertaking a doctorate candidature with Deakin University in Melbourne. Her areas of interest are swinging trapeze and verticals with a specific interest in the transfer of the freedom of the swinging flight to the rope, combined with the motion layers of arts of movement.

Katie Gardner is a doctoral candidate in music and the Wendell Herbruck Scholar at The Queen’s College, University of Oxford. Her doctoral research investigates the musico-dramatic inclusion of aerial circus arts in contemporary opera production. As a soprano and aerialist, Gardner’s research examines circus, opera and the intersections of the two art forms. She received a MFA in voice from the California Institute of the Arts.

Roy Gomez Cruz is a PhD candidate in performance studies at Northwestern University. He holds an MA in communication from ITESO University in Guadalajara, Mexico. His research explores cross-border exchanges sheltered within a major growth of contemporary circus across Canada, the United States and Mexico. He examines the political-economic reorganization of circus economies under competing forms of transnationalism. His investigation elucidates the contradictory meanings that “intimate circus” takes as embodied within local and global circus economies at strikingly different developmental phases. He approaches ethnographically an interrelated network of circus schools, festivals, companies and independent circus artists to reveal

how minority circus groups mobilize race, gender and sexuality as counteracting tactics to the “transnationalism from above” spearheaded by Cirque du Soleil at the aftermath of its corporate circus reinvention. In doing so, his research highlights the centrality of the body as a performative site of transversal, multidirectional and alternatives forms of labor shaping contemporary circus economies in North America.

Jimmy Gonzales grew up traveling between France and Spain. At the age of eight he began to juggle and perform in the street. After many years of practicing on his own, he was accepted to the National Circus School of Châtellerault, France, and then continued his studies at the National Circus School of Montreal. Drawn to a multidisciplinary approach to the arts, he hopes to collaborate on diverse creations and experiences.

Prof. Dr. Philippe Goudard is an artist and scientist of the circus arts. He has created and performed over forty original contemporary circus works. As a medical doctor he is the former leader of the medical department of the French Centre National des Arts du Cirque and has been involved for years in the health problems of circus artists. As a professor of performing arts at Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier III in France, he created and leads the only circus research program at a French university, Circus: history, imaginary, practices. He is the author of many relevant publications in circus studies.

Dr. Anne Hemkendreis studied art history and German in Bochum and Dublin. Her dissertation was on the Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi and published in 2016. She currently works as an academic assistant and lecturer at the Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Germany. Meanwhile, she has also started to train hula hoop, fire and aerial arts, and to organize a variety of shows, festivals and conferences. Hemkendreis lives in Berlin and combines her life as a researcher and performer by writing and teaching about the contemporary circus scene and its origin.

Riikka Juutinen is a graduate student of social anthropology at the University of Tampere, Finland. Riikka is currently writing her master’s thesis on circus mobilities, focusing on the mobile lifestyles of traditional circus artists. The focus of the study is the nomadic features of circus artists’ lives, as well as the conditions of artistic mobility and features of work-based movement. During the summer semester of 2017, Riikka is doing her Erasmus-internship at the University of Münster, working on Zirkus | Wissenschaft.

Sebastian Kann is a German-American circus artist, researcher, teacher and performance dramaturg. After receiving his diploma in circus practice from ENC (Montréal) in 2009, he began to work in Europe as a circus artist, performing both short numbers in cabarets and longer-form devised work. In 2016, Sebastian received his MA in theatre studies from Utrecht University, graduating with a thesis dealing with circus technique and its latent formal potentiality. Since graduating he has been active giving lectures and dramaturgy workshops at circus festivals and residency spaces in Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. He is also working as a dramaturg on various projects in circus and dance, mostly notably with choreographer Vera Tussing. Sebastian’s current research interests include embodiment, imagination and political resistance through performance, and his first academic article will be published in *Danswetenschap in Nederland* in May 2017. He will receive his RMA degree from Utrecht University in media, art and performance studies in 2018.

Dr. Jessica Kendall holds a PhD in social anthropology from SOAS (University of London). She has conducted extensive multi-sited research in China, Europe and Ethiopia, focusing on how circus performers strategize in the process of building internationally successful careers. She has displayed (Brunei Gallery, London) and published her photographs in books (Wiley-Blackwell), Journals (JRAI) and online (BBC). Kendall has also toured for several years in the circus industry as a manager working within the area of talent and production.

Natalia Kloos decided to study philosophy and literature in France (Sorbonne Nouvelle and Panthéon-La Sorbonne) after going to a professional circus school in Brazil. During her first year as a graduate student, Natalia wrote a dissertation on the sublime and the grotesque in contemporary circus (under the direction of Danièle Cohn / Paris 1); and then decided to question the idea of a “circus art of living” (EHESS, under the direction of Marielle Macé). Kloos explored the artists’ discourses when it comes to risks and ways of life. She did a research residency in CNAC (June 2015) and is preparing her PhD project under the direction of Marielle Macé and Esteban Buch (CRAL/EHESS).

Franzi Kreis works as a freelance artist and focuses on photographic portraits and videography in the field of performing arts, such as theatre, dance and contemporary circus. She completed her studies in theatre, film and media at the University of Vienna. Since 2012 she has been the assistant of the photographer and filmmaker Lukas Beck. Her work is represented in press and exhibitions, among others *Der Spiegel* (DE, 2015), Dschungel Wien - Museumsquartier (AT, 2015), Kosmostheater Wien (AT, 2016) or Freiraum Übersee (DE, 2017). Kreis has been commissioned by various international festivals and companies, such as ImpulsTanz - Vienna International Dance Festival, New Plays From Europe (Wiesbaden), La Strada Graz and the Vienna Boys Choir.

Prof. Dr. Louis Patrick Leroux is a professor at Concordia University and the Founder and Director of the Montreal Working Group on Circus Research. He holds a strong interest in circus, stemming from his practical experience in theatre and scholarly research into discourse analysis and the performing arts. Leroux has published and given international talks on contemporary circus, and has worked closely with the Québec circus scene as a researcher, collaborator and teacher. He is an ongoing associate researcher and guest teacher at the National Circus School of Montreal. At the NSC he is currently working alongside students and teachers exploring the various modes of circus narratives and dramaturgical strategies. Recent scholarly collections include *Cirque Global: Québec’s Expanding Circus Boundaries*, coedited with Charles Batson (McGill-Queen’s UP, 2016).

Alix Michell graduated in book studies and European literature from the Universities of Mainz and Tartu. She is currently a graduate student at the Department of Cultural Poetics of Literature and Media at the University of Münster, where she focuses on popular culture in the sixties and seventies as well as on performative semiotics. Michell also spent a research term at the Department of Science and Art at the University of Salzburg, where she worked in the field of performativity in public space. She is one of the editors in chief of the blog kulturproleten.de, which publishes on “culture as text”.

Ayal Prouser started performing in the circus on the professional level at age 16 when he toured with Circus Smirkus. Since then, he has been performing and coaching circus art professionally within the disciplines of juggling, double trapeze, group acrobatics and flying trapeze. Prouser is currently a graduate student in film and media studies at Columbia University, New York. His academic focus is split between a Foucaultian approach to queer spectator theory of cinema, and a Western philosophical approach to circus arts. At Columbia he is an Interdisciplinary Arts Fellow, a position within the School of the Arts tasked with the responsibility of fostering and catalyzing interdisciplinary work and synergy within the School of the Arts. Prouser continues to teach and to perform in the circus arts.

Sandy Sun was awarded the gold medal in trapeze at the Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain and was awarded a prize by the Foundation Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet. Sun has created her very own style involving contemporary choreography and the virtuosity of the classic apparatus in trapeze. She is a virtuoso soloist in the biggest circuses and European cabarets, teaches at high level professional circus schools, communicates her art through her graduate level classes and gives talks at scientific conferences in the international circus network.

Kristy Seymour is a circus artist and emerging scholar with over 18 years experience in the Australian circus sector as a performer, trainer, artistic director and administrator. She has worked extensively in the youth circus sector and has collaborated with Strut n Fret Production House, Brisbane Powerhouse, Creative Generations, Woodford Folk Festival, Brisbane Festival and Adelaide Fringe Festival. In 2012 Kristy completed her honours thesis “How circus training can enhance the well-being of children with autism and their families”. Her research has been published in *New Theatre Quarterly* and a forth-coming publication in *Performance Matters* will be released in May 2018. Kristy has her own circus school, Circus Stars, solely dedicated to children with autism, which was the topic of her recent TEDx talk (June 2017). Kristy is currently completing her doctoral research titled “Bodies, Temporality and Spatiality in Australian Contemporary Circus” at Griffith University Gold Coast.

Dr. Veronika Štefanová holds a PhD from the Department of Theatre Studies of the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague, where she has explored contemporary circus as a dramatic art. She occasionally lectures at Charles University, at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague or at Masaryk University in Brno. She conducted her academic research at the École nationale de cirque Montréal and at Sorbonne-Nouvelle in Paris. She was also involved in research projects focusing on circus and dance. She is the co-founder of the first Czech library dedicated to circus arts, which is part of CIRQUEON, an umbrella organization for the support and development of contemporary circus in the Czech Republic.

Prof. Dr. Peta Tait is a professor of theatre and drama at La Trobe University, Australia; she is an academic and a playwright and is a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities. She has written over 60 scholarly articles and chapters and her recent books include: *Fighting Nature: Travelling Menageries, Animal Acts and War Shows* (Sydney University Press 2016); the co-edited *The Routledge Circus Studies Reader*

(Routledge 2016); *Wild and Dangerous Performances: Animals, Emotions, Circus* (Palgrave MacMillan 2012); *Circus Bodies* (Routledge 2005); *Performing Emotions* (Ashgate 2002). She is currently writing on emotion and affect in performance. Her most recent play, *Eleanor and Mary Alice*, is about Eleanor Roosevelt meeting with Mary Alice Evatt and human rights, art and war.

Franziska Trapp, PhD candidate in Cultural Poetics at the University of Münster and the University of Montpellier, is working on the narrativity of circus. She is at the forefront of circus studies in Germany, founder of the research project Zirkus | Wissenschaft and organizer of the international conferences “Semiotics of the Circus” (2015) and “UpSideDown—Circus and Space” (2017). During the last years, Trapp has worked for various circus productions, such as the Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain in France and Cirque Bouffon in Germany.

Ante Ursić’s interest as an academic researcher in the domain of circus lies in acts, events, shows and performances that offer a unique set of possibilities to widen our perception of circus, what and who it encompasses and its politics. Currently, he is investigating the animal/human relationship in traditional and contemporary circus. Most of Ante’s professional career is as a performer and choreographer the field of contemporary circus. Ante visited the circus school in Brussels (ESAC) and Berlin (Die Etage) and Moscow. He holds a BA with Distinction in contemporary dance, context and choreography from the University of Arts, Berlin and a distinguished MA in Performance Studies from New York University. At the moment he is pursuing his PhD in performance studies at UC Davis. He has successfully produced projects on his own and in collaboration, which have been recognized and honored with various awards, such as the Gold Medal at the Festival SOLyCIRCO, the Special Prize at the Cirque du Demain and the Propone Prize at the Theaterfestival Vailladolid (the latter for Oko Sokolo in collaboration with Claudia Schnürer). He collaborated with Julia Christ on the piece *Bambula*. Ante also performed with companies such as Cirque du Soleil, Circus Roncalli and Tiger Lillies Circus.

Elisabeth Zimmermann is responsible for public relations and social media at Zirkus|Wissenschaft. She has been studying English literature and sociology at the University of Münster since 2014 and works as an undergraduate assistant at the graduate school entitled Practices of Literature. Additionally, she contributes to *Textpraxis. Digital Journal for Philology*, an online open access publication of the Graduate School.

| Zirkus | Wissenschaft

The Research Project Zirkus | Wissenschaft

Objectives

Founded in 2015 by Franziska Trapp, the project Zirkus | Wissenschaft seeks to anchor circus—a relevant object of research for cultural studies—in university research and coursework. It also encourages and initiates research projects on this genre, as well as the production of bachelor, master and doctoral theses from students and scholars alike in Germany. It explicitly aims to establish the University of Münster as a long-term international meeting place for circensic researchers from Germany and abroad as well as to set up an international scholarly network. Zirkus | Wissenschaft is intended to raise the public's awareness of the significance of circus as a cultural good.

Characteristics

Interdisciplinarity, internationality and the linking of science and practice are the key features of the project:

Interdisciplinary

Zirkus | Wissenschaft strives to conceive of the circus genre in various ways. Based on diverse academic disciplines—such as theatre studies, dance studies, semiotics, sociology, history, medicine and cultural studies—different perspectives of circus are analyzed and placed within such contexts.

Internationality

In light of the international nature of the circus genre in general, circensic research must also be international: The study of circus as an independent, institutionalized science does not yet exist worldwide. But in France, Canada and Sweden deeper examinations of the circus genre have already been established in university research. For this reason, Zirkus | Wissenschaft is closely connected to these international universities and scholars in the exchange of information.

The connection between science and praxis

Since circus has only recently become the object of scientific research, there must be a continual exchange between science and praxis, which is why Zirkus | Wissenschaft cooperates with diverse companies and circus producers.

Project Activities

With regard to the abovementioned objectives of Zirkus | Wissenschaft, the project contains five different formats:

Conferences

In cooperation with Cirque Bouffon, an international conference is held every two years in Münster based on the topic “circensic art”. The conference's focus is the academic exchange of information among international circus scholars.

Seminars

In circus studies seminars, a cultural-poetics approach is applied, along with a reflective expansion and transgression of the object of literary studies—in this case the expansion of the genre “Circus”—to develop the ability to analyze cultural representations. The seminars are for graduate students of the program “Cultural Poetics of Literature and Media”, but are also open to graduate students of “Germanistik” and “Master of Education.”

Excursions

Drumroll + Sawdust + Smell of horse dung + Red noses + August's old clown shoes + Elephant foot stool + Stars + Seals on a ball + The head of the animal trainer in the lion's mouth + Childhood. Zirkus | Wissenschaft seeks to dismantle these associations: Students of the University of Münster are invited to visit circensic art in and around Münster.

Library

The circus studies section in the library of the German Studies Institute is a place for circus scholars to meet and research in Germany. It includes the foundational texts of circus studies literature and is regularly updated. Moreover, the online bibliography offers an overview of the locations of publications related to circus studies worldwide.

Network

Zirkus | Wissenschaft promotes the exchange of information with international research institutions and makes available an information platform.

Follow us on

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#UpSideDown17

Organization and Contact

Franziska Trapp | Direction and Production

In an effort to realize an international network on circus research, Franziska Trapp founded the project Zirkus | Wissenschaft in 2015. She seeks to raise awareness of a new view of circus arts which avoids the widespread romanticizing notions of the genre and is the Conference's initiator, director and producer.

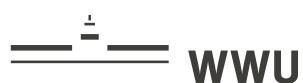
Riikka Juutinen | Erasmus + Internship

Zirkus | Wissenschaft has an international intern: Riikka Juutinen is a student at the University of Tampere, Finland, and has been here in Münster with us since April 2017 working on the organization and coordination of the conference. She is our emergency helper and is responsible for artist and speaker support.

Elisabeth Zimmermann | Social Media

Elisabeth Zimmermann has been studying English literature and sociology since 2014 at the University of Münster. She is the virtual artist, responsible for the Zirkus | Wissenschaft webpage, Facebook and twitter.

Many Thanks to Our Sponsors



Contact

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