

steirischer herbst 2006
21/09 – 15/10/2006

steirischer herbst is a special festival in many respects: thanks to its multidisciplinary nature, its firm resolve with regard to contemporaneity, the active exchange between artistic work and aesthetic discourse. Its clear-cut positioning as a festival of production and processes, of facilitation and initiation is also special – and increasingly necessary in the international politico-cultural situation.

In 2006 there will be numerous works (be it theatre, visual arts, music or literature) that would not be possible without steirischer herbst and that will also go on show subsequently in Europe and beyond.

One key factor is the participation and networking of international and regional artists, institutions and contexts.

Leitmotifs:

Control, collaboration, participation and open sources

steirischer herbst 2006 does not have a specific theme to which all artistic and theoretical aspects must submit. There are, however, important leitmotifs, red threads, which we want to follow and that tie together here and there: ever and again, the political, social but also aesthetic discussions of our time revolve around techniques of outside and self-control that influence all areas of our life and art. On the other hand, there are sometimes utopian, sometimes pragmatic models of collaboration, participation and open sources.

Questions of control, collaboration and open source are the subject of reflection in many of the festival's projects, not least in the **herbst exhibitions**. For example, with the aid of works above all by young artists, **Grazer Kunstverein** focuses on aspects of "sad" certainty – a certainty that leads to loneliness. **Kunsthaus Graz** hides behind the anagram **Gutshaus Kranz** and presents "Protections", an exhibition that is not an exhibition – but rather is constantly changing as a performance. Further exhibitions at **Camera Austria**, **Neue Galerie**, **Forum Stadtpark**, **ESC im Labor**, **Medienturm**, **Haus der Architektur**, **K.U.L.M** and **Pavelhaus** go to round off the picture with a wide variety of different curatorial approaches. A notable and unusual aspect is that the majority of the works on show will be created explicitly for steirischer herbst.

The theatre, dance and performance projects also focus on topics of control: the première of the latest piece by successful playwright **Fritz Kater** (winner of the Mülheimer Theatertage, etc.) takes a profound, evil and comical look at the dependency structures of everyday office life, in this production by his alter ego, the future director of Berlin's Gorki-Theater, **Armin Petras**. New York's off-scene star **Richard Maxwell** portrays our Western society in the form of a paranoid surveillance company. And Belgian choreographer **Alain Platel** ("Wolf") presents his latest work "vsprs", demonstrating how bodies and souls get out of control, socially disciplined and mutilated – with the assistance of the outstanding dancers and performers of **C. de la B.**

The idea of open source – open, generally accessible sources – is a lived utopia from the world of software and the Internet: control is shared, passed on, changed. Analogously, the herbst

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“**open_gates**” project transposes the production principles of open-source software to aesthetic production, involving numerous **Graz-based artists** for its presentations.

Parallel to this, finally, “**playing field research**” – the theoretical backbone of the festival – focuses on in-depth investigations: not as an academic science approaching art as an object, but rather as a strolling way of exposing oneself to art. Three workshops, four instructive “**walks in progress**”, **three mini-symposia**, **one student project**, and the “**Dictionary of War**” cover a broad field – linking up local and international personalities from theory and practice.

Interdisciplinarity:

A concert is an installation is a performance

Long before everyone started talking about networking the arts and calling for interdisciplinarity, steirischer herbst was already integrating art, music, performance, dance, theatre, literature, architecture, film, New Media and theory – over the years with various focal points but always on the basis of the conditions of the respective genres.

steirischer herbst is devoting special attention to this aspect this year: concerts that are installations, exhibitions that are performances, literary works that are performative practice. Such dramaturgical considerations are perhaps most obvious in “**Concert for Greenland**” by the Norwegian **Verdensteatret**, that we are presenting as a theatre work, as an installation, and as a concert: an archaic, Arctic theatre of shadows and pictures, and an audio-visual, electro-musical composition.

But **Raffaello Sanzio**, probably the most radical exponents of Italian nuevo teatro, are also crossover artists: originally hailing from the visual arts, they draft out sophisticated theatrical spaces of association that are never completely decipherable.

steirischer herbst focuses particularly explicitly on the question of co-operation between the arts and artists in the “**Writing Acts**” project: twelve young artists from Austria, Germany and Switzerland – authors, directors, video artists, musicians, performers – were involved in recent months in a mutually influenced research and production process and will be presenting their works during the festival.

The artists who are part of “**Camp-Show-Styria**” also come from different disciplines of art. Five unique models – conceived, designed and performed in by very different artists (including **Theater im Bahnhof** and **Club Real**) will be touring Styria for three weeks, playing, filming, bathing, photographing, vexing and animating. The caravans will keep returning to the base camp at the festival centre in Graz, presenting the fruits of their expeditions in shiny camp shows.

musikprotokoll for New Music has been part of steirischer herbst from the very beginning: this year it will be even more closely meshed into the overall programme – and also performed with influences from other media. **Georg Nussbaumer’s** unusual composition and installation “**Schwerefeld mit Luftabdrücken**” (gravitational field with air impressions), a commissioned work, will be showing at the opening of steirischer herbst at the Helmut List Hall: a kinetic air/falling sculpture in which music is largely relieved of its obligation to sound – and that is nevertheless a composition. But other works, too, for example **Klaus Lang’s “fichten”**, are as much installations as music. In addition, musikprotokoll will as usual accompany contemporary orchestral works with electronic concerts and all manner of experiments.

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Festival centre:

Someone who wanders that far afield needs a home ...

Not only the Camp-Show caravans will keep returning to the festival centre, that will be designed by the Northern Irish artist **Stephen Craigh** and that will shine out through the Stadtpark during the festival. The festival centre is a coffee-house, herbstbar, chatroom, club and lounge, information point and ticket office. Academy, lecture hall, concert hall, Internet café and exhibition room. This is where the documentary video images of the "**Praxiskop**" by Berlin media artist Timm Ringewaldt flicker on screen; where the artistic presentations of "**open gates**" and concerts take place, for example by the publicity-shy feuilleton favourite **Peter Licht** ("Songs from the end of Capitalism"); where artists, journalists and the public come together; where there are parties, talks, wine and whatever else may arise ...

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