



**Re-Engage
Connect
Collaborate**

**Patty Kim
Hamilton
Interview**

**On
European Stages
2021-22**

**ETC
Season
Programme**

Season's Highlights



Enduring Desires
Cyprus Theatre Organisation has two main summer productions this season. Esmé sees Director Marina Vronti relay the timeless message of love with a contemporary revival of the story identified with the Greek tradition. And in Agamemnon, Director Lea Maleni explores enduring desires in a world of powers and counterpowers.

www.thoc.org.cy

Tree of Life

In May, the StartUp GOGOLFEST festival took place for the third time in Mariupol, Ukraine. Director Vlad Troitskyi created the special production 'The Road Home' on the H-20 Mariupol-Donetsk highway - close to the border with Russia. An eight-meter-high metal installation 'Tree of Life' was placed in the middle of the bridge and remains on the bridge after the performance.

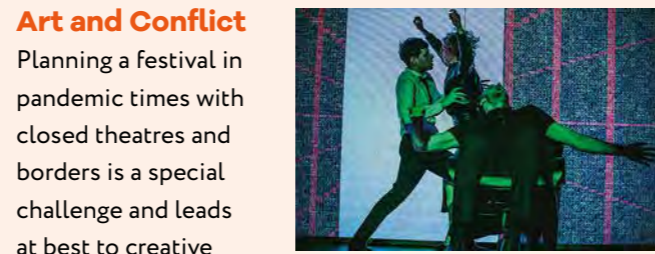
gogolfest.org



A Pink Pig

De Toneelmakerij presents: The Three Little Pigs and the Wolf Costume. A summer production in the open-air theatre Amsterdamse Bos-theater, from 10 July till 21 August. For everyone 4 years and up, full of puns, music and smooth dance moves.

toneelmakerij.nl



Art and Conflict
Planning a festival in pandemic times with closed theatres and borders is a special challenge and leads at best to creative solutions. At the RADAR OST festival in October 2021 at **Deutsches Theater Berlin**, artists from Bosnia, Belarus and Russia will collaborate to create productions in Berlin that deal with the tension between "art and conflict" in theatrical terms.

deutschestheater.de



© Divadlo Jána Pálarika

Bad Mother

In June, **Divadlo Jána Pálarika** brought the piece 'Bad Mother' by Mario Gelardi to its audiences, directed by the prestigious European artist, Hungarian director and actress Enikő Eszenyi.

The play emphasises the difficult and sensitive issue of 'coming out' in the conservative milieu.

djp.sk

Deep Into the Woods

As everything went on hold, **Folkteatern Göteborg** reflected on the global crisis with 17 playwrights across the globe in the "Urgent Drama" project. Friedrich Schiller's 1782 play 'The Robbers' is the main attraction of the new season, welcoming the audience deep into the woods. The theatre also collaborates with playwrights and directors from Denmark and Chile in 'Mitt arbete' and 'Stortorget'.

folkteatern.se



© Nudim Elazeh



© Tiko Robalidze

A Trilogy of Violence

After reopening on 17 April, the 'Kreutzer Sonata' became the first part of a trilogy on violence and devastation at **Kote Marjanishvili State Drama Theatre Tbilisi**.

The second performance is Fyodor Dostoevsky's 'Crime and Punishment'. For the third part of the trilogy, Artistic Director Levan Tsuladze has chosen Pierre Beaumarchais' 'The Marriage of Figaro' which is scheduled for outdoor performances in different parts of Georgia.

marjanishvili.com



© Sulikhan Gogolashvili

10 Years Running

Between 17 June and 1 July, **Kutaisi Lado Meskhishvili Professional State Drama Theatre** hosted the main regional theatrical event of the year for the tenth year running - the "Theatrical Imereti" festival, involving all professional and community theatres in the region.

meskhishvilitheatre.ge/news_eng.html



© Martin Špelda

Spectators by Our Side!

Two world premieres of original Czech plays, 'Father Watches

Daughter' and 'People vs. Kramer', and theatre movie the Idiot dir. by Daniel Špinar will be presented in 2021/22 season at **National Theatre Prague**. The main theme of the yearbook for this season stood the test of time: to find a way for an environmentally-friendly and sustainable theatre operation.

narodni-divadlo.cz/en

An Unusual Step

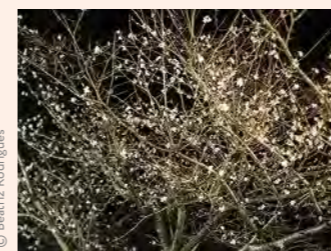
This season, **Slovak National Drama Theatre** is taking the unusual step of opening for audiences in August. For



© Lubos Kotlar

foreign spectators, classic pieces like 'War and Peace' and 'Russian Diaries' will play alongside the intimate 'Escaped Alone', with English subtitles.

snd.sk/en



© Beatriz Rodrigues

The Inexorable Force of Change

The **Teatro Nacional D. Maria II** is increasingly committed to the values of freedom and diversity and this season will

combine new productions and shows cancelled during the pandemic. In December, the theatre will present Tiago Rodrigues' version of Anton Chekhov's 'The Cherry Orchard', which opened the 2021 Festival d'Avignon. It reflects on the hopes and pains of a new world that no one fully understands.

tndm.pt

Farewell Season

This season at **Theater Magdeburg** is Artistic General Director Karen Stone's last. She will direct 'Falstaff' and 'Don Giovanni', and Sir David Pountney will direct the German premiere of 'Figaro Gets a Divorce' by Elena Langer. This season also contains the world premiere of 'Grete Minde', and the musical 'Rebecca' will be the definitive farewell to Karen Stone on Cathedral Square in June 2022.

theater-magdeburg.de



© Andreas Lander



© Theatre and Music Centre Kardjali

Masons

In June, **Theater and Music Centre - Kardzhali** presented the new project 'Masons' by Petko

Todorov - a story about the struggle with one's own conscience. All three of the theatre's ensembles took part in the performance and the theatre has planned a summer tour with live performances across Bulgaria.

dktdimov.com



© Françoise Wallmeccq

War Reporters

War Reporters, at **Théâtre de Liège**, is based on an ethical and aesthetic question: Why and how should we depict the pain of others? Why and how should we invoke bruised

memories? The project brings together actors, former journalists and NGO workers, who covered the wars in Croatia and Bosnia, to use theatre to transform old reports into artistic objects and tell their war.

theatredeliège.be

Deadly Sins

In 1925 Mahatma Gandhi named what he saw as the deadly sins of modern society. But what about these theses in a digitalized and globalized world? Seven European authors are each writing a short piece for **Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe** on one of Gandhi's deadly sins from today's perspective. Drama director Anna Bergmann interweaves the texts into a large ensemble evening on 17 July.

staatstheater.karlsruhe.de



© Thorsten Wulff

Albania
National Theatre of Albania (Tirana)

Austria
Landestheater Linz
Schauspielhaus Graz
Volkstheater Wien

Belgium
Théâtre de Liège

Bulgaria
Theatre and Music Centre Kardjali

Croatia
Croatian National Theatre (Zagreb)

Cyprus
Cyprus Theatre Organisation THOC (Nicosia)

Czech Republic
Národní divadlo – National Theatre Prague

France
CDN Nancy-Lorraine, La Manufacture (Nancy)
La Mousson d'Été (Pont-à-Mousson)

Georgia
Kutaisi Lado Meskhishvili Professional State Drama Theatre
Kote Marjanishvili State Drama Theatre (Tbilisi)

Germany
Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe
Deutsches Theater Berlin
Staatsschauspiel Dresden
Staatstheater Braunschweig
Theater & Orchester Heidelberg
Theater Dortmund
Theater Magdeburg

Hungary
Pesti Magyar Színház (Budapest)
Weöres Sándor Színház (Szombathely)

Italy
Fondazione Teatro Due (Parma)
Teatro Stabile di Torino – National Theatre
Teatro Koreja (Lecce)

Luxembourg
Escher Theater (Esch-sur-Alzette)
Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg

Malta
Teatru Malta (Valletta)

Netherlands
De Toneelmakerij (Amsterdam)

Norway
Det Norske Teatret (Oslo)

Poland
JK Opole Theatre

Portugal
Teatro Nacional D. Maria II (Lisbon)

Romania
"Alexandru Davila" Theatre (Pitești)
"Marin Sorescu" National Theatre of Craiova
Timisoara National Theatre

Serbia
National Theatre Belgrade

Slovakia
Slovak National Drama Theatre (Bratislava)

Divadlo Jána Palárika (Trnava)

Slovenia
Slovensko Narodno Gledališče Nova Gorica
Prešernovo Gledališče Kranj

Sweden
Göteborgs Stadsteater / Backa Teater
Folkteatern Göteborg

United Kingdom
Belarus Free Theatre (London)

Ukraine
Dakh Theatre – Centre of Contemporary Arts (Kyiv)
Kyiv National Academic Molodyy Theatre
TEO Theatrical Space (Odessa)

Honorary Members
Christa Müller (Germany)
Ola E. Bø (Norway)

Membership as of July 2021

THEATRE?

SCHAUSPIEL
GRAZ

Foreword

Over recent years, the European Theatre Convention network has become a valuable partner for the European Commission. This network has invested the 1 Million Euro of EU support for ENGAGE into active acceleration of international collaboration, pioneering ideas and concepts and setting trends in youth theatre, participatory theatre and digital theatre. I am particularly happy to see that the support coming from Creative Europe can lead to transformation not only for the individual members of a network, but also for the sector they represent.

Under the German EU presidency, ETC played a major role as leading partner for the consortium organising in November 2020 the first ever European Theatre Forum, which was initiated by the European Commission. ETC has effectively contributed to putting theatre on the European policy map and I was glad to be able to intervene at the Forum, reiterating my support for this important cultural sector.

The work of ETC is remarkable because it is looking to the future. It has a clear strategic vision on global issues and priorities such as the need for more diversity, gender equality and, as of late, sustainability. Its goal to become a climate-neutral network by 2030 is inspiring and provides a concrete example of how the cultural and creative sector in general, and the performing arts in particular can have a major role to play in European Commission's initiatives such as the New European Bauhaus. It is the tradition of theatre to represent an agora where people are stimulated to reflect and engage with each other on questions of their concern and, eventually, the way they want to live together in Europe.

With its recent Renaissance project, ETC took on the innovation challenge in the artistic and aesthetic sense too, and showed the capacity of European theatres to think ahead and create new formats.

I am looking forward to witnessing how ETC will engage with new and young audiences and artists across borders. I am certain that giving room for future dialogues not only throughout the entire sector but also with European policy making and society as a whole in the form of a platform such as a regular European Theater Forum will be a real achievement. I would therefore strongly advocate that we continue the format we started together last year.

The Creative Europe programme will provide important opportunities to support such initiatives.

To overcome the recent crisis and to bring our European values to the fore, Europe needs its theatre and the stories it alone can tell.



Mariya Gabriel

*European Commissioner for Innovation,
Research, Culture, Education and Youth*

Happy 5th anniversary, ETC Journal!

During the Week of New European Drama in June 2021, we celebrated four years of ENGAGE, ETC's international programme for European theatres. Four years ago, with co-funding support from the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union, we embarked on a journey to empower today's audiences through challenging theatre.

When the world around us came to a standstill at the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to reimagine theatre and international collaboration. It became important to us to mindfully manage the 'in-betweenness' of the situation, to harness the benefits of this transitional period, while coping with the challenges of the pandemic and planning future strategies. As the biggest theatre network in Europe, connecting over 45 theatres from 25 countries, we have a desire and responsibility to inspire and lead towards more sustainable, conscious, inclusive and diverse approaches for theatre-making in order to deal with the complexity of our time. Our Renaissance project, which took place in spring 2021, paved the way for new inspiration. A digital playground dedicated to the rebirth of theatres in virtual space, Renaissance experimented with the preservation of time, using digital media on a virtual stage mixed with the ephemeral experience of theatrical expressions.

As our societies steadily gain control over the virus and our social lives can finally return to public spaces, audiences will be able to enjoy live theatre on stage again.

For us at ETC, this new season is best defined by three words: re-engage, connect and collaborate! We have to re-engage with audiences, connect

with partners in society and collaborate with theatre-makers across Europe so that a strong and vibrant European theatre ecosystem can continue to bring narratives from all over the continent to our stages and the widest possible audiences.

In his interview ETC President Serge Rangoni explains why having a strong, supportive, yet (self-)critical network is key to making progress in digital development, diversity and sustainability. Read about the paradigm shift that Iris Laufenberg, Artistic Director at Schauspielhaus Graz, wants to be addressed on stage, and the reflections of Patty Hamilton, a rising star on the European playwriting scene, on multilingual storytelling. Discover Vijay Mathew, who co-founded the HowlRound Theatre Commons and live-streamed all ETC's online conferences, and his digital strategy for a smaller ecological footprint. Finally, get to know one of Europe's first environmental activities coordinators working in a theatre, Michaela Rýgrová, of the National Theatre in Prague, as she gives us insights into the transformation process of theatres in the age of sustainability.

This 5th ETC Journal presents a season of 'in-betweenness', an experience of liminality. It will be a season that requires us to take advantage of this transitional period by managing both opportunities and challenges. Join us to turn our passion and drive for a greener, more sustainable conscious and mindful just future for theatre, people and institutions into good practice. Join us to pave the way for a change-process to shape cultural leadership for theatres in Europe.



Heidi Wiley
ETC Executive Director

Photo Heidi Wiley © Cornelia Globb



ETC Members at the ETC International Theatre Conference in Graz/Austria, 2021
© Lex Karelly

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Performance: *Jeanne Dark*, produced by Théâtre de Liège
© Matthieu Bareyre



Participatory Readings of New Drama with ETC Members.
Find out about ETC's Season Programme on p. 30
© Lex Karelly



Performance: *Vernon Subutex*, produced by Schauspielhaus Graz
© Lex Karelly

Performance: *Lunch at Wittgenstein*,
produced by Národní divadlo - National Theatre Prague
© Petr Neubert



ETC Member Theatres announce Sustainability Action Code
for European Theatres. Read more on p. 40
© Lex Karelly





'ETC is Strongest When We Feel Able to Share Ideas and Disagree with Each Other'

Serge Rangoni is the Artistic Director & General Manager of Théâtre de Liège/ Belgium and has been President of the ETC Board of Directors since 2017. As ETC looks forward at the next three years of activity, he explains why having a strong, supportive, yet (self-)critical network is key to making progress in areas such as digital development, diversity and sustainability – and to being a useful resource for artists based in increasingly authoritarian countries.

*Interview with Serge Rangoni,
by Christy Romer*

Christy Romer: *2021 will hopefully be the year that we emerge from the pandemic and start thinking about re-building again. What are your artistic ambitions for the ETC network in the coming years?*

Serge Rangoni: ETC has a very important role to play in the coming years, because the connection between theatres in Europe was completely interrupted during the pandemic. ETC is a place, a network, where we can share our experiences, our way of doing things, our new projects and find (some) solutions. We know that Europe will have to recover quickly – and that one of the best ways to do this is to work on things together, at the same time. That is absolutely crucial.

CR: *Over the past year, we saw lots of our members experiment with digital work. What sort of advances do you think we will see in digital activity in the coming year?*

SR: It's difficult to say. On the one hand, I think people are a little bored by digital-only work. But on the other hand, we've learned a lot.

Overall, I think the artistic impulse will push us in two directions. The first is to encourage people to develop work on stage, physically, with their bodies. This return to something – a presence – is very important. You can see this in large arts and digital festivals that have returned with a section strongly connected with bodies, voices and the audience.

The other thing is further digital experimentation. We are starting to see strange crossovers and different types of media. There are, for example, artists making a series for Netflix while doing a live/online festival performance on the same topic. Artists are increasingly able to switch from one form of media to another, because they have had to be present in different media during the pandemic. I think in the field of theatre we will find more and more people who want to go in different directions.

CR: *This idea of digital work as simply another mechanism for staying connected was more or less the impulse for Renaissance. It happened online, but it was really just a way of collaborating – and quickly. Are you interested in developing these short-term*



ETC Members at ETC International Theatre Conference, Amsterdam 2019
© Bart Grietens

Serge Rangoni speaking at ETC International Theatre Conference, Graz 2020
© Lex Karelly



IMPACT: *Jeanne Dark* at Théâtre de Liège © Matthieu Bareyre

collaborations in the future – i.e. ones that take three months rather than three years (like we had for projects like Young Europe)?

SR: Yes. We could definitely learn from experiences like Renaissance and develop these kinds of short collaborations in the ETC network, in which everyone has to do something that adheres to a tight format. It could be a new way of showing the differences between different countries and theatres.

More broadly, the moment in which theatres were only able to open at night to present on-stage performances is gone. You have to be connected to daily life, so the question of formats is also linked to the involvement in city life, in the social fabric of the city. Digital activity is the mantra of this.

I also think we should explore how this type of work can bring in new audiences. In Liège, one show by Ismaël Saïdi really resonated with the Muslim community in Europe, playing online to 500 people every night for four nights. Which is almost no comparison to the little studio in our theatre, which has a capacity of 165 people. I'm sure these people wouldn't have come to the theatre, because of the feeling that it's 'not for us'. But now, after this experience, the same people will probably want to come and see the actors live. We had similar experiences when we presented shows on Instagram, which allowed us to organise things easily with schools and maintain direct contact with each other.

CR: *One of the biggest issues for society is the climate crisis. In Liège you're currently working with an environmental advisor. What ambitions do you have for ETC in terms of sustainability? And how important is it to have conversations about the climate in our artistic work?*

SR: It was great to work on sustainability during the first lockdown. We always thought about doing something in Liège but it's extremely difficult. It's not easy to change the mentality and way of working of a whole theatre. Theatre is

an industry made by people – the people who travel, build the sets and come to see the productions. We have to include artists in this area because there are a lot of constraints, and accepting constraints is not easy – especially in our production system in which some artists can only survive by touring.

For ETC theatres, I think it's useful to consider the line of activity from the beginning to the end. Where can we have a good ratio between direction and production? With all these things, I don't think we will necessarily find a perfect solution. We will find some ways of changing, but it's a broad topic and we need to have conversations with staff and artists. Artists are completely involved in this already, yet they could do a performance about sustainability and still need three trucks to put on the show.

It's also good to learn from examples across Europe. The artist Jérôme Bel, who said he would not take a plane ever again, comes to mind. But you have to be alive to the contradictions. After Bel's letter, an African choreographer said something to the effect of: You can do this because you are in Europe, you have a lot of money, but we in Africa have to tour to get paid. So there are a lot of contradictions. It's always good to call a contradiction by its name, because things are complex. Without this kind of critical discussion, it's impossible to move forwards.

CR: *Another key theme for ETC is diversity and inclusion. In spring 2021 we published a study entitled 'Gender Equality and Diversity in European Theatres', which found that we only had a small portion of people from minority groups in the ETC network. What do you think we can do to address and remedy this issue in the coming years?*

SR: I see it as a challenge for ETC. It's a challenge because Europe is not a continent with one single sensibility. Each country has its own development, story, culture, contradictions. You cannot be too radical because what's possible in Amsterdam is probably not possible – or the right thing to do – in Sofia. Or Lisbon. The situation is completely

different so we always have to be very aware that our role is to give our colleagues tools that enable them to analyse where they stand. We cannot say to anybody: This is the requirement for your audience, and you must do it in the same way. Instead we can help our theatres understand: Where are you now, under what circumstances, or where do you want to go?

When you speak about diversity and you look around at the ETC General Assembly, you realise we have a lot of work to do. We must always take care to avoid being too colonialist, saying that every country has to be the same as France or Germany, for instance. Discussions on the same topics in each place are not going to be the same discussions because our backgrounds, our cultures are not the same.

CR: *As you mentioned during the ETC International Theatre Conference, the big challenges the theatre sector is currently facing are closing borders, budget cuts to international collaborations and a rise in nationalistic policies. How important is European artistic collaboration in this context? And how can the spirit of collaboration be kept alive?*

SR: For me European artistic collaboration is really the most important thing. The pandemic has made things more complicated than they already were. So it's only by talking with our colleagues that we can try to help each other. At the same time, in Europe today you have colleagues in illiberal democracies who know they cannot speak openly and freely, so it's very difficult to get people willing to go against these populist movements involved in a European network. For them, participation in something like ETC is a red flag of sorts for the authorities. It's already really tricky, so we absolutely need to support artists in countries like Hungary, Poland and Slovenia. It's the only way we have to really forge our link with them, give them opportunities and continue recruiting, and we can see that all these governments have already done a lot of damage.

Europe is its own contradiction. The EU does Creative Europe projects about immigration, but at the same time doesn't want to intervene in these countries when the values it champions are not respected. So Europe is not really clear on this either.

CR: *Do you have any other messages for the network?*

SR: As a network, it's important for us to keep pushing key topics, such as support for young artists, digital development and refugees. And we have to be connected to the rest of the world. Europe, with its difficulties and contradictions, is often inward looking. We also have to pay attention to what's happening on all the other continents, full of different ways of viewing the role of theatre.

I also want to stress how important it is to invite activists and people who have a great influence on these topics to our General Assemblies.

We saw that at the ETC Conference in Dresden in 2019, when KVS Brussels dramaturge Tunde Adefoye spoke. Some of our members were very shocked by his intervention. But it's good for us to disagree. I like Tunde a lot because you can say: 'I can go to this point and not beyond it.' But in those moments, when we all see each other, we know where we all are. We are not at the General Assembly to unanimously and uniformly concur with one another. To be 'flat'. We have to be able to work with a wide range of complex topics and opinions; to say 'no', my point of view is different because of my culture, my country, my history, etc. I think that's really important.

There is a great diversity of thinking in the ETC network and we have to keep this alive, even though it can be so difficult and we sometimes get a bit disappointed by the slow-moving nature of Europe. You cannot give the feeling we are equal or all the same. It can be a weakness to have a very 'politically correct' GA. We have to instead create a space to air these contradictions, to change our understanding and assumptions. This is good. Travel should change your way of thinking. When you travel, you see that people do things in different ways – and maybe their way is better. This attitude is important in a network.

I want to stress this because I sometimes have the feeling that people don't agree with issues that come up, but they don't have the courage to say they don't agree for this and this reason. And I believe that is very important.



Serge Rangoni is the Artistic Director & General Manager of Théâtre de Liège/Belgium and has been President of the ETC Board of Directors since 2017. He studied at the Conservatoire of Brussels. After

working in various theatre institutions and at the Ministry of Culture, he was designated in 2004 as General Manager of Théâtre de Liège. Under his leadership, the theatre received the titles of "European center of theatrical creation and choreography" and "Centres for Drama" in the French-speaking area of Belgium, affirming its role in theatrical and dance productions and their dissemination to local and international audiences. Since his arrival at its head, the institution has developed considerably, with now an audience of 65,000 and more than 180 performances a season. Théâtre de Liège is today the leading stage in Wallonia.



Christy Romer is Communication Manager at the European Theatre Convention (ETC). He studied International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science. After internships at

political consultancy firms and national newspapers, he spent four years as a journalist at the arts policy magazine ArtsProfessional, then contributed articles as a freelance writer to The Guardian, The Independent, El País and City Lab.

'Different Areas of My Mind Are Related to Different Languages'

What is it like to be a truly bilingual playwright? Patty Kim Hamilton, a writer who makes theatre in German and English, was recently involved in the ETC ENGAGE Readings programme – through which her play was translated into English for the first time. She tells us about how working bilingually influences her creative process.

*Interview with Patty Kim Hamilton,
by Christy Romer*

Christy Romer: 'Sex Play' was presented at the ETC ENGAGE Readings. Tell us about the play.

Patty Kim Hamilton: 'Sex Play' is a play about consent, intimacy and the language we use around these realities. It's a play that grew out of numerous conversations over the course of many years, reflecting on bodies, nearness, needs and desires.

I wrote it after personal experiences of not being fully seen, and of navigating consent. But I also wrote it because in my adult life I am constantly hearing stories and listening to conversations which reflect on language and bodies and desires. In the play, we experience Jane (Doe) and John's relationships to sexual assault, intimacy and to one another, all while dropping into the experiences of unnamed characters and a chorus of multifaceted perspectives, all trying to figure out the spectrum of different relationships to one another and themselves. In the process of writing I referred to the work of Alice Birch and Sarah Kane, playing with language to lay bare real situations and experiences, attempting to hit a nerve that feels relevant to the public conversation post-#MeToo.

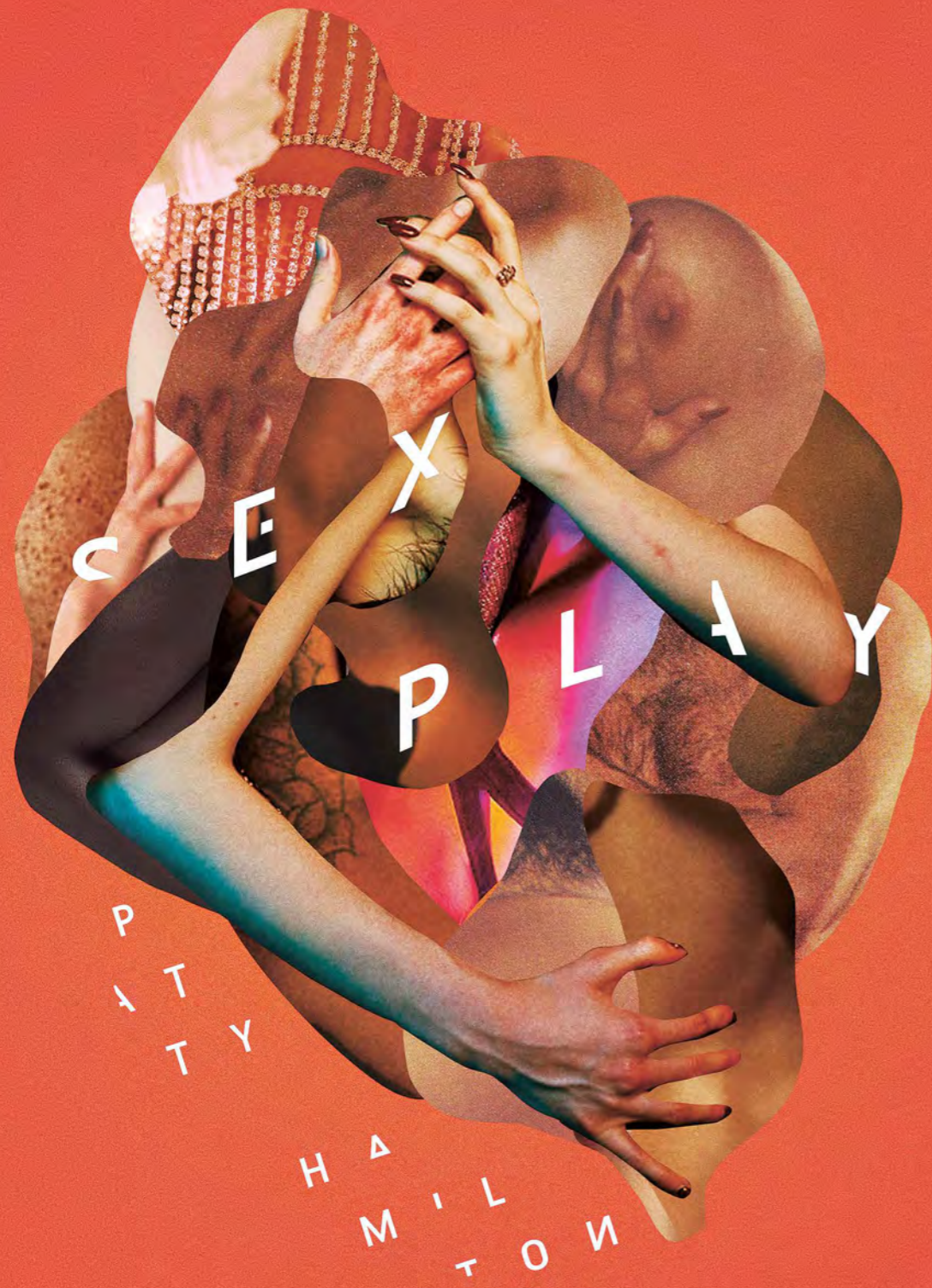
CR: 'Sex Play' was initially written in German, then halfway through the process translated into English. Is it still the same play?

PKH: It remains, in essence, the same play, but in this iteration has become something clearer and stronger, more nuanced and specific. This is partly due to the act of translating and partly due to the continued work of refining the text. If anything, the translation pushed me to continue developing the text and made me aware of places where I hadn't quite articulated what I wanted to.

CR: How did working with a translator during the writing process influence the development of the text?

PKH: Working with a translator is a huge relief for me in my writing process. It allows me to distance myself from the words, and examine the whole piece again from a fresh perspective. It also allows me to examine and understand when I haven't been specific enough; what works and what needs to be tweaked (or just rewritten). I could see what perspectives were missing, which ones needed to be clarified, what was confusing, and what scenes were, indeed, hitting the mark. I've sometimes had to do this work myself, and on my own it's time consuming.

CR: The typical question in this situation is whether you think anything has been lost in translation. But I think the more appropriate question here is actually: Has anything been gained from it? The play is intentionally not bound to particular



Sex Play by Patty Kim Hamilton
© Katia Engells

Screenshot from a Zoom reading of 'when it hurts this body is just a house' by Patty Kim Hamilton



© Will Hamilton

characters, and many of the lines are spoken in chorus, in unison. Do you feel that translating the text – and therefore the ideas it expresses – has made it more universal?

PKH: In this specific case, the text did become more universal in that it was translated into English, which makes it accessible to a greater number of people. Also, because so much work has been done around the #MeToo movement, sexual assault, consent and intimacy in the English-speaking world, it feels somehow even more fitting for the piece to be spoken in that language. As someone who was educated about consent and experienced most conversations around intimacy in English, it probably also made writing the second draft somewhat easier, allowing me to use situations and articulations that are not available in German.

CR: You've mentioned before that younger and more diverse audiences handle bilingual performances best. Do you see this as a cause for hope? Those younger audiences will eventually grow into the traditional middle-aged theatre audience. And although theatres have been talking about diversifying their productions and audiences for 40+ years, without making major changes, it does feel like there's been a different energy in the past several years.

PKH: I absolutely feel that my generation and younger are increasingly multilingual, if only through the pervasive experience of the globalised internet and the ways in which languages are changing to naturally include a large number of Fremdwörter ('loan words' in English). I'm sure there are more articulate linguistic theories but as a lay person who is always observing language, I find the increased and ubiquitous use of English words in German extremely interesting. It of course changes your thinking, and in some ways, your personality, if you're using English words to describe states of being for which there is no word in German (i.e. 'vibing', 'awkward', 'sad'). Obviously, there is a word for 'sad' in German, but not in the way it's used ironically at this moment in our globalised culture.

Additionally, anyone who has immigrated from another country is existing within two or more languages, navigating their mother tongue(s) as well as the language(s) of the country to which they immigrated. In this way, while multilingual programming might be challenging to a traditional theatre audience, there are many people who are used to switching back and forth constantly, who might identify with and feel spoken to by theatrical storytelling that does the same. I've worked at a theatre in Berlin with a postcolonial focus which specifically encourages this form of (multilingual) storytelling, as their audience enjoys this added way of reflecting on their own experiences (or they simply enjoy experiencing

the specific reality – of which language is a huge part – of the storyteller-artist who created the piece). Additionally, we underestimate the ability of audience to participate in and commit to a reality on stage – people are curious about other realities and go to the theatre to experience exactly this.

However, just because younger people and anyone who has ever emigrated (as well as their children) experience the world as a more multilingual and culturally diverse place, it is not necessarily reflected in the actual space of the theatre. There is a great deal of virtue signalling when it comes to a theatre expressing an interest in a more diverse audience, but it's rare to see this translated into actual, targeted action plans. Most of the time I think this happens because people just don't know how. But unless theatres do active work to bring in audiences who are coming from different backgrounds, classes and life experiences, I do think the theatrical audience will simply remain niche: academic, elitist and self-referential.

Creating a more diverse audience does not happen without a concerted effort towards making theatre more accessible, i.e. by decreasing the barriers to entry and by programming artists and perspectives to which a wider audience can relate. And also by finding people with ideas who either know what needs to be done or are willing to put in the work, listen and figure it out. (In positions of artistic programming).

This work involves:

- diversifying from the inside out, bringing people onto artistic teams who have a broader perspective;
- asking the people you want to bring into the theatre what would appeal to them;
- telling stories onstage that reflect everyday experiences and human truths (to ensure a sustained interest in and community around the theatres;) and

- encouraging those coming from non-traditional backgrounds (ie: non-academic and lower class backgrounds, individuals with migration histories, etc) to develop artistic skills...

I could go on and on with ideas, but you basically need people in creative decision-making positions (dramaturgy, artistic direction, etc.) who are generating this change.

CR: As a bilingual playwright, how do you use language in the creative process? Do you think differently in different languages? Do you write for the same audience when using both languages? Do certain scenes/themes come more easily in particular languages?

PKH: My relationship to language is an inherent part of my creative process: different areas of my mind or experiences I've had within the world are related to different languages. In German, I feel like I think more directly and specifically, if not more dramatically. There is also a tenderness to the German language that allows for a specific tone in writing. In English, I am able to think in nuance and expanse. I have a bigger English vocabulary, from having read much more in it, and so I am able to employ language more broadly. My process is usually to write a first draft in German, then translate it into English, write until I've finished that draft, and then translate it back into German. It's a very time-consuming process, but in the end I have words that have been placed very intentionally and combed over with great care.

The use of language is also situational. I am currently writing a play about chronic pain, about elderly women in a surreal chronic pain clinic. As someone who deals with chronic pain, I do most of my own learning about the neuroscience of pain online in English. However, in the formal, clinical setting, my experience is fully German. It is interesting for me to observe what this does with pain and how I (and others) perceive it, depending on the vocabulary that exists to talk about it. So, yes, in some settings a specific language feels more appropriate. And no: I don't write for the same audience, I mostly try not to think too much about my audience, since in my experience I never know exactly what is going to speak to one audience or another. When I wrote my play 'Peeling Oranges' I thought, 'Who else could be interested in that story but an American audience?' (The play is about a family of Asian American women pursuing and failing at the American Dream, among other things). It turns out I was completely wrong: German theatres have been significantly more interested in it, specifically in the poetry of the language and narrative and the form. Maybe it's because I've been studying and learning in Germany, so the formal structure of the play is too far outside a traditional 'well-made play' to be easily accessible to an English-language audience?

But what I meant to say is: when I was 19, I was able to attend a talk with Lynn Nottage, a playwright who I deeply respect.

I remember her sitting on stage, looking at the relatively small audience (feeling like she was making eye contact with me) when she said, 'Writing for the stage is putting truth – emotional truth – on stage'. That's when I realised I wanted to be a playwright and that's how I've focused my process since. I listen: to the world around me, to my inner compass, to the words that come up on the page. I listen, and attempt to portray something true. And whatever language feels necessary to communicate that is the one I write in.

CR: At ETC, we often help theatres reach new audiences through surtitling, or translations. Have you learned anything from this process that could help ensure theatres get it right?

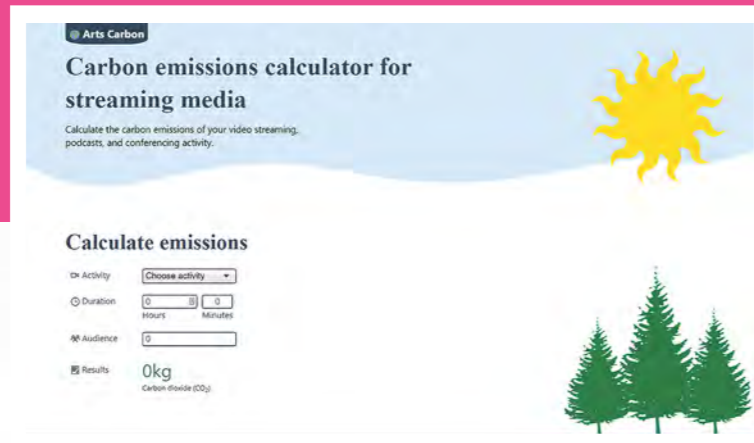
PKH: I feel like the most important thing is having a translator who understands the tone and voice of the playwright. What I realised in this process is that I also acted as a third person, as someone who could speak both languages and check the tone of the translation to polish it to be even stronger than the original. Of course this isn't usually necessary, but I feel like a third person in the translation process is honestly ideal (so often I read German-to-English surtitles that are just not getting it). And this makes me think that in future translations of language which I don't think, I'd like to have another person on board to ensure the translation is capturing the essence I intended. So this is my radical suggestion for translation - you in theory need at least two translators to get it 'right'.



Patty Kim Hamilton is a poet-playwright, dramaturg, director and performance artist, currently in her masters in Playwriting at the University of the Arts in Berlin. Her Play, "Peeling Oranges" (developed as

Playwright in Residence at the Shakespeare Academy Stratford and through the Bechdel Group) is the recipient of the Heidelberger Stückemarkt 2021 Radio Play Prize (produced through the SWR2), amongst other nominations and mentions. Her work exists at the intersection of the intimate and the political - meditating on bodies, language and memory. She is a graduate of Stanford University where she received a Bachelors in Theater and Performance Studies with Honors and the Sherifa Omade Edoga Prize for Work Addressing Social Issues. In Germany she is represented by Suhrkamp. pattykimhamilton.com

Christy Romer see page 11



An Inclusive Digital Strategy with a Smaller Ecological Footprint

Streaming and online conference tools kept us connected during lockdown. But at what cost to the environment? And who was and is still excluded from the process? Cultural strategist Vijay Mathew offers a new perspective.

Article by Vijay Mathew



How to keep track of carbon emissions for digital theatre?
© Nathaniel Stern

Screenshot from ArtsCarbon.com,
created by Vijay Mathew and Axxess Lab

Climate science demands that we – especially those of us in historically high-emitting nations, such as those in Europe – stop all carbon emissions today or risk catastrophic consequences for all. We in the performing arts sector could, for example, collectively pledge to reduce our carbon emissions to nearly zero by 2025, or even sooner, which would be in line with the science.

Air travel is by far the most carbon-emitting practice in which our field engages and over which we have immediate control: we can abandon it as a tool for the way we design and operate our programming. (For organisations that have buildings, the next highest carbon-emitting activity is the generation of electricity for heating, cooling and lighting systems.) Unlike land-based travel, like trains, buses and cars, there will not be low-carbon emission alternatives for air travel.

As organisations and artists turned to video conferencing and live video streaming in a resilient adaptation of programming during the COVID-19 lockdown, many positive equity-based

outcomes emerged that we need to recognise and prioritise as we reopen in person in the months to come. A number of people who had not had access to performances and conversations for a variety of economic and social reasons suddenly had increased opportunities to participate in them. A number of the oppressive power dynamics of elite, exclusive in-person gatherings took on a more democratic character: many more exchanges and conversations between artists in the Global North and the Global South were able to occur, as the immediacy of the medium collapsed geographic borders.

There is, however, a deceptively significant environmental cost to the production and consumption of internet media. The energy and physical materials usage of the information technology industry belongs to the extractive and ecocidal economic paradigm out of which we also need to transition very quickly. Just like the airline industry, the internet as we currently know it – always on and always growing – has an unrealistic future.

As an international performing arts community, we must urgently continue learning and thinking about our next steps towards an equity-informed, low-energy future. As a temporary strategy, using digital tools in a frugal manner and in a way that embodies and prioritises inclusion, accessibility and independence from consumerism may help us give ourselves this much-needed opportunity and space to re-envision our purpose and meaning to society.

We must urgently continue learning and thinking about our next steps towards an equity-informed, low-energy future.

I recently developed a carbon emissions calculator for streaming media at ArtsCarbon.com [<https://artscarbon.com/>] in collaboration with Axess Lab in Sweden for two purposes: to provide a simple tool for cultural managers to budget their programme's internet carbon emissions, and to provide a proof-of-concept design strategy that embodies justice-based values while simultaneously being highly performant.

This proof-of-concept demonstrates that we, together as an artistic field, can successfully choose to create online media that: 1) is low-energy, lightweight, low-carbon emitting, 2) is accessible to people with disabilities, 3) is inclusive and inexpensive for people who have limited bandwidth or for whom internet access is expensive relative to their income, especially in the Global South, 4) uses and contributes to commons-based open-source software and technology platforms instead of defaulting to problematic multinational products and services, and 5) provides a highly performant user experience as measured by page speed.

All decisions about the website were based on the priority of web accessibility, i.e. keeping the website as small as possible in terms of data (measured in kilobytes) and using open-source technology wherever available. This simple approach resulted in a website that is cheap to access and maintain, emits very little carbon, and is available to many more people with various abilities and disabilities. We can take this design approach and apply it to anything we choose to create.

In terms of using the calculator for budgeting and tapering your organisation's streaming emissions, adding a column

or row in your existing budget spreadsheets for CO2 estimates can be quite simple to do. However, answering the question 'What is an acceptable carbon budget?' puts us in a predicament, as the answer is always going to be 'zero'.

Some organisations may find they want to establish their pre-pandemic baseline carbon emissions and then phase out more carbon-intensive activities such as air travel by a certain deadline, say 2025, and progressively taper their CO2 emissions for each subsequent fiscal year.

Given these creative constraints and goals for cutting emissions, some important questions for programmers and artists will be: Who can be included in the limited number of people able to partake in air travel, video conferencing, and live video streams? Video, though carbon-intensive, is an essential tool for Deaf artists and Deaf cultures, for example. Who has historically not had the mobility (economic, social or physical) to engage with the artistic experiences you provide which a live video stream could help mitigate?

Acting based on a more holistic awareness about the hidden costs of our programming and activities is going to be an essential skill as we re-emerge from the pandemic restraints.

For more on reducing the carbon emissions caused by your digital activity, see Vijay's article: Streaming in the Just Transition [<https://howlround.com/streaming-just-transition>].



In the past decade, Vijay has helped to build the organisational capacity for several hundred non-profit organisations worldwide to livestream their conferences, panel discussions and performances – with an emphasis on prioritising accessibility, inclusion and resource efficiency. In the past year, Vijay supervised the production of more than 500 live-streamed events for the HowlRound Theatre Commons [<https://howlround.com>], of which he is a co-founder and for which he is cultural strategist. He is based at Emerson College in Boston, USA. When using internet technologies, he is passionate about the issues of accessibility, inclusion, the climate emergency, social change and a post-carbon future and the ways in which they are interconnected. All of his work in these areas has been informed by a 'commons' philosophy and social-justice values. He is also a worker-owner of the Crux cooperative – a visionary studio at the intersection of Black storytelling and immersive technology.

Photo Vijay Mathew © private



Ghosts are Only Humans Too, produced by Národní divadlo - National Theatre Prague © Petr Neubert

Paradigm Shift

Iris Laufenberg is ETC Vice-President and General Manager & Artistic Director of Schauspielhaus Graz, Austria. In this poetic analysis of the pandemic, she weaves together references to 20th Century German playwright Heiner Müller and a vampiric Tilda Swinton to set out how theatre (and art in general) influence our understanding of the world – and why we now have a chance to re-write this narrative into one that is more in tune with nature, death, and each other.

Essay by Iris Laufenberg

It is **high time – right now**, and even more so in times of a pandemic – to hold up a mirror to the world so it can get a better look, through the numbers of Covid cases and deaths, through the numbers of economic performance and forecasts, at its true face and circumstances. This mirror is and has always been art. In theatre, film and literature, death's ugly face is given fine features in which we can all recognise ourselves, in order to learn at both the individual and the collective level. Without insight, there can be no awareness; without awareness, there can be no change, and that instead leads to paralysis, to being doomed to repeat the same thing over and over again. So let's take a look in the mirror:

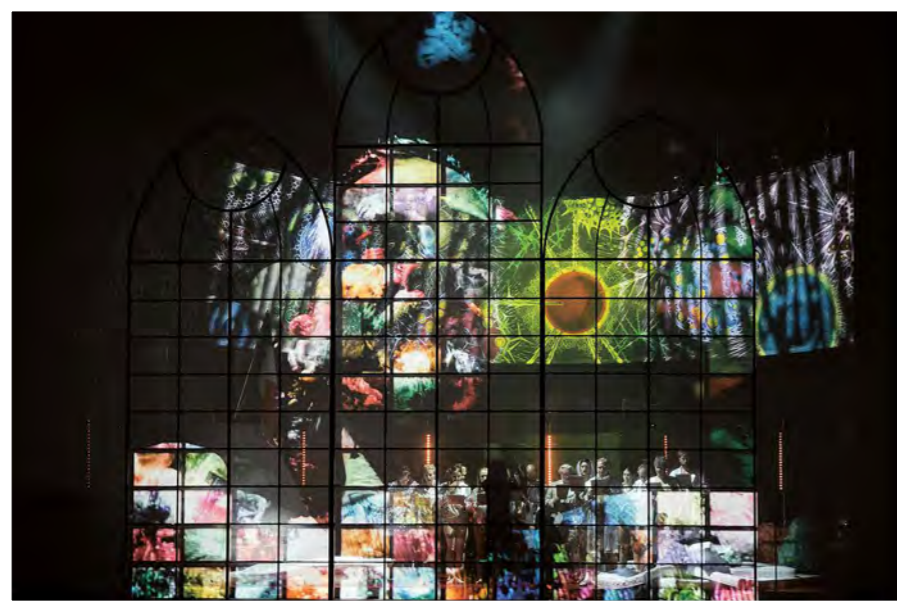
In my own life, the year 2020 ended with the death of a close relative. He made it to an advanced age and died of 'natural causes'. So my new year began with a funeral. This year was supposed to mark a change from the last: we were supposed to leave 2020 behind, with all its case numbers and deaths, and move forwards. Alas, things didn't work out as expected. Not just for me personally, but for everybody: we are all still carrying the baggage of illness and death around with us in our everyday life.

Actually, we humans know that there is no life without death. As Robert Pfaller says: 'We shouldn't fear death, but a bad life'¹. And whenever and however we cross paths with death, it is always an unexpectedly new experience. A test

of endurance, to be sure: it has been at the centre of our lives for the entire past year. There was not a single piece of news that failed to induce fear or remind us of our own individual responsibility. Although this fear was present, it was exclusively aligned with abstract data: there were case numbers and faceless fatalities.

In art, and even more so in theatre, death often is and has been – from antiquity to the present – the centre of the action, even the protagonist. Theatre is a place of lies, intrigue, deceit; centre of tragic love stories that culminate in death and murder. The tragedies on stage give us an opportunity to work through things we've experienced or that aren't settled in our own life, or to stand up to the powers that be. Because there is something that can be achieved on stage, in film and in literature, which, outside of the arts, might only be possible through spirituality: we are endowed with the ability to talk to the dead, a fact that playwright Heiner Müller emphasised throughout his life: "One function of drama is the invocation of the dead—the dialogue with the dead must not come to an end until they hand over the part of the future that was buried with them."²

The combination of death and viruses has been a defining feature of art for centuries. Take the outbreak of the Black Death in Florence in 1348, which inspired Giovanni Boccaccio's *Il Decamerone*. The central theme of this work



Two images top:
Performance: *Vernon Subutex*,
produced by Schauspielhaus Graz/Austria
© Lex Karelly

Schauspielhaus Graz/Austria
© Lupi Spuma

is what we have been missing during these months of abstractly ominous numbers flooding us without interruption. Boccaccio has ten different people, among them aristocrats, escape the threat of the epidemic by fleeing to the countryside. While there, they distract each other with stories, told with great relish by a different person every day. Voluntarily isolating themselves on a country estate, they are not only escaping the misery of death but also the tristesse of everyday life.

The plot is quite different in Albert Camus' classic *The Plague*. After the government's initial denial of the epidemic, as the rats are dying miserable deaths in the streets and doorways of the city of Oran, the city gates are ultimately closed to everyone. Nobody can enter or exit the city. The death rate spikes; there aren't enough coffins for the dead; curfews are issued, hygiene measures adopted, remedies tested; a path out of the misery is sought.

Although the events resemble one another and we have been experiencing them for over a year, – if not up close, then by way of the endless cycle of images and reports and our attempt to find distractions in the media – we remember very little of the plagues of our ancestors. Not much attention has been paid to the history of epidemics until now, so these images have not been able to embed themselves in the collective memory: 'For a long time little was known about how doctors tried to prevent an outbreak of the Plague in European port cities in the twentieth century. There is no collective memory of pandemics', writes Clara Hallner in the *Tages-Anzeiger*, a Swiss newspaper, and still: 'The Plague ploughed through the world three times. The most recent time it cost millions of human lives – not only in Europe.'³ This sort of look at cultural history shows that – in very different genres and works of art – pandemics and diseases are very much inscribed in collective memory. Art, as memory brought to life, can be used to provide an additional perspective alongside the dominating views of virologists and statisticians, to mediate and come up with ideas for coping with the situation and to offer a hope-inspiring narrative (that does not constantly stoke our fears).

If the epidemic in *Il Decamerone* is a nuisance the privileged can escape by going to the countryside, it becomes a fortress for the people who are trapped within it in Camus' *The Plague*. In Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's 1922 film *Nosferatu*, it even travels on a phantom ship carrying a multitude of rats and a vampire to the small city of Wismar. Or let us recall the scene in which Klaus Kinski, in his role as Count Dracula in Werner Herzog's film adaptation of the same story, disembarks the Transylvanian ship, led by the ghastly rodents that spread the plague. The vampire is the incarnation of the 'virus':



Iris Laufenberg, ETC Vice-President © Lupi Spuma

like the virus, he brings death, but never dies (out) himself; rather, he slumbers in secret, only to break out at some point in the future, metaphorically depicted in *Nosferatu*'s giant shadow cast across the buildings of the city. The motif of the unredeemed, of the inability to die, pervades throughout all these scenes. We see a more contemporary version of it in a scene from Jim Jarmusch's 2009 film *Only Lovers Left Alive*, where Tilda Swinton, in inimitable casualness in her role as a vampire bored by immortality, drives through the deserted Detroit with her likewise eternal lover. Living forever has got to be draining. That's why the topos of the human fear of death, the fear of danger lurking in every corner, is also imbued with the deep-seated desire for redemption.

We find it in countless works throughout the history of art, as well as in Richard Wagner's opera *The Flying Dutchman*, which is based on the legend of a Dutch captain: he placed himself above God and nature and is cursed for it, doomed to sail the seas of the world on his phantom ship till kingdom come – apparently without ever being able to dock at a harbour. But still, every seven years he has the chance to be redeemed by a human sacrifice...

All these undead continue to roam the earth, or at least our shared cultural history. The virus, draped in bat's clothes or dressed as a vampire, mirrors and embodies a threat which we allow to frighten and terrify us as we shudder gratifyingly in our seat at the cinema or on our sofa at home. With the certainty of having projected our own fears onto celluloid or the stage, we can banish them and go to bed in the dark comforted by the certainty that tomorrow will bring a bright new morning. At least, we'd been able to do that until early last year, when a virus began affecting us in a very real and physical way: so here and now we are forced to take a closer look.

The fact that epidemics and pandemics have always really existed is an inconvenient historical truth which had apparently

really collectively been repressed or forgotten by society. It wasn't until I read Philip Roth's *Nemesis* that I understood for the first time the scale of the catastrophe caused by polio: although about 10,000 people still contracted the disease in Germany in the 1960s and it was only stopped after all children were required to take an oral vaccine, the traumatic magnitude of this disease was hardly ever brought up throughout my time at school or in my family and environment. Plagues like SARS and Ebola also used to feel quite far away. The threat of a novel virus spreading across our globalised world was severely underestimated; it was something unthinkable. Likewise the fact that we globetrotters could – time and again – be infected with a virus and bring it along with us, spreading it to all corners of the world in a very short time.

Aside from all the bad, what good will come out of the Covid pandemic for our society?

We had been warned – if we had only wanted to listen – for many years by scientists and progressive thinkers all over the world. Not to mention that we culture lovers and cineastes could also have opened our eyes back in 2011: *Contagion* by Steven Soderbergh was dubbed an 'exciting thriller' with a star-studded cast (with Gwyneth Paltrow, Matt Damon and others). But from today's perspective it was much more: it documented the cycle of an epidemic; it was a crystal-clear, realistically portrayed warning to humanity that our planet, due to our treatment of other living beings and our dominance of nature for our survival, will no longer offer us any security in the future.

Now the pandemic is slowly taking on faces and a history, and becoming easier to place into our era than the plague was. If we had merely been 'fans of extraordinarily crafted science fiction worlds' from the start of the twentieth century until now, these works of art and their 'fantasies' (such as in the 2013 novel *The Circle* by Dave Eggers) now suddenly depict what our life has become today.

Since the dawn of industrialisation at the latest, societies oriented towards unlimited progress and growth have exposed themselves as destructive weapons against the basis of our existence. The apocalypse can no longer be relegated to history, projected onto art or preached away in worship: we human beings have crowned ourselves King

of the Universe and in the process have failed to weigh the consequences or take appropriate measures. Vampires and bats are getting closer now, tumbling down from the silver screen. We had sensed it before. I remember the issue of the increasingly reckless destruction of the environment and the unsustainability of our way of living were already quite evident to me back in the 1980s. According to evolutionary theorist Lynn Margulis, this is due to 'our strong feeling that we are different from all other lifeforms' or, simply put, 'megalomania'⁴. As the saying goes: 'Pride comes before a fall'. But even Oedipus had to be blinded before he could see the scope of the tragedy that he had caused.

If our current geological epoch can still be framed by the term Holocene, which stretches from more than 11,000 years ago to the present day, in the 1990s the playwright Heiner Müller made a point of describing an 'infinite present', thus bringing the contemplation of our future to a halt. At a conference at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in 2013 Frank M. Raddatz argued: 'Our idea of nature is outdated. Human beings shape nature. That is the heart of the Anthropocene thesis, which heralds a paradigm shift not only in the natural sciences but also seeks new paths in culture, politics and everyday life.'⁵ And so humanity was identified as a dominant influential factor on biological, geological and atmospheric processes: the massive waste of resources, contamination of the environment and disastrous interventions in nature are all being accelerated due to the human drive for (economic) growth and by globalisation.

The current pandemic has made this rapid progress of globalisation and the interconnectedness resulting from it at all levels crystal clear: within just a few weeks, Covid was detected on every continent. Until then, we had hardly ever realised just how 'short' the distances across the globe had become. And so it is no wonder that the most frequent (and, from this perspective, actually rather naïve) question put to culture and artistic creation over the past ten months was: *Aside from all the bad, what good will come out of the Covid pandemic for our society? What will we have learned?* Such complex processes and (world) events, which frequently elude the power of a person's imagination, not only require reflection and concentration and ultimately a narrative: crucially, this narrative also needs to spread and be absorbed into collective memory.

In light of this paradigm shift, we must acknowledge that we, in the arts and in general, will have to look for new narratives about our existence in the future. Shouldn't art be granted more relevance in society? And, given that it has long proven its relevance, shouldn't it be seen as a valuable partner or even as a necessary 'tool'?

As early as the 1970s, Heiner Müller prophetically gave us a first taste of it in his 'Mission': 'The rebellion of the dead will be the war of landscapes, our weapons the forests, the

mountains, the seas, the deserts of the world. I will become a forest, a mountain, a sea, a desert.

The epidemiological historian Malte Thießen paints a rather bleak picture in his lecture 'How epidemics influence society'⁶, though not without pointing out the opportunities we still have to make changes: he also attests to an unusual historical amnesia when it comes to our epidemiological past – from the Spanish flu to cholera and the black death to polio and HIV. So while these diseases are seismographs of the ruin of societies, they themselves are also social in that they are contagious: when one person falls ill, it becomes a problem for everybody. As a result, epidemics also harbour within them the possibility of social emancipation. Since it is a question of life and death, it is also about the fundamental principles of our society. And here is where politicians and virologists would be sure to benefit from support from the fields of sociology, linguistics, history, psychology, and certainly art and culture.

To conclude these thoughts, I want to leave you with the vision of a future utopia: we will manage – thanks to our societal, emancipatory, self-reliant and reflectionist power – to unite and stand up against the widespread practice of nation states outdoing one another, against the putting up of borders (including the ones in our heads), against the reinforcement of stereotypes and the search for 'scapegoats'. We will open up new spaces for thought and action, and replace our fears with trust in global responsibility in order to jointly solve global problems.

Oh, and in this utopia we're also finally going to let go of a well-known phenomenon of our cultural history: the woman's role in this upside-down David-and-Goliath vision. The roles of the sacrificial beauties – whether in *Nosferatu* or *The Flying Dutchman* – who have always and forever redeemed the patriarchal status quo will have no place in this utopia. Neither the young Senta nor the beautiful Ellen will stand outside of the landscapes wrestling one another, or at least they will not sacrifice themselves to humanity. Yes, Agamemnon may wage war against the landscapes embroiled in dilemmas that cannot be solved, but in the war of the seas, Iphigenia will not be there; and, if she is, she will stand by Agamemnon's side as an equal. Either way, daughters will no longer be sacrificed. Nor will the storms allow themselves to be graciously appeased by any human sacrifice at all. The *Oresteia* will have to be rewritten.

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The following texts and lecture are quoted in and served as the main inspirational sources for this essay:

Elisabeth Bronfen, *Angesteckt. Zeitgemässes über Pandemie und Kultur*, Basel 2020; **Frank M. Raddatz**, *Bühne und Anthropozän. Dramatische Poesie der Zukunft – eine theaterästhetische Spekulation*, in: *Lette International*, no. 122, autumn 2018; **Malte Thießen**, *Wie Epidemien Gesellschaft beeinflussen*, 11.11.2020, Forum Paderborn, broadcast at the Deutschlandfunk Nova lecture theatre on 23.01.2021

Foonotes:

- 1 – **Robert Pfaller**, *Kurze Sätze über gutes Leben*, Frankfurt/Main 2018, 13.
- 3 – **Heiner Müller in conversation with Wolfgang Heise**, *Theater der Zeit* 1988, vol. 2, 25.
- 3 – **Clara Hellner**, *Wie die Pest besiegt wurde. Dreimal schon rollte die Pest über die Welt hinweg. Die Letzte kostete Millionen Menschenleben – nur nicht in Europa*, in: *Tages-Anzeiger*, last updated on 13.09.2019, 00:30, URL: <https://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/hintergrund-und-analyse/wie-die-pest-besiegt-wurde/story/26684572>
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- 6 – **Malte Thießen**, *Wie Epidemien Gesellschaft beeinflussen*, 11.11.2020, Forum Paderborn, broadcast at the Deutschlandfunk Nova lecture theatre on 23.01.2021



Iris Laufenberg studied "Drama, Theatre and Media" in Giessen (Germany) until 1991. After working in Bonn and Bremen, she worked as a dramaturge and artistic director of the international Bonn Biennale Festival, focusing on contemporary European drama. She was the director of the internationally reputable festival *Theatertreffen* in Berlin from 2002 to 2011, where she again focused on the promotion of current European drama at the *Stückemarkt*. As the director of drama at the *Konzert Theater Bern* (Switzerland) from 2012 to 2015 she emphasized the importance of international productions and began her work with interdisciplinary and site-specific projects. Since the 2015/16 season, Iris Laufenberg has worked as General Manager and Artistic Director of the *Schauspielhaus Graz* (Austria). Among sharpening the profile of contemporary authors by founding the "DramatikerInnenfestival" of Graz, she goes on pursuing the development of the city theatre concept beyond content genres and geographical boundaries.

Photo Iris Laufenberg © Lex Karellly



ETC Collaboration Pitching Session, Graz/Austria, 2021
© Lex Karellly



Can Theatres Save the World from the Climate Crisis?

If you feel overwhelmed by the seemingly massive challenge of making your theatre's activities sustainable, don't bury your head in the sand: open your eyes and ears. You can learn from the experiments, successes and failures of other venues. Michaela Rýgrová, Environmental Activity Coordinator at the National Theatre in Prague (Národní divadlo, or NT), outlines the theatre's advancements in sustainability over the past 20 years and offers a message of hope for theatres at the start of their journey.

Article by Michaela Rýgrová



Ghosts Are Only Human Too by Národní divadlo - National Theatre Prague
© Daniela and Linda Dostálková

Národní divadlo - National Theatre Prague/Czech Republic
© National Theatre Prague

The times of raised eyebrows in response to a sentence containing the words 'sustainable' and 'theatre' are coming to an end. The once quiet voices pointing out the importance of a sustainable approach to theatre are now being amplified and many ideas are getting more opportunities to come to life. We are not completely there yet, but we are on our way.

People come to the theatre for an experience. They want to be captivated by the beauty of the artistic portrayal of stories, by the acting, by the music, to be dazzled by the lighting effects as the scene changes. Here a castle grows in front of us, here part of a house transforms into a tree. We know that even when the theatre is in a historical building, all of this is made possible by modern technologies and, despite the fact that we suspect their presence, we are not bothered by them.

The fear of the audience being 'bothered' or the plays being 'butchered' by more sustainable and ecological practices in

theatre productions have been the main disincentives to green theatre in the past two decades. Will the set and costumes only be made from garbage from now on? Will we stop seeing stunning new set designs? Will we have to stop using lights? And, most importantly, will we only be allowed to watch plays about environmental issues? Isn't that depressing? Doesn't it go against artistic freedom? Luckily there were people who wanted answers and went to work to prove that the fears were unwarranted. Just look at the National Theatre in London, the Arcola Theatre, Glyndebourne, the Sydney Opera House, etc.

The National Theatre in Prague

The combination of running a theatre in a historic building and the growing demand for comfort from spectators and performers alike, compounded by the increased emphasis on the functionality and efficiency of the technologies that afford said comfort, makes for a particularly tough set of challenges,



Screenshot from Národní divadlo – National Theatre Prague's video for the ETC Renaissance project
© National Theatre Prague

especially if the technological guts of the building are to remain hidden. It was the functionality and efficiency of the technology at the National Theatre in Prague that initially triggered fundamental changes. And it was precisely the need to preserve the integrity of the historic character of the building, and the fact that it was a venue serving art rather than a production hall that needed a facelift, which started a long process with surprising results.

In 2003, Miroslav Růžička was appointed head of the technical and economic department of the National Theatre. His main goal was to address and improve the inefficient and obsolete energy management system in the NT buildings. It took him almost three years to do that. During that time he faced a lack of data, financial resources and, finally, of understanding as to what such changes and their execution would mean in the bigger picture.

He started collecting all of the data available on the NT's energy management, including energy consumption, costs and efficiency, the technical parameters of all the equipment, etc. Because this data was insufficient, he had to verify them over the course of two heating periods (i.e. two winter seasons) in order to determine the functionality of the technologies and their potential ability to work differently from the way they were designed to.

The cost of the necessary modifications was beyond the possibilities of the National Theatre. Applications for targeted subsidies to the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic

were rejected in both 2004 and 2005, which caused the theatre to turn to energy performance contracting (EPC), or the possibility of funding investments in the project from the achieved savings in energy consumption (usually such projects have a timetable of five to twelve years).

Will theatres save the world from the climate crisis?

After months of negotiations, in 2006 the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic approved the use of this funding method, and work began on preparing the tender documentation for the public contract. (One illustration of the complexity of the whole process is the fact that it contained 33 appendices!)

The agreement to introduce energy-saving measures, which was signed at the end of 2006, guaranteed energy savings of around CZK 25 million. Over the next three years, this contract was extended by additional cost-saving measures in the form of four amendments, increasing the total guaranteed savings to over CZK 53 million. It was, however, only the beginning, as the

same programmes were applied in other theatre buildings run by the NT.

The transformation included, for example, the renovation of the central boiler room; the use of new condensing boilers; the waterproofing and installation of a photovoltaic power system on the roof of two NT buildings; the installation of an energy recovery unit to preheat outdoor air and prevent large heat losses; the introduction of the use of river water for hydraulic cooling; the replacement of interior lighting, etc.

Environmental consciousness as a by-product

However, implementing these measures not only meant modernising existing technologies and performing necessary renovation work: it was also an important step towards cheaper energy, heating and water costs, the use of renewable energies and the reduction of CO2 emissions. In the first ten years alone, the theatre has prevented the emission of over 24,000 tonnes of CO2, or the amount that a car would emit if it travelled 211 million kilometres; it has also saved over 330,000 m3 of water, corresponding to a volume of 105 Olympic swimming pools, as well as 11,000 MWh of electricity, which represents the annual electricity consumption of households in a city of 12,000 inhabitants; finally, it has also saved 59,000 MWh of gas, which was the amount consumed by the NT in five years before the introduction of these efficiency measures.

The environmental impact was not the goal and for several years its importance was not fully recognised in the NT, even though the energy project has earned several prestigious national and international awards. It took a couple more years to understand that, despite the fact that the NT's main purpose is cultural, it can integrate more eco-conscious behaviour into its production.

Will theatres save the world from the climate crisis?

Do we really need an answer to that to do the right thing? Let's hope not, regardless of whether our approach is driven by economic or ecological motives. A couple years back, the playwright Chris Thorpe said to the writer and theatre-maker David Finnigan, 'We still think we're making art to save the world. We've never been making art to save the world. We've always been making art to slow down and fragment and isolate the thinking we use to understand the world.' Following Chris's comment, David proposed: '...art can gather us together and let us know that we're not alone in feeling overwhelmed and inadequate to deal with the crisis.'

So let's leave that existential question for now. It is important to understand that theatres are not here to save the world. Let's cut them some slack. There are no precise rules or one-size-fits-all instructions on sustainability. Sustainable

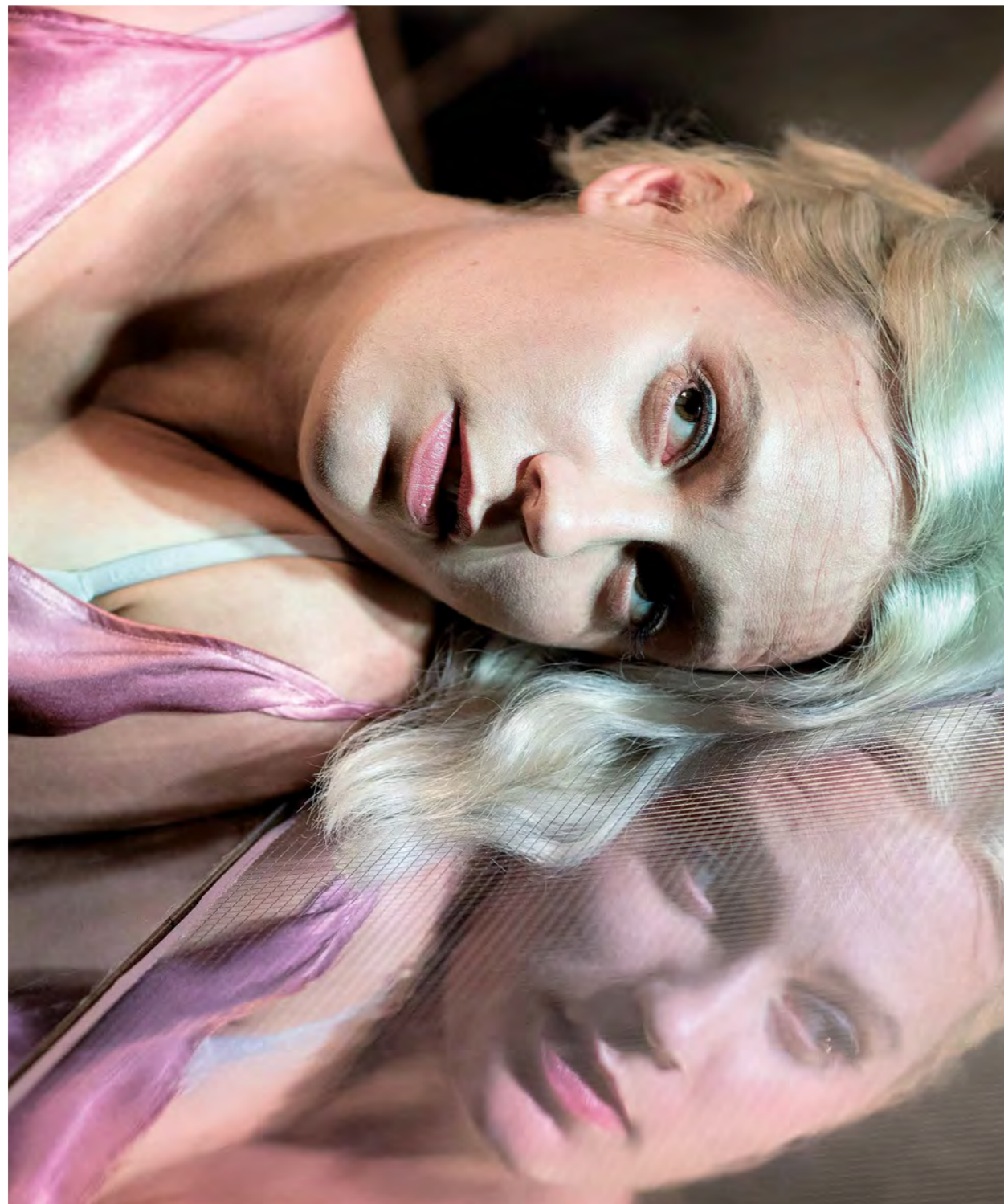
approaches to theatre production are still new and uncharted ventures. The various tools and processes and their impact are still being explored. At the same time, theatres should not be slacking in their effort! What all theatres – regardless of what stage of sustainability endeavours they are in – can and should do is be bold enough to start important discussions and be open to listening; be courageous enough to look inward; and be honest about what sustainability means to your theatre because your approaches will be based on that. Give yourself permission to not be perfect because the process, research and evaluation can and will be overwhelming. Give yourself time. It is a learning process, of which failure is an inherent part. Also remember that you are not alone: join networks, partner with other theatres, follow ETC and their sustainable theatre initiative which was launched with the publication of The Sustainability Action Code for Theatres. Start now.



Michaela Rýgrová is Environmental Activity Coordinator at Národní divadlo - National Theatre Prague. Based in Prague, working around the world, she is driven by a passion for culture, innovation,

sustainability, art, communities and a better world. She has over a decade of experience in creative industries, event production, multicultural teams coordination, developing, supporting and strengthening of various networks, alongside work in PR, presenting and writing.

ETC Season Programme



Emma Österlöf in *Blixtra, spraka, blända!*, directed by Emma Roswall at Folkteatern Göteborg © Lina Ikse

2017-2021 ENGAGE

ETC's bold international programme for European theatres. Facts & Figures of international artistic collaboration, professional development and advocacy for European theatre

652 connections to **52** European Theatres through member events / conferences / artistic projects

new cross-border theatre productions and plays initiated and supported **82**

250.000 audience reached across **4** artistic projects and **3** festivals

artists supported through creative projects **728**

100k people reached by Renaissance, ETC's programme of short theatre films made by **22** theatres

participants from **37** countries at **8** ETC International Theatre Conferences **605**

100 young directors and dramaturgs from **33** countries supported through Academy and Residency Programmes

new theatre publications with articles by **44** authors **12**

A Collaborative Network

ETC's activities are designed to support our Member Theatres – and where relevant the wider theatre and performing arts sector – by giving them opportunities to learn, share, innovate and experiment in their creative and professional development.

We focus on helping artists coproduce and scale up their capacities through international exchanges, artistic programmes and residency opportunities.

We bring together theatre professionals from across the continent to discuss and disseminate ideas at our ETC International Theatre Conferences and regular online/in-person workshops.

We continue to innovate by focusing on cross-cutting issues like sustainability, inclusion and gender equality, facilitating critical thinking in organisations and audiences through theatre.

This season's activities are taking place in the specific context of the recovery from the Covid pandemic. The programme is not intended to be a repeat of previous activities or a return to 'normal'. It is instead about learning from the digital-first activity that became necessary during lockdown and helping build resilience among theatre organisations as we transition back to in-person activities.

The activities listed below are subject to the availability of funds. Check our website to see the full, confirmed programme.



The five Pipelines playwrights
© Erion Kovaci, Philippe Matsas,
Stefanie Kulisch, Alice Piemme

Pipelines

“What kind of drama do fossil fuels provoke in your country?”

The new ETC collaboration project 'Pipelines' centres on five ETC Member Theatres from five European countries that have commissioned five authors to come up with a story about oil. Different perspectives on the topic complement each other; the individual stories representing local themes coalesce to show the bigger picture. European collaboration and political engagement increase the visibility of a burning issue and show that common problems can only be solved by working together: a communication network circulates words, instead of oil, and draws energy from cultural exchange rather than from fossil fuels.

The playwrights and the commissioning theatres:

- Alex Lorette – working with *Théâtre de Liège*
- Elsa Demo – working with *the National Theatre of Albania*
- Ian De Toffoli – working with *Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg*
- Magdalena Schrefel – working with *Schauspielhaus Graz*
- Simone Spiteri – working with *Teatru Malta*

Young Europe IV

YOUNG EUROPE IV is a three-year programme devoted to expanding the canon of European theatre literature, by highlighting 'forgotten' plays and writing new ones for young audiences. European theatre literature is dominated by a white, heterosexual, male perspective. With Young Europe IV, we explicitly focus on the non-dominant voices in our societies; on stories that usually go untold or should be told more often.



- Open to ETC Member Theatres only
- Kick-off-workshop in autumn 2021



Rage by Deutsches Theater Berlin/Germany
© Arno Declair

ETC International Theatre Conferences

The ETC International Theatre Conferences are key moments of ETC's activities: two high-level conferences take place, each season, bringing together theatre professionals from the ETC network as well as invited guests to promote networking and raise awareness of current debates and challenges in European theatre.



- For ETC Member Theatres and invited guests
- 28–31 October 2021 in Malta, in partnership with Teatru Malta
- 19–22 May 2022 in Prague, in partnership with Národní divadlo – National Theatre Prague



Hybrid ETC International Theatre Conference in Graz
© Lex Karelly

ETC Drama Committee

Formed in 2021, the ETC Drama Committee is made up of dramaturges and directors across the continent. It represents the diversity and expertise of the ETC network. The committee searches for, debates about and shares the most interesting 'undiscovered' contemporary European plays to make them available for translations into new languages, thereby allowing the stories to travel across borders.

The committee selected the texts to be translated into English for the first time as part of the ENGAGE Readings programme, which was showcased at the ETC International Theatre Conference in Graz in June 2021.

It will continue to meet in the 2021/22 season and select new texts to be translated and presented at the upcoming ETC International Theatre Conferences.



- The committee will reinstate activities in the 2021/22 season.

ETC Green Theatre Committee

The ETC Green Theatre Committee, also established in 2021, has set the ambitious goal for all ETC theatres to become climate neutral by 2030. This will involve adopting and strengthening sustainable processes in theatre organisations, theatre buildings and across theatre productions.

The goals are set out in the newly published Sustainable Action Code for Theatres, adopted by ETC Members at the ETC International Theatre Conference in Graz in June 2021.



- The committee will reinstate activities in the 2021/22 season.

Professional Development Programme

In-person workshops and regular online webinars focusing on relevant topics such as sustainability and the fight against climate change, diversity and inclusion within theatres, digital capacity-building and adapting to online working.

- For ETC Member Theatres only
- Workshops, online webinars and seminars throughout the season

Artist Residency Programme

Grants Available!

Young artists are selected to join the creative process in ETC Member Theatres for a 6- to 8-week residency, during which they gain insights into new working methods, receive input on their own work and expand their European networks.

- Open to ETC Member Theatres and independent artists
- Takes place between January and June 2022
- Call for applications: October 2021
- Grants available

Women Directors' Networking Group

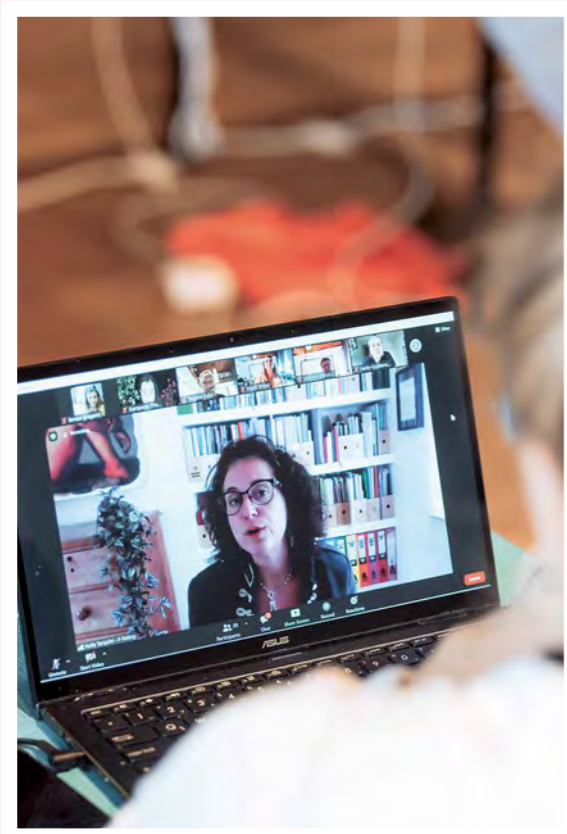
A chance for women directors and dramaturges in ETC Member Theatres to meet in a closed group with leading women theatre professionals across Europe and to share experiences.

- For ETC Member Theatres only
- Activities will take place regularly between August 2021 and June 2022

European Theatre Academy

Four days of masterclasses, workshops and mentoring by leading European theatre professionals during the Festival d'Avignon in France for emerging theatre-makers from public theatre institutions and the independent performing arts sector looking to acquire know-how and skills to internationalise and professionalise their work.

- Open to both ETC Member Theatres and independent artists
- Takes place in July 2022
- Call for applications: March 2021



Holly Tarquini, Executive Director of FilmBath & Founder of 'F-Rating' at the ETC International Theatre Conference © Lex Kareilly

Coffee Breaks

Monthly online networking meetings for ETC Members to share their latest news, challenges and a coffee, and develop future projects together.

- For ETC Member Theatres only
- Takes place online every month

Performance Exchange Programme

Grants Available!

ETC offers travel and translation grants to support artistic exchanges and guest performances between ETC Member Theatres, and raises awareness about the performances on tour as part of this programme.

- For ETC Member Theatres only
- Takes place between September 2021 and August 2022
- Grants available

Staff Exchange Programme

Grants Available!

The Staff Exchange Programme is an opportunity for the staff of ETC Member Theatres to exchange know-how and best practices with European colleagues, and work at another European theatre for up to 30 days.

- For ETC Member Theatres only
- Takes place between September 2021 and August 2022
- Grants available

Policy Recommendations

Over the course of the four-year ENGAGE programme, funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, ETC has collected and devised a series of policy recommendations for national and European funders.

Digital Theatre

Even before the Covid-19 lockdown forced theatres to adapt and present activity to online audiences, the rapid pace of digital innovation had transformed the way we create, present, distribute and circulate theatrical work. This paper features learning from the two-year European Theatre Lab project - stressing the need for a long term approach to funding and support schemes.

Participatory Theatre

What does it mean to use 'horizontal thinking' when planning participatory theatre activity, and how does this compare to a 'democratic' understanding of the term? This paper explores the links between participation, community cohesion and the distribution of power, making suggestions for how theatres and funders can change working practices and funding structures.

Youth Theatre

What occupies the minds of young generation today, and how can theatres across Europe collaborate on topics that resonate for international audiences? Using examples from ongoing projects at European theatres, recommendations are made for involving young people in institutional decision making, directing funding towards youth theatre, and being open to new formats and approaches.

Gender Equality & Diversity in Theatre

In Spring 2021, ETC published the results of the independent academic study into Gender Equality & Diversity in its Member Theatres. This policy paper makes recommendations to address the general lack of people from minority backgrounds in staff - and the contractual and job role inequalities that still exist between men and women employees. Includes recommendations for analysing diversity in programming and reviewing organisational policies.



All ETC Policy White Papers are available to read or download on www.europeantheatre.eu

Sustainability Action Code for European Theatres

Creating now, a greener, more sustainable conscious and mindful just future by 2030.

We, theatres in Europe, are committed to measuring, understanding, reducing and offsetting our carbon footprint through information, mobilisation and legislation on a European level.

Theatres have the power to reach many people across society, to engage and initiate cultural debates. Creating a better and more equitable future is at the heart of our 'recovery plan' to overcome the Covid-19 crisis, providing resilience, all while reducing our impact on the climate crisis. We refer to the EU Green Deal and the Sustainability Goals of the United Nations to achieve a better and more sustainable sector by 2030.

ETC's Sustainability Action Code for Theatres is the ambitious vision to create sustainable progress in Europe's theatres by the end of this decade, aiming to reach a climate positive network and membership. It is based on the three basic pillars considering the social, economic and environmental transformation of our work for a more sustainable, diverse and just use of our resources, to create, present and share theatre made in Europe.

We are committed to adapting our environments and actions in three areas towards:

- Sustainable processes in theatre organisations
- Sustainable theatre buildings
- Sustainable theatre productions



Read more on our website
www.europeantheatre.eu

Diversity in Action Code of Conduct for European Theatres

ETC Members adhere to a code of conduct principles to ensure equal opportunities and a diverse artistic theatrical expression.

Theatre is an essential part of Europe's cultural diversity. We present artistic visions and reflections of our world on stage, thriving to be a mirror of our rich diversity in society. We believe in diversity and freedom of expression in a society that offers equal opportunities to all citizens, including people with disabilities, to lead a fulfilling life, no matter their gender, sexual orientation, ethnic, social, religious or philosophical backgrounds.

Theatre is a cultural heritage and contributes to the contemporary cultural diversity in European society. As art form relevant to reflect the developments of human and societal issues, we as theatre makers, as representatives of public art institutions, believe that it is our role to ensure equal opportunities and a diverse artistic theatrical expression, considering the diverse realities of the cities and countries we live in.

We are committed to move toward equality and greater diversity in our theatres and adhere to the following Diversity in Action code of conduct principles:

- Ensure gender equality and increased diversity amongst theatre staff employees;
- Reflect gender and diversity across artistic creation and programming;
- Invest in training allowing equal opportunities for gender and diversity minority groups;
- Ensure equal pay across gender;
- Set forward clear objectives in our theatre's artistic and management plans.

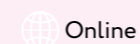


Read more on our website
www.europeantheatre.eu

ETC Calendar 2021/2022

September 2021 – July 2021

Regular ETC Coffee Breaks



Online

October 2021

Artist Residency Programme:
Application Period Opens



europeantheatre.eu

28-31 October 2021

ETC International Theatre Conference



[Teatru Malta/Malta](http://TeatruMalta/Malta)

January – June 2022

Artist Residency Placements



[ETC Member Theatres](http://ETCMemberTheatres)

March 2022

European Theatre Academy:
Applications Period Opens



europeantheatre.eu

19-22 May 2022

ETC International Theatre Conference



[Národní divadlo – National Theatre Prague/CZ](http://NarodniDivadlo-NationalTheatrePrague/CZ)

July 2022

European Theatre Academy



[Festival d'Avignon/France](http://FestivaldAvignon/France)

Watch out for new ETC webinar series, workshops and seminars – more info on our website!

europeantheatre.eu



Visit to the Festival d'Avignon with the ETC European Theatre Academy

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About ETC

An artistic platform for creation, innovation and collaboration

As the largest network of public theatres in Europe, ETC reflects the diversity of Europe's vibrant cultural sector.

Founded in 1988, ETC promotes European theatre as a vital social platform for dialogue, democracy and interaction that responds to, reflects and engages with today's diverse audiences and changing societies.

ETC fosters an inclusive notion of theatre that brings Europe's social, linguistic and cultural heritage to audiences and communities in Europe and beyond. Powerful and professional ETC governance ensures that the network will thrive and grow, taking into consideration the latest trends and developments.

ETC's current four-year programme

"ENGAGE: Empowering today's audience through challenging theatre" offers our Member Theatres many opportunities. This comprehensive, ground-breaking programme is supported by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

Advocacy

ETC voices the needs and concerns of the theatre community to political leaders and promotes the visibility of the sector from the local to the international level.

Your Benefits as an ETC Member

- **Meet and network with colleagues** from other European theatres
- **Create** international artistic collaborations
- **Get inspired** by new ideas and share best practice
- **Be represented** at European and international levels
- **Explore new contexts**, cities and perspectives



ETC International Theatre Conference, Bratislava/Slovakia 2018
© Peter Chvostek

Join the network!

Interested theatres are invited to join our ETC International Theatre Conferences to get to know the network, the members and future cooperation partners. New members' applications are voted on at each General Assembly.

If you are interested, please don't hesitate to contact the ETC team for further information.



ETC Partners

ETC projects are jointly financed by its members.

The ETC programme "ENGAGE – Empowering today's audience through challenging theatre" is co-funded by the **Creative Europe Programme of the European Union**.



Cooperation Partners



Media Partners



**22 Theatres.
18 European Countries.
250 Artists.**



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ETC Contact

European Theatre Convention

c/o Deutsches Theater, Schumannstr. 13a, 10117 Berlin
convention@europeantheatre.eu
+49 30 28 441 460



europeantheatre.eu

ETC Team

Heidi Wiley, *Executive Director*
Hélène Gauthier, *Project & Network Manager*
Teresa Pfaud, *Project Coordinator*
Christy Romer, *Communication Manager*

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