

The Annual Amfiteater International Academic Symposium

Shifts in Contemporary Drama After the Year 2000

organized by

**Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television,
Slovenian Theatre Institute** and

Amfiteater – Journal of Performing Arts Theory

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Throughout history, playwriting and theatre have been caught in an impossible relationship in which they are constantly struggling for dominance. At the same time, each of them appears to be unable to exist without the other one. This can be noted as early as Aristotle's *Poetics*, in which the great philosopher argued that "the power of Tragedy, we may be sure, is felt even apart from representation and actors". Nevertheless, the rise of tragedy was essentially bound to theatre and rituals in honour of the god Dionysus which represented an essential element of the Athenian polis. However, we will not be dealing with the entire history of this relationship but rather the changes it has undergone during the last twenty years. It appears that we are witnessing a revival of playwriting in Slovenia and elsewhere in Europe.

We have already addressed the renaissance of playwriting in the wake of the "in yer face" theatre, which emerged in the United Kingdom in the 1990s and affected the development of drama throughout Europe. On the other hand, as early as the late 1960s, the so-called performative turn (a term coined by Erika Fischer-Lichte) took place in the development of theatre, which later influenced the emergence of postdramatic theatre (Hans-Thies Lehmann) or the new aesthetics of the performative (*Ästhetik des Performativen*) (Fischer-Lichte). In playwriting, this development brought about no-longer-dramatic texts (Gerda Poschmann) or postdramatic texts in the 1980s.

After the turn of the millennium, a new writing style for theatre started to be discerned, mainly in German literary theory and theatre studies: the "dramatisches Drama" or "dramatic drama", as Birgit Haas designated it. This style encompasses theatre texts that are once again built more heavily upon dialogue and a discernible and – at least partly – coherent drama plot. Emphatic political or socially engaged points are another characteristic of such texts. At the same time, new designations for drama playwriting began to emerge, e.g., neo-drama (Anne Monfort) or post-post-dramatic theatre (Élisabeth Angel-Perez), in which authors maintain their presence through lyricalisation or episatation. Thus, contemporary drama exposes us to a deconstruction of the opposition between presentation and representation, while at the same time establishing a solid process of re-dramatisation, the injection of drama and the dramatic into the postdramatic tissue of plays, despite the disturbances of the fictional universe and parallel to it.

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 7 October 2021

8.30 Registratuion of the participants

9.00 Opening of the symposium

**mag. Mojca Jan Zoran, director of the Slovenian Theatre Institute,
prof. Tomaž Gubenšek, dean of the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana**

9.15 *Lada Čale Feldman: Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Fictional Universe: On Two Opposite Examples of Contemporary Metadrama*

9.45 discussion

10.00 first session

Moderator: Gašper Troha

Špela Virant: Contemporary German Theatre Plays or «Capitalism will not win«

Martina Petranovič & Lucija Ljubić: The Poetic Tendencies of Contemporary Croatian Playwriting

Zuzana Timčíková: Authenticity in Collective Works of Auteur Theatre: The Approaches of the Millennial Generation in Slovakia

10.45 discussion

11.10 coffee break

11.30 second session

Moderator: Tomaž Toporišič

Krištof Jacek Kozak: A Playwright's Confrontation with the Basic Human Condition: Being a Refugee

Zala Dobovšek: The Representation and Understanding of Poverty in Contemporary Slovenian Drama

Maja Murnik: The Smart Text: Contemporary Slovenian Drama and the Document

Hana Strejčkova: Site-Specific Auteur Drama

12.30 discussion

13.00 lunch

15.00 *Aleksandra Jovičević: From Stage to Page: New Forms of Performance Text*

15.30 discussion

15.45 third session

Moderator: Krištof Jacek Kozak

Tomaž Toporišič: How Can We Interpret the 21st-Century (No Longer) Dramatic Texts and Theatre in Art and Theory?

Blaž Lukan: Post-post-drama or the Heavily Broken Dramatic World

Ana Perne: The Text as the »Trace that the Performance Leaves on Paper«

Hanna Veselovska: The 21st-Century Drama and the New Reality of Social Networks

16.45 discussion

17.00 coffee break

17.20 Fourth session

Moderator: Maja Murnik

Almir Bašović: The Anxiety of Self-Determination and Signs of Crisis

Mateja Pezdirc Bartol: The Return of the Worker in Contemporary Slovenian Drama

Gašper Troha: What Shakes the Mind and Heart in Eastern Europe at the Beginning of the 21st Century?

Ivana Slunjski: To Whom Belongs the Performance?

Piet Defraeye: Milo Rau's Theatre of the Real and the Issue of Homophobia

18.35 discussion

Friday, 8 October 2021

9.00 fifth session

Moderator: Gašper Troha

Benjamin Zajc: The Substance of Regional Millennial Playwrighting

Varja Hrvatina, Maša Radi Buh, Jakob Ribič: Generationless Drama

Nika Švab: Questioning the Definition of Women's Writing in Contemporary Slovenian Drama

9.45 discussion

10.15 coffee break

10.45 *Jure Gantar: The Death of the Character in Postdramatic Comedy*

11.15 discussion

11.30 sixth session

Moderator: Krištof Jacek Kozak

Karolina Prykowska-Michalak: The Dramaturgy of Migrants: Kill the Robbers

Lara Jerkovič: Dramatic Form and the Ethical Dimension of the Text the feast by Simona Semenič

Radka Kunderová: The Textual, the Performative and the Political

Simona Hamer, Jera Ivanc, Kim Komljanec & Simona Semenič: A Report from the Frontline

12.15 discussion

12.45 lunch

14.30 seventh session

Moderator: Mateja Pezdirc Bartol

Kim Komljanec: The Present and Future of Contemporary Slovenian Playwriting at Home and Abroad

Andrizej Moskwin: The Reception of Slovenian Dramaturgy in Poland

Ljudmil Dimitrov: Slovenian Drama in Bulgarian Translation

15.15 discussion

15.40 coffee break

16.00 eighth session

Moderator: Blaž Lukan

Pavel Ocepek: Sexually Liberated Woman: Sexuality and Sexual Cultures in Two Plays by Simona Semenič

Ivanka Apostolova: /Theatrical Control Policy or Why, After Goran Stefanovski and Dejan Dukovski, No

One is Known Outside the Borders of the Macedonian Theatre?

16.30 discussion

16.45 final discussion of the symposium

CONTRIBUTIONS

Ivanka Apostolova: Theatrical Control Policy or Why, After Goran Stefanovski and Dejan Dukovski, No One is Known Outside the Borders of the Macedonian Theatre

The national playwriting in Macedonia from 2010 until 2020 – exists or does not exist. The question now is, why – after the Yugoslav, Balkan and European success of the Macedonian playwrights Goran Stefanovski and Dejan Dukovski within the former Yugoslav countries and beyond – does nobody know anything about the new generations of playwrights from Macedonia? Why do they rarely stage the works of contemporary local playwrights? Among the reasons, we can consider the academic crisis and artificially induced discontinuity; theatre clans, politicised media and false media independence or dealing with the chances of regular stagings and a theatrical career; political party employments, in the only theatres in Macedonia – the national theatres. From Katerina Momeva, Blagica Sekulovska, Gorjan Milosevski, Srdjan Janacievic, Sasho Dimovski, Ivana Nelkovska, to Igor Pop Trajkov, Mia Efremova, Mia Nikoloska, Lidija Mitoska Gjorgjioska, there are flirtations between contemporary Macedonian literature and contemporary Macedonian drama – opportunistic dramatic adaptations of prose and film scripts (successful and unsuccessful approaches). We see film scenario structures in the contemporary drama, the authors playing on two cards – film and theatre (the festival rise of the national film – the stagnation of the national theatre art and production). We will also look at the regional success of the non-dramatic author Rumena Buzarovska – a feminist, short prose writer – representing Americanised Macedonian feminism or a successful control policy outside the borders of the Macedonian theatrical reality in crisis.

Ivanka Apostolova is an associate (visiting) professor. She is self-employed in culture as an anthropologist of arts, programme producer, visual dramaturg, translator, editor, author, educator. She is head of the Macedonian Centre of the International Theatre Institute/PRODUKCIJA and creator of awarded video theatre projects (*Destination: Skopje-Gabrovo* (2020); *Dispersive Dramatics in Skopje* (The Theater in Creative Industries, 2020); *Dispersive Dramatics: Poor Little Rich Drama in Kratovo* (Drama in Movement, 2019). She teaches art and design history at the Faculty of Art and Design/EURM Skopje. She is the editor of and a contributor to the e-magazine *The Theater Times*. She is the author of the e-books *Theater Comics*, *In Search of Lost Director*, *Anthropology of Experience in Theater*. She is a member of several national and international networks: ITI, ZDUS, ICOMOS, AICA.



Almir Bašović: The Anxiety of Self-Determination and Signs of Crisis

This paper addresses some issues that substantially determine contemporary thinking about European drama and theatre. Thus, for example, the notion of fragmentary dramaturgy is considered in relation to the first type of such writing, through Aristophanes' comedies. Namely, the fundamental question to consider is: in relation to which idea of the "whole" is a drama fragmented and by what logic are these fragments connected into one rounded "whole"?

Another important term refers to our belief that we live an exclusive moment in history, that is, that performativity is an essential characteristic of our time. Have we had to forget a whole tradition of understanding language as an act, which dates back to Plato, to grandiosely introduce the debate on speech acts? Have we, to declare our times exclusive, perhaps forgotten a whole tradition of European theatre that neither relied on the completion of a dramatic literary work nor perceived theatre as a presentation of a literary text?

Can we consider theatre that relies on a story, that is, on Mythos as the "soul of tragedy," as a post-dramatic theatre? Could it be that our nervous attempts to define the moment in which we live are a symptom of a crisis? Particularly, since in all epochs without a consensus on fundamental world issues, theatre dealt with the place it occupied in society instead of opening with an action as the construction principle to the totality of reality? Did some other images of the world and, together with them, theatrical conventions fall apart before ours?

Almir Bašović (Sarajevo, 1971) is a professor at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo, at the Department of Comparative Literature. He is co-editor of the edited volumes *Drama and Time* (Sarajevo, 2010) and *Life, Narrative, Memory* (Sarajevo, 2017). He is the author of the following books: *Chekhov and Space* (Novi Sad, 2008; Slovenian edition: Ljubljana, 2013), *Masks of the Dramatic Subject* (Sarajevo/Zagreb, 2015) and *Coils and Markers* (Zagreb, 2020).

He is the author of the five plays published in *Four and a Half Plays* (Sarajevo, 2018), for which he received the Kočić Pen Award. His plays have been translated into eleven languages and staged in Sarajevo, Zenica, Vienna, Brno, Belgrade, Tuzla and Skopje. For his pedagogical and scientific work at the Academy of Performing Arts of Sarajevo, he received the Dr Raziya Lagumdžija Award. In 2004, his play *Apparitions from the Silver Age* received the award for the best drama at the Festival of BiH Drama in Zenica. The ETC also selected it among the 120 best contemporary European plays. He is a member of the Association of Writers and the PEN Centre in BiH.

Lada Čale Feldman: Deconstructing and Re-constructing the Fictional Universe: On Two Opposite Examples of Contemporary Metadrama

One of the salient features of contemporary playwrighting concerns its manifold attempts to break free from "the closure of representation" as the invariant structure of Western theatre, which Artaud attacked and Derrida (1996) famously theorised as being metaphysical in kind. These endeavours often take the shape of either "lyric" or "epic" strategies of "de-dramatisation". However – as Liz Tomlin pointedly argued (in Angelaki, 2013) – there is also a respectable dramatic tradition of self-reflexive critique which contemporary playwrights revive when they explicitly refer to crucial instances of the very medium of theatre – to authors, plays, actors, audiences, playacting and spectating, as well as to spaces, i.e., ontologies, these agents and actions are supposed to occupy.

The paper, following David Robert's discussion of Derrida's reading of Artaud in his considerations on the two basic types of early modern metadrama (in Greiner and Fischer, 2007) – the "self-implicating", "introverted", and "paradoxical" type on the one side, and the "self-explicating", "extroverted" and "allegorical" type on the other (exemplified in his study of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and Calderon's *Great Theatre of the World*, respectively), analyses two analogously opposed contemporary examples of questioning the same fatal structure of repetition and reduplication: Pascal Rambert's *Clôture de l'amour* (2011) and Tim Crouch's *The Author* (2009). Besides reflecting upon the sharply contrasting ways these two plays articulate various aesthetic, ethical, epistemological and ontological resonances of their metadramatic foci, it also points to their inverse dramaturgical approaches to political stances on violence and trauma.

Lada Čale Feldman is a full professor and chair of theatre studies at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. Her areas of research are theatre, performance and gender studies. Her books in Croatian include *Play-within-the-Play in the Croatian Theatre* (1997), *Eurydice's Turns* (2001), *Fermina ludens* (2005), *Dreams are not to be trusted* (2012), and *Beyond the Stage* (2019). She also co-authored (with M. Čale) *In the Canon, Studies in Doubling* (2008) and (with A. Tomljenović) *An introduction to feminist criticism* (2012). She co-edited several special issues of journals and numerous collections, among which, in English (with I. Prica and R. Senjković), *Fear, Death and Resistance: Croatia 1991–92* (1993) and (with M. Blažević) *Misperformance: Essays in Shifting Perspectives* (2014). She has received four awards for her essays and books; her entry on "Misperformance", co-authored with M. Blažević, appears in Bryan Reynolds's *Performance Studies: Key Words, Concepts and Theories* (2014).

Piet Defraeye: Milo Rau's Theatre of the Real and the Issue of Homophobia

Milo Rau has vanquished European stages with his emphatically realistic quasi-documentary theatre. In many cases, his productions reconstruct a specific incident or a memory by so-called (semi-)authentic actors. The merit of the production lies mainly in the reconstruction itself and its explosive potential of exposure. Location is a constant preoccupation in these endeavours. His recent projects *Das neue Evangelium & La Rivolta Della Dignita* (2019) are prime examples of this tendency.

A few of Rau's productions have addressed or included the theme of homosexuality and homophobia. It is conspicuously absent in many of his productions, as with his Africa-centred productions (*Hate Radio*, 2011). In *Orestes in Mosul* (2019), and equally conspicuous, homosexual inference on stage/screen certainly created an acute conflict with the push for authentic acting. *La Reprise. Histoire(s) du théâtre I* (2018) and the now deferred production of *The Interrogation* (by Edouard Louis, 2021?), homophobia is front and centre in the dramaturgy. Yet, in *La Reprise*, the protagonist-victim's homosexuality is entirely de-emphasised – some say obfuscated – favouring an interesting polemic on the representation of violence and a habituated audience.

The author will analyse Rau's dramaturgy of the Real and its problems when dealing with sexual identity, particularly homosexuality and homophobia. In doing so, he will look at the performance itself, its text and the various reception responses.

Piet Defraeye studied at the University of Louvain (Lic.), University College Dublin (MA) and the University of Toronto (PhD). He is a full professor of performance studies at the University of Alberta.

As a scholar, theatre director and dramaturg, he researches strategies of stage provocation and focuses on interdisciplinary approaches to performance. He has toured internationally with several productions, including the award-winning production of Evelyne de la Chenelière's *Bashir Lazhar* (Edmonton, Antwerp, Munich, Dresden, Innsbruck, Kyiv, London, Edinburgh, Kitchener-Waterloo). His most recent publications include *Brussels 1900 Vienna* (2021), a co-edited volume on the cultural transfers between Austria and Belgium around the turn of the century (Brill, in press), and a special (co-edited) issue of *Theater* (Yale) on the Swiss-Belgian director Milo Rau.

He has published on the Rwandan genocide and is at the apex of an interdisciplinary and collaborative research project on the figure of Patrice Lumumba, the assassinated first Prime Minister of the Congo, as he appears in a variety of cultural discourses and practices.

He has served on several juries for awards and grants. He has been a guest professor for extensive periods of time at Innsbruck Universität, Ludwig Maximilian Universität (Munich), Kath. Universiteit Leuven, Universiteit Antwerpen, Universiteit Gent and Université libre de Bruxelles.

Ljudmil Dimitrov: Slovenian Dramaturgy in Bulgarian Translation

The paper focuses primarily on the reception of Slovenian (contemporary) drama in Bulgaria. More precisely, how texts that fall into a foreign linguistic and sociocultural context, regardless of when they were written, turn out to be new in the host culture and are interpreted according to the problems of our time. The author primarily presents the new collection of five Slovenian plays, which he selected and translated. These plays fall within the aesthetic framework of the modern (from modern to postmodernism) and are united by the motifs of the miracle, the fantastic and the unnatural (the supernatural). The motivation for his choice is twofold. After the (un)expected great success of the first collection, *Lurking for Godot. Five Contemporary Slovenian Plays* (2014), three of which were staged in Bulgarian theatres (one three times), the second collection tries not just to meet the Bulgarian audience and Bulgarian theatre with the Slovenian classics, but to include itself in Bulgaria's own dramatic tradition, in which the dominant motif is the myth, the miracle, the infernal. Can we make sense of the other through our own, how new is the old?

Ljudmil Dimitrov is a professor of Russian literature at the University of St Kliment Ohridski in Sofia. He is a member of the Union of Translators in Bulgaria and Bulgarian PEN. From 2005 to 2010 and from 2014 to 2019, he was a lecturer for Bulgarian language, literature and culture at the University of Ljubljana. He is the co-founder and head of the master's programme Literature, Cinema and Visual Culture and the Literature and Culture of Russia and Fiction Translation programmes at the Faculty of Slavic Studies, University St Kliment Ohridski in Sofia. He has authored several scholarly monographs, textbooks and books (anthologies and collections), over 300 publications in Bulgaria, Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Turkey, Italy, Great Britain, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Romania, the USA, etc., and participated in over 120 forums and conferences in Bulgaria and Europe, related to Russian, Bulgarian and Slavic literature, theatre and cinema. Winner of the Lavrin Award (2017), presented by the Union of Slovenian Translators of Literature, in the name of Janko Lavrin and the award of the Union of Translators in Bulgaria for overall activity in the field of translation (2020). He is also an editor and translates works from English, Russian, Slovenian and Serbian/Croatian. From Slovenian, he has translated, among others, France Prešeren, Ivan Cankar, Zofka Kveder, Drago Jančar, Evald Flisar, Suzana Tratnik, Simona Semenič, Slavko Grum, Svetlana Makarovič, Aleš Šteger and Iztok Osojnik.

Zala Dobovšek: The Representation and Understanding of Poverty in Contemporary Slovenian Drama

By analysing a selection of plays, this paper will tackle the representation and understanding of poverty in contemporary Slovenian drama. The selection of texts will be based on both original dramatic works and those created during the process of a particular production. In recent years, there has been a noticeable emergence of dramatic texts that critically thematise the working class, precarity and social poverty. There is a huge lack of diversity in portraying social classes in both the broader public discourse (politics and media) and the national performing arts scene. The dominant representation of material and financial deprivation, which is most often portrayed in the national playwrighting (and consequently in theatre production), in reality, depicts a middle or, in some places, even an upper-middle social class, i.e., a population that – despite being financially “deprived” and only seemingly poor – is still able to afford loans, housing, holidays, cars, nannies and travel. These elements are alien and inaccessible to the actual working class, the poor and the precarious population. The obliviousness of the real image of poverty is linked to the inability to articulate it in the public sphere; such an image represents a marginalised group without the power and means to bring its own voice into the institutions. The representation of their actual situation is only possible through already established figures and institutional structures – through them, in principle, the voices of those who have directly experienced these problems and hardships or who show a high sensitivity to social inequalities are heard.

Zala Dobovšek (1983) is a dramaturg, theatre scholar and assistant professor of dramaturgy and performing arts at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana (UL AGRFT). She graduated from UL AGRFT with a degree in dramaturgy and also studied at the Theatre Academy DAMU in Prague (Divadelní fakulta Akademie múzických umění v Praze). In 2019, she received her PhD from UL AGRFT (Department of Dramaturgy and Performing Arts) with the dissertation “Theatre and War: Fundamental Relations between Performing Arts and the Wars on the Territory of Former Yugoslavia in the 1990s”. She is the current president of the Association of Theatre Critics and Researchers of Slovenia. Since 2016, she has been the mentor of the year-long seminar School of Criticism. She works as a dramaturg, theatre critic, critical writing mentor and pedagogue.

Jure Gantar: The Death of the Character in Post-dramatic Comedy

According to Elinor Fuchs, the main characteristic of post-modern theatre, and consequently the main reason for the demise of the dramatic text as the most important element of classical theatre, is the death of the character. While the traditional Hegelian view of drama depends heavily on a unified fictional subject, Fuchs argues, both modern and postmodern theatre destabilise and subvert this subject to the degree that we can no longer see it as a coherent whole. Yet her theory, just like Hans-Thies Lehmann’s, has one notable methodological weakness: she almost entirely ignores comedy. Her study omits in its analysis a substantial portion of the repertoire not only of mainstream but also fringe and experimental theatres.

This paper attempts to rectify this omission and hopes to determine whether the character also disappears from postdramatic comedy and not just from postdramatic drama theatre. The analysis focuses on three forms of post-modern comedy that deviate from the traditional narrative format and seem to support Fuchs’s reading: sketch, stand-up, and improvisational comedy. Using examples from sketch comedy *Beyond the Fringe*, George Carlin’s stand-up acts, and *The Second City* improv, the main body of the argument tests the cogency of basic tenets of Fuchs’s theory. The second part of the paper centres around a counterargument and a possible supplement to her hypothesis.

Jure Gantar holds a BA and an MA from the University of Ljubljana and a PhD in drama from the University of Toronto. He is currently a professor in the Fountain School of Performing Arts at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. His area of expertise is the theory of drama, in particular the theory and criticism of comedy, laughter, humour and wit. He has published numerous articles as well as three books – *Dramaturgija in smeh* (Dramaturgy and Laughter, 1993), *The Pleasure of Fools* (2005) and *The Evolution of Wilde’s Wit* (2015) – on this subject.

Simona Hamer, Jera Ivanc, Kim Komljanec and Simona Semenič: A Report from the Frontline

Representatives of the Playwrights' Unit of the Slovenian Association of Dramatic Artists (SADA) (Simona Hamer, Jera Ivanc, Kim Komljanec and Simona Semenič) will put on an informance, a format merging the artistic and the documentary, the empirical and the informative, to present the key questions of the dichotomy between a play script and its production as well as the intrinsic conflict playwright (male) vs director (also male). The male gender here is used not as a generic form but as a reflection of the phallic theatre history. The symposium contribution takes the form of a play text, whilst its content touches upon the statistical data on the quantity of first productions and book publications of contemporary Slovenian plays and offers a deep insight into the personal experience of many contemporary Slovenian playwrights.

Through their dramatic collage, the four authors of the informance expose the problematic attitude of the professional and general public as well as theatres (and individuals that represent them) towards contemporary Slovenian playwriting. They aim to draw attention to the lack of professional discourse, professional conduct towards their work, the shortfall of treating plays as an independent literary genre and their presence in the literary canon, the pejorative prejudice within theatre and readers' circles, the absence of development strategies within programming and cultural policies, etc.

And, because they are firm believers in happy endings, they will conclude by presenting examples of good practice in Slovenia and internationally.

Simona Hamer (1984), **Jera Ivanc** (1975), **Kim Komljanec** (1978) and **Simona Semenič** (1975) entered the professional world of theatre (and literature) around the turn of the millennium. They work as authors, translators, dramaturgs, language consultants, assistants, directors, educators, editors, column writers, producers, performers, visual artists, artistic directors and members of various juries and theatre boards. They write plays, novels, librettos, hymns, songs, poetry, forewords and annotated introductions, articles and columns. They translate from Ancient Greek, Croatian, English, Latin and Serbian as well as into English. Among them, they have (co-)created over 300 projects (100 as script authors) produced by institutional or independent theatres in Slovenia and abroad. Many of these projects have won awards or appeared at festivals, both in their home country and internationally. Their plays have been translated into 12 languages, staged and published in several European countries, the USA and the Middle East. These four authors hold degrees from the University of Ljubljana (in Classics, dramaturgy, French and Slovenian language and literature), a Master's degree from the University of Exeter (in playwriting and script development) and have taken an endless number of workshops in their

home country and abroad. They are recipients of various scholarships and residency invitations (Jernej Šugman Fund scholarship, Royal Court Theatre International Residency, writing residencies in New York, Sofia, Cape Town, Prague, Poznan, etc.). They have also won many awards: at the Week of Slovenian Drama – 4 Slavko Grum Awards (as well as 10 nominations for the Slavko Grum Award), 4 Rudi Šeligo Awards, 5 Audience's Choice Awards; at the Maribor Theatre Festival – 2 Grand Prix and 2 Critics' Association awards; at the Days of Comedy festival in Celje – 1 Best Play Award and 1 Audience's Choice Award; at Zlata Paličica Festival – 2 Children and Young Adults Jury's Choice Awards for Best Play and 11 "recommended show" catalogue listings; at Anton Tomaž Linhart Festival – 2 Awards for Best Play and 1 Award for Achievements in Theatre. Furthermore, they hold 1 Prešeren Fund Award, 1 Gašper Tič Award for the best libretto, 1 Zlato gnezdo Award for new artistic achievements and 1 Modra ptica Award for best children's or youth novel.

Out of their initial meeting at the playwriting workshops held by the Week of Slovenian Drama and Sodobnost publishing house in 2004 was born the PreGlej playwriting platform. More recently, they have created the SADA Playwrights' Unit.

The development of dramatic writing partly depends on new generations of artists. Discussing generation as a concept implies a discontinuity of existing forms of life, work and values. That is why this paper is interested in the dramatic writing of authors who have only emerged in the past decade. They examine which are the criteria that place them in the supposedly same generation to which we also belong. Although most of the texts use a classic dramatic structure, their writing varies by formal characteristics and thus avoids a common denominator. These authors are connected neither by a historical, political or cultural moment nor a collective movement, as with Revija 57 (Magazine 57) and Perspektiva (Perspectives) or, recently, PreGlej. Instead, they take a more individualistic stance. The speakers counteract that stance in their formalistic decision to write and present this paper collectively. The younger generation of writers is thus more similar in the explicitly or implicitly addressed themes of their texts: autobiographical elements, speaking from one's own subjective position, self-referentiality, the absence of (utopian) futuristic visions. The plays mainly portray life here-and-now and lack explicit political stances or (provocative) confrontations with current ideological norms. The paper attempts to contextualise these characteristics (ideology of authenticity, individualistic asociality and supposed liberation from ideological strains) within a broader social and historical moment (the rise of the internet and social networks, lack of a collective experience, etc.). It also tests them for the presence of liberal-democratic ideology, as Rade Pantić discusses in *Umetnost skozi teorijo* (Art Through Theory, 2021).

Varja Hrvatin (1993), **Maša Radi Buh** (1998) and **Jakob Ribič** (1995) have been collaborating as writers and co-creators of the Radio Študent show *Teritorij teatra* (Theatre Territory) since 2018. They have produced thirteen episodes during this time, ranging from expert and theoretical contributions to collaged interviews and live programmes on a specific topic. In their collective work, they wish to combine their personal areas of interest and their shared knowledge and experience to create a dynamic insight into the diverse layers of the performing arts. By combining philosophical, theatre and sociological perspectives, they decode theory with practice, think practice with theory and bring performing arts closer to the broader or more peripheral societal issues.

If in the contemporary theatre, the performance text has become “more presence than representation, more shared than communicated experience, more process than a product, more manifestation than signification, more energetic impulse than information” (Lehmann, 2006, 85), then we are in front of a still new phenomena that requires new instruments for its analysis.

The performance text could also be defined as a *piecing together* of different elements, material and conceptual alike, that *exist only during the performance*, in the very *act of performing*, during an event, performance, or, in representation that produce different performance texts, which Alain Badiou calls *theatre-ideas* (2005, 72). Thus, theatre-ideas cannot be produced by any other instruments or at any other place. None of the elements by itself could produce theatre-ideas or even the text of the performance itself. Precisely, theatre-ideas *come forth* only in the (brief) time of their performance, of their representation. Therefore, all these texts could be called “open” texts of the performance, in the sense that they require the spectators to become active co-writers. Can we, therefore, define the performance text as scenic *écriture*, collective writing, or hypertext, or stretch text, or even *écriture corporelle*? And how can it be translated from stage to page to be preserved for future studies?

A performance text is impossible without its author(s), so the paper will attempt to analyse the concept of the performance text through the works of Croatian director Oliver Frljić, who always uses the theatre as a performative tool to reach out to the audience's darkest taboos. When not deconstructing classical texts, Frljić is presenting his own performance texts that are sometimes based on facts and sometimes on invented narratives. He prefers “the original politics of performance art: no repetition, no rehearsing and no recording. So the only trace of each performance is an experience shared between you as a performer and the audience” (Frljić, 2016). But what are these traces, and how they can be acknowledged? The central goal of such a reflection should be to precisely analyse the creation and meaning of the performance text as a new and unavoidable theatre tool that enlarges the definition of contemporary theatre.

Aleksandra Jovičević is a full professor at the Department of History Anthropology Religions Art Performance (SARAS Storia Antropologia Religioni Arte Spettacolo) at the Sapienza University of Rome and a coordinator of PhD studies in performance at the same university. Her book, *Orson Welles and Theatre: Shakespeare and Beyond*, will be published this year by Rome's Bulzoni Editore, for whom she also curates the book series *The Politics and Aesthetics of Performance*.

Kim Komljanec: The Present and Future of Contemporary Slovenian Playwriting at Home and Abroad

This paper presents the results of a study on the condition and development of contemporary Slovenian playwriting, specifically in terms of script creation and translation into foreign languages. The research was commissioned by the Slovenian Theatre Institute (SLOGI).

The study targeted playwriting professionals from various stakeholder groups (writers, translators, artistic directors and managers of institutional and independent venues, editors, representatives of public funding bodies, dramaturgs, directors and others). Based on the results, the paper presents conclusions on the efficiency of the existing cultural policies and circumstances in the fields of creation and translation of new Slovenian playwriting. It also proposes some measures which could strengthen the creation, publication, translation and promotion of contemporary Slovenian playwriting in the future.

Kim Komljanec is a playwright and dramaturg, theatre director and educator. After graduating in French and Slovene language and literature from the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Kim earned an MA in playwriting and script development from the University of Exeter, UK. She then continued her education with Mercury Music in writing librettos for musicals. Kim also took part in the International Residency for Playwrights at London's Royal Court Theatre. Her plays have been staged in theatres in Slovenia, the UK and the United States. She has published articles on playwriting and theatre in theatre programmes, literary magazines and academic journals. She is currently working with the International Dramaturgy Lab in a research group exploring different forms of online theatre. She is also the author of an academic study commissioned by the Slovenian Theatre Institute (SLOGI) on the condition and development of new Slovenian playwriting. She is currently writing a handbook on playwriting due to be published in December 2021.

Krištof Jacek Kozak: A Playwright's Confrontation with the Basic Human Condition: Being a Refugee

Since its beginnings in the Western world, drama has been understood as a primarily social literary genre, committed to the polis, and therefore, in the broadest sense, political. Because of its performative nature, it is also one of the most (socially) sensitive, particularly in its depiction of one of the fundamental conditions of human existence: the refugee condition, homelessness, migration, alienation, exclusion, non-belonging. Many versions of the above-mentioned categories of the human condition have also been frequently portrayed by Slovenian playwrights, who did not shy away from strong, ideological messages and thus from the artistic concretisation of reality but instead tackled them directly, thus committing themselves to the long tradition of European drama.

Recently, with dramatic texts on the topic of exile, Draga Potočnjak entered the public discourse as one of the relatively few dramatists reacting indignantly to the human tragedy unfolding practically on our doorstep in the form of the horrific war conflict in the former Yugoslavia. And despite high-profile postdramatic theatre productions on the subject, the newest wave of refugees, which saw hundreds of thousands set out on their journey as a result of the military clashes in Syria, has found only one response in Slovenian drama – *Romeo and Juliet were Refugees* by Vinko Möderndorfer, which also received the 2018 Slavko Grum Award.

By comparing some selected Slovenian and foreign past and contemporary plays (I. Ratej, E. Jelinek, D. Greig, M. Pelević, etc.), this paper attempts to summarise an artistic response to the tragic state of the contemporary world and man and, on this basis, to show the tendencies of contemporary drama, which seems to return to (admittedly no longer grand) stories.

Krištof Jacek Kozak studied philosophy and comparative literature at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He received his PhD in comparative literature at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. He did postdoctoral training at the Wirth Institute for Austrian and Central European Studies of the same university.

He is a full professor of literature at the University of Primorska. He has published two monographs (the second one in Serbian, Slovak and English) and a number of academic articles on contemporary versions of tragedy, political literature and drama, values in drama, etc.

Radka Kunderová: The Textual, the Performative and the Political

Czech Documentary Theatre of the 2010s

In this paper, the author will discuss a role of the (play)text in the Czech documentary theatre of the 2010s in which the attributes of “postdramatic theatre” (Lehmann) as well as the “aesthetics of performativity” (Fischer-Lichte) can be identified. She emphasises how the political was dealt with in the textual component of the productions, which often included quotes from historical documents, and how the political was performed on stage. In her analysis, she draws on Hans-Thies Lehmann’s reflections on the functioning of the political in postdramatic theatre, especially on his concept of the “interruption” (e.g., in *Das Politische Schreiben: Essays zu Theatertexten, Theater der Zeit*, 2002). She also discusses the performative dimension of the political in documentary theatre, inspired by Erika Fischer-Lichte’s reflections on performativity in theatre and ritual (*Ästhetik des Performativen, Suhrkamp*, 2010).

The paper uses the production *Mraky* (Clouds), devised by the Prague-based experimental ensemble Handa Gote and premièred in 2011 at the Alfred ve dvoře (Alfred in the Courtyard) Mime Theatre in Prague, as a case study. *Mraky* reflects upon the Communist era in Czechoslovakia. This empirical material provides a way to discuss the broader question of the conference, the tactics and strategies contemporary drama employs when faced with social challenges.

Radka Kunderová is a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellow at the Institute of Theatre Studies of the Freie Universität Berlin. She has recently published the article “Crisis?: Czech Theatre after 1989” in *Theatre Institutions in Crisis* (2021), edited by Christopher Balme and Tony Fisher. She has worked as the head of the Institute for Theatre Research and as an assistant professor at the JAMU Theatre Faculty in Brno. Her publications include studies on the socio-political dimension in 20th-century Czech theatre, East-West collaborations during the Cold War, and artistic research. As a theatre critic, she has been associated with the theatre magazine *Svět a divadlo* (World and Theatre).

Blaž Lukan: Post-postdrama or the Heavily Broken Dramatic World

What happens to drama in some of the newer dramatic texts that otherwise know and exploit the achievements of dramatic modernism, postmodernism, and postdrama but understand them and think anew? The paper will discuss the recent texts (*It all Began with Rabbit Soup, Golden Bird, Black Crow, I would like to run away from shame*) by the young Slovenian author Varja Hrvatin (1993), who, while writing the play, also thinks of it; at the same time, she writes for “staging”, although she also questions “staging” as we know it. What is the minimum qualifier of her drama? The appearance of drama? The specifics of her “handwriting”? Her immanent “dramaticity”? Her focus on the action? The “stageability” of her texts?

All this and none of it. Hrvatin leaves heterogeneous and hybrid textual particles and units into the dramatic structure, seemingly without the obvious logic of a series of different (post)modernist principles, such as intertextuality, the absence of “dialogue”, but also the secondary text, (self-)citation, essays and sayings, proverbs, recipes, and moral “teachings,” that is, constant narrative, rhetorical and verbal matrices that she either leaves untouched or wittily reinterprets. Compared to the drama of Simona Semenič, who is undoubtedly her close ancestor, her writing is “impure”, similar to writing of some contemporary Slovenian authors, such as Nina Dragičević or Tibor Pandur Hrs. In the apparent production of postdramatic “textual landscapes” or “speech plates”, its “landscapes” and “plates” are severely broken as a result of tectonic shifts in the very substance of understanding drama and the dramatic. Despite her penchant for the concrete, her drama works as a postdramatic abstraction, questioning practically everything that is key to drama. What is drama? What is dramatic writing? How to stage a drama at all? She confidently places her literary products in a “dramatic” and “staging” context ... So, how can we understand contemporary drama and why talk about “drama” in connection with it at all?

Blaž Lukan received his PhD from the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana (UL AGRFT) in 2006. In addition to working as a dramaturg in theatre and film, he writes theatre reviews, accompanying texts in published plays by Slovenian and foreign authors and academic papers on drama and the theory of performing arts. He was the artistic director of the Glej Experimental Theatre (1985–1988) and the Celje People’s Theatre (1989–1993). He works as an assistant professor of dramaturgy at UL AGRFT and head of the Dramaturgy and Performing Arts Department. He is the author of numerous books, among them: *Gledališki pojmovnik za mlade* (Theatre Glossary for Young People, 1996); *Slovenska dramaturgija: dramaturgija kot gledališka praksa* (Slovenian Dramaturgy: Dramaturgy as Theatre Practice, 2001); *Performativne pisave: razprave o performansu in gledališču* (Performative Gestures: Essays on Performance Art and Theatre, 2013); *Turški lok* (The Turkish Bow: Essays on Slovenian Drama, 2019).

Andrijež Moskwin: The Reception of Slovenian Drama in Poland: The Example of the Anthology New Slovenian Drama (Vol. I-II, ed. Andrijež Moskwin)

As part of a project started in 2011, the Laboratory for Theatre and Drama Studies in Central and Eastern Europe at the University of Warsaw has begun publishing an anthology of contemporary Slovenian drama in Poland – volume I in 2019, volume II in 2020. As of today, the laboratory has published twenty-one anthologies. The presentation will consider the plays included in these two volumes of the Slovenian anthology. Do they represent the canon of contemporary Slovenian drama? What is their reception in Poland? What is the theatrical reception of these plays in Polish theatre?

Andrijež Moskwin, PhD, is a philologist, Slavist, culture and theatre scholar, translator, playwright and associate professor. He heads the Laboratory for Theatre and Drama Studies in Central and Eastern Europe and is editor-in-chief of the scientific journal *Theater Studies of Central and Eastern Europe*.

Maja Murnik: Pametni tekst: The Smart Text: Contemporary Slovenian Drama and the Document

In the series of changes that we are witnessing in the last decades in drama and theatre, which refer to the crisis of representation and the drama form, as well as to the rise of heterogeneous, performative and significance-open structures, we can notice a peculiar interest in document/s. What is at stake here is neither the issue of documenting a theatre performance nor the strategies of its preservation against decay, but the use of documents in drama texts or stage plays, either as the starting point for the authors or as directly included in a performance. The use of documents tends to surpass an artwork as an autonomous and self-contained entity; it implies the search for a closer relationship with the so-called non-artistic world. Here, not only the issues of the Protean relationship between “fiction” and “reality” (and the issues of intertextuality and postmodernism as well) are being raised, but also the issues of social responsibility, engagement and activism. Therefore, documents can be used as a part of a (postmodernistic) game or as a part of other functions that contemporary art practices appropriate. In the latter case, the documents seem to give the authors an assurance of the truth and an elevated moral position from which they speak. However, by entering a scene, a document always proves to be something open and thoroughly performative.

The paper examines the strategies and tactics of the use of the documents using examples of texts by Simona Semenič, Andrej E. Skubic (*Pavla nad prepodom*) and theatre performances (*6* and *Republic of Slovenia*).

Maja Murnik holds a PhD in philosophy and the theory of visual culture (Faculty of Humanities Koper, University of Primorska, 2012). She graduated in comparative literature (2003) and in theatre studies (2005) in Ljubljana. She has also worked as an assistant at the Faculty of Humanities Koper and as editor-in-chief of the performing arts journal *Maska* and its book editions. Currently, she is a freelance art critic and essayist. She is a co-founder of the Institute of New Media Art and Electronic Literature (www.inm.si) and a member of the editorial boards of *Amfiteater – Journal of Performing Arts Theory* and *the Journal of Virtual Creativity*.

Pavel Ocepek: Sexually Liberated Woman: Sexuality and Sexual Cultures in Two Plays by Simona Semenič

The paper takes as its starting point the theory of sexuality as a social structure defined, among other things, by sexual cultures and their distinctive discourses and imperatives. Analysing the distinguishing elements of traditional, permissive and subversive sexual cultures in two works by Simona Semenič – *this apple, made of gold and rowan, strudel, dance, and more* – reveals that sexuality is indeed one of the central themes in both plays. Furthermore, the playwright situates the thematisation of all the three sexual cultures in the context of social changes in organising sexuality. With her intimate/sexual citizenship, the dramatic subject finds herself in the grip of the modernisation of sexuality. She is liberated through a drive to detraditionalise, pluralise and individualise her sexuality and through a change in sexual morality. Simona Semenič primarily liberates the woman and her sexuality, who – by rejecting the anti-sexual tradition of the Roman Catholic Church and the social changes in the organisation of sexuality in (post-)socialist society – traverses the path from sexual restraint to sexual liberalisation. The sexually liberated woman is a new and long-awaited moment in Slovenian drama (and possibly in Slovenian literature in general) and one of the unique elements in Simona Semenič's dramatic writing.

Pavel Ocepek studied Slovene language and literature at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, where he graduated in 2002. He defended his master's thesis, "Draga Potčnjak's Plays", in 2005 and is currently working on his doctoral dissertation "Sexuality in Slovenian Drama". He is employed as a teacher of Slovene at foreign universities at the Centre for Slovene as a Second and Foreign Language at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He has been teaching Slovene for 18 years; after 12 years teaching at Ghent University (Belgium), he now teaches at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina). In addition to teaching Slovene and researching Slovenian drama, he focuses on promoting Slovenian literature and culture, organises guest lectures and visits by Slovenian authors, and literary readings and film screenings.

Ana Perne: Besedilo kot The Text as the »Trace that the Performance Leaves on Paper«

The definition in the title belongs to Joël Pommerat, a French author-director who believes that text writing and directing are acts coming from the same source. In 1990, he founded the group Compagnie Louis Brouillard, and in its name theorist and dramaturgical collaborator Marion Boudier finds a connection with film art pioneer Louis Lumière: "Pommerat also takes the liberty and challenges himself to reinvent theatre, developing a specific way of working and thus forms his own theatrical machine." The simultaneous creation of text-writing and directing is not left to some free creative flow. Instead, it is based on pre-preparation and documentary research by the author and his artistic collaborators. Active involvement of actors is extremely important, as their personalities and physical expressions fundamentally generate the writing process. Despite this joint research work, however, it is not collective authorship. As the definition in the title suggests, there is an inseparable connection between the text and how it is staged. Still, publications of Pommerat's texts and stagings by other directors show that these texts can also function as drama models.

Based on Pommerat's principle of auteur-directing work and considering other forms of contemporary stage writing, the paper will focus on aspects of authorship that cannot be defined as collective, even if collective work is essential for the whole. Finally, such questioning will also serve to detect possible examples of the *traces that the performances of Slovenian artists leave on paper*.

Ana Perne graduated in dramaturgy from the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television as well as in French language and literature and the sociology of culture from the Faculty of Arts, both part of the University of Ljubljana. For several years, she worked as a performing arts critic and collaborated with the PreGlej programme for the development of drama and with various festivals and theatres. She translated two plays, staged at the SNT Nova Gorica. Since December 2014, she has been employed at the Slovenian Theatre Institute (SLOGI). Among other projects, she co-authored the exhibition *Borštnik Bound!* for the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Maribor Theatre Festival in 2015 and, in 2018, the year dedicated to one of Slovene's greatest writers Ivan Cankar, she was one of the leaders of the symposium "A Century of the Bondsmen". In recent years, she has co-authored several radio broadcasts dedicated to presenting theatre heritage through the audio format on Radio Slovenia's programme Ars.

Martina Petranović, Lucija Ljubić: The Poetic Tendencies of Contemporary Croatian Playwriting

The paper aims to discern and examine the poetic tendencies of contemporary Croatian playwriting since 2000. Focusing on several prominent Croatian playwrights (such as Davor Špišić, Ivan Vidić, Nina Mitrović, Elvis Bošnjak, Dubravko Mihanović, Tomislav Zajec, Ivana Sajko, Tena Štivičić, Ivor Martinić, Olja Lozica ...) whose plays have been staged, published, studied and/or awarded over the past two decades in both Croatia and abroad, the paper will look into the features of the content (local or global, public or intimate, popular or provocative concerns), the formal and generic qualities (dramatic structure, narration, poetisation, exploration of the limits of playwriting), the representation of cultural identities (personal and collective), the interest in mass and popular culture, the characteristics of dramatic discourse and language, the relation towards social engagement or criticism, and the effort to appeal to targeted social groups or types of audiences. Finally, the paper will explore the differences and similarities between the playwriting of the 1990s and playwriting after 2000.

Lucija Ljubić is an associate professor in the Division for the History of the Croatian Theatre at the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb. Her fields of interest are theatre history and theory, contemporary Croatian drama and theatre, comparative relations with other national cultures and cultural studies. She has published the books *From Offender to Artist. Theatrical and social roles of Croatian actresses* (2019), *A Ten. Essays on Croatian drama and theatre history* (2013) and, in collaboration with M. Petranović, *The Répertoire of Croatian Theatres. Descriptive analysis of performances in Croatian or by Croatian performers in foreign languages till 1840* (2012).

Martina Petranović is a senior research associate in the Division for the History of the Croatian Theatre at the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Zagreb. Her main research interests are theatre costume and set design, contemporary Croatian drama and theatre, and theatre historiography. She published the book *From Costume to Costume Design* (2015) on the history of Croatian costume design and several monographs on Croatian designers (Ika Škomrlj, Kamilo Tompa, Vanda Pavelić Weinert, Zlatko Kauzlarić Atač). She is the author of two collections of theatre essays, *On Stage and Around It* (2013) and *Theatre and (Hi)story* (2015), and the co-author of *The Répertoire of Croatian Theatres* (2012), with L. Ljubić, and *The Idea of Synthesis. Set and Costume Design in the 1950s* (2019), with A. Lederer.

Mateja Pezdirc Bartol: The Return of the Worker in Contemporary Slovenian Drama

The title of this paper reflects observations made upon reading contemporary Slovenian plays, which have become ever more intensely engaged with reflections on social issues since the 2008 financial crisis. Many unemployed persons – often young and from a vulnerable group –, precarious workers and some regular employees submit to exploitation by their superiors just to get or keep a job yet are unable to make a decent living on their wages despite doing difficult overtime work. Through their dramatic works, modern Slovenian playwrights call attention to the unbearable situation of today's workers, express empathy for the exploited and take an ethical stance on the situation of these "modern serfs". The paper analyses plays by Žiga Divjak, Tjaša Mislej, Vinko Möderndorfer and others according to their textual and staging strategies, often supported with documentary materials.

Mateja Pezdirc Bartol is a full professor of Slovenian literature in the Department of Slovene Studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, where she lectures on the history of Slovenian drama and theatre, contemporary Slovenian drama, theory of drama, and youth literature. She is the author of the monographs *Najdeni pomeni: empirične raziskave recepcije literarnega dela* (Meanings Found: Empirical Studies on the Reception of Literary Works, 2010) and *Navzkrižja svetov: študije o slovenski dramatiki* (The Collision of Worlds: Studies on Slovenian Drama, 2016); and she has edited the volumes *Slovenski jezik, literatura, kultura in mediji* (Slovene Language, Literature, Culture, and Media, 2008); *Telo v slovenskem jeziku, literaturi in kulturi* (The Body in Slovene Language, Literature, and Culture, 2009); and *Slovenska dramatika* (Slovene Drama, 2012). She has published numerous papers in scholarly journals in Slovenia and abroad, been a visiting professor at the Zagreb Faculty of Arts and lectured at various foreign universities. She has chaired the jury for the Slavko Grum Award several times.

Karolina Prykowska-Michalak: The Dramaturgy of Migrants: Kill the Robbers

In her paper, Karolina Prykowska will focus on the newest works created for the migrant theatre in Germany. She will present an adopted strategy, i.e., the “dramaturgy of the self”.

The drama of migrants is a place that has been studied recently (*Dramaturgy of Migration*, ed. Yana Meerzon and Katharina Pewny, Routledge, 2020). What is new in this phenomenon is the approach to the audience, taking into account those who are to watch this drama. Therefore, the paper will focus on presenting this phenomenon but will ask the question, why? Who will be watching this new playwright, and why should one be interested in it?

Karolina Prykowska-Michalak is an associate professor in the Department of Drama and Theatre, University of Łódź. She was visiting professor at the European University Viadrina Frankfurt Oder, Germany. Her monographs include *Kurtyna w górę! Relacje między teatrem polskim i teatrem niemieckim po 1990 roku* (Curtain up! Relations between Polish theater and theater after 1990, University of Łódź, 2012), *Teatr niemiecki w Łodzi. Sceny-Wykonawcy-Repertuar (1867–1939)* (German Theatre in Łódź. Theatres-Spectators-Repertoire (1867–1939), University of Łódź, 2005). She has also edited the books *System teatrów w Europie* (The Theater Systems in Europe, Theater Institute in Warsaw, 2016); *Teatr niemiecki w Polsce XVIII-XX wiek* (German Theater in Poland 18th–20th century, University of Łódź, 2008); *Felix Austria – Dekonstruktion eines Mythos? Das Österreichische Drama und Theater seit Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts*, co-editors Małgorzata Leyko, Artur Pełka, Litblockin, Fernwald, 2009; *Migrationen/Standortwechsel deutsches Theater in Polen*, co-editor Artur Pełka, Hamal, 2007.

Ivana Slunjski: To Whom Belongs the Performance?

By translating the dramatic text into the choreographic score within the *Staging a Play* series, the choreographer Matija Ferlin undermines the foundations of the staging based on the spoken dramatic word. By staging Molière’s *Tartuffe*, he does not abolish the text, but the performers do not utter it that it can be heard; instead, they repeat it within themselves while performing complex choreography. In her research of Ferlin’s *Staging a Play: Tartuffe* performed by the Zagreb Dance Ensemble, she deals with the question: what does it mean today – when we are immersed in the multi-media reality – to read/interpret/stage a drama? Which layers of meaning are transmitted, how much does the staging of the drama misinterpret or exceed the text itself? Can the performing of the dramatic text reach deep layers of the drama, that is, what lies behind the spoken words? Can the physical vocabulary “replace” dramatic discourse? How does the inaudible text affect the production of movements, gestures and spatial compositions and whether the spectator can read the meaning of the text from the performers’ physicality, movements, gestural and mimic codes? If we talk about directorial and dramaturgical interventions, can the spectator reach the primarily inscribed meanings of the drama or is it always a matter of approximation or recognition of context? Does not always the spectator miss in that sense the dramatic word? How “late” is drama as a textual genre intended to be performed in the context of contemporary performing arts?

Ivana Slunjski is a dance critic and researcher. She works as a contributor and editor in many printed and electronic media, occasionally publishing in other books and anthologies. She is interested in recent innovative performative practices, strategies of resistance to the economic undermining of artistic work, and the development of new models of artistic exchange. She develops the concept of a research-archival model based on the idea of “archiving the present” to create a database for further artistic, scientific or other research and reevaluation. Relying on this concept, she launched and is running a project mapping the Croatian contemporary dance scene from 2015–2020, developing methodologies for monitoring, documenting and analysing the artistic process.

Hana Strejčková: Site-Specific Auteur Drama

The conference paper discusses the role of the author in contemporary drama and theatre. As a playwright, Strejčková focuses on memories of witnesses and socially taboo topics. As a researcher, she studies and compares the theoretical outputs of prof. Jan Císař (*Man in the Situation*) and doc. Josef Valenta (*Theatre or Life!*). And as a theatre director, she is looking for ways to transform the memory of place, oral history and burning issues into the theatrical language. Qualitative research based on observation, empiricism, analysis, and comparison focuses on three main areas: the author's drama based on recent history (20th cent.), the performative potential of the commonness and oral history, site-specific drama. Art research examines the relationship between the author's drama and theatre performance. Specifically, the paper gives an example of Strejčková's plays and their productions: *Midnight in Borderland* (3–4 May 1950) – a monastery; *Three Chairs* (Alzheimer's disease) – a retirement home; *From Majdalenka to Madla* (World War II) – a cellar. The study emphasises the need for a creative and attentive approach of the author, dramaturg, and director to create a whole new world from the ordinary and taboo. It turns out that the combination of a strong theme, an unusual place tied to the topic of the drama, and the participatory role (active/passive) of the audience can be an effective strategy and tactic in strengthening the role of the author in drama after the year 2000.

Hana Strejčková graduated from the Prague Academy of Performing Arts, majoring in dramaturgy and directing at the Department of Drama Theatre. She studied physical theatre at the Jacques Lecoq International Theatre School in Paris and graduated from the Pascale Lecoq Scenography Studio L.E.M. She is currently a doctoral student and teacher at the Department of Nonverbal Theatre at HAMU in Prague. Her dramatic work builds on memories of the 20th century, based on oral history with witnesses. As a researcher, she collaborates with the Theatre Institute in Prague. She is a member of the Committee of the Czech Centre ASSITEJ, a full member of the Association of Czech Theatre Critics and the Association of Theatre Teachers.

Nika Švab: Questioning the Definition of Women's Writing in Contemporary Slovenian Drama

In the last twenty years, the number of female authors in Slovenian drama has jumped. Among the Slavko Grum Award recipients appeared the first woman – Draga Potočnjak –, followed by eight more female recipients in later years, at least twice that many were nominated.

In this paper, Nika Švab will focus on the criteria which characterise writing as female. Female writing denotes texts written by women and/or places female characters in the foreground. Are there also parameters at the level of content and representation that need to be met? Should women's writing necessarily empower women and introduce more characters to whom we want to be similar, or does women's writing include texts in which women have a greater role but are entirely subordinate to patriarchy? Through the analysis of prominent representatives of contemporary Slovenian drama, works by Simona Hamer, Varja Hrvatin, Tjaša Mislej, Draga Potočnjak and Simona Semenič, the paper will determine which works could be marked as women's writing, which already are and perhaps should not be.

The texts in question certainly bring more female characters than in the drama before 2000, yet they are still often written as victims, as mothers, or as if gender does not define them. What would be the ideal representation of a woman in drama – not to deal with gender and identity policies at all or to question her position in the world through archetypes and stereotypes about women?

Nika Švab (1991) is a graduate of comparative literature and dramaturgy. She got her education at the University of Ljubljana and DAMU in Prague. As a freelance artist, she works as a dramaturg, playwright and critic. She mainly writes reviews, reflections, plays, analyses and pedagogical materials – occasionally, she also performs, moderates, edits and produces festivals. She is a co-author of the projects *S*S* and *Home Sweet Home* (in production of Nova Pošta, Ljubljana) and *TRANS-plant* (Bunker, Ljubljana). In 2017, she received the Week of Slovenian Drama's Young Playwright Award and, in 2021, was nominated for the Slavko Grum Award for the best new Slovenian play.

Zuzana Timčíková: Authenticity in Collective Works of Auteur Theatre: Approaches of the Millennials

We can find certain similarities in theatre forms, topics and relationships to drama manifested and used by the artists of the same generation – so-called “millennials” operating primarily on the independent scene. They are more interested in auteur texts than in the original dramatic texts. The author is not represented as one person, but they cooperate as a collective of authors. It is the whole group of creators, the actors or performers, who create the final shape of the text. It seems that expressing the authenticity – in the text and on the scene – becomes the main intention of their approaches towards drama. Trivial and everyday matters of life become the subjects of their interpretations. The human as their self-image or the human as a person they know from close or familiar circles, from media or stories from others is placed in the centre of their attention. For the authors, themselves or their issues and attitude towards life represent their inspiration. Also, they like to speak about themselves, analyse their feelings and perceptions as if defining these in front of the spectators brings them a therapeutic effect and confirms the relevancy of their attitudes towards life. What does this kind of authenticity expressed by the self-projection of artists in their texts and performances bring to the audience? Does it raise any deeper awareness and understanding of life for the audience, or does it recycle what we already know?

Zuzana Timčíková works at the Institute of Theatre and Film Research Art Research Centre, Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava, where she graduated with her doctoral studies in 2020. In her research, she focuses on the production of independent theatres and actively contributes with her reviews to several Slovak magazines and international platforms. She has presented at several domestic and international conferences. During her doctoral studies, she spent her fifth (penultimate) semester as a foreign student at the Aleksander Zelwerowicz Theatre Academy in Warsaw. She published a paper in *The Slovak Theatre magazine* about the Warsaw independent theatre scene entitled “A Cross-cutting View of Warsaw Independent Theatre Scene”.

Tomaž Toporišič: How Can We Interpret the 21st-Century (No-Longer) Dramatic Texts and Theatre in Art and Theory?

In this paper, we will explore the processes of dangerous relationships between drama and theatre. We will analyse the bodies of a dramatic or non-dramatic text as a border area belonging to both the field of literature and theatre. We will follow the processes of translation from the literary into the performative dimension and vice versa. We will show some possible uses of the term interpretation as part of the creative process. In the field of drama or postdrama, interpreting can mean in the Slovene language either “interpreting” in the sense of specific reading, or acting or directing a play in the sense of acting or theatrical interpretation as a Bourriaudian media translation from literary to staging. However, this interpretation and translation can also coincide with intercultural translation from one culture to another. We will be interested in the analogy between critical (hermeneutic) interpretation and artistic interpretation, which we always require to be productive and coherent and thus convince us (as the French post-semiotician Patrice Pavis accurately notes). While detecting the specifics of the interpretation of drama and theatre, we will use eclectic tools offered by literary and performing arts studies to analyse the corpora of contemporary drama or no-longer drama performing practices: Simona Semenič, Oliver Frljič, Žiga Divjak, Anja Hilling, Mariano Tenconi Blanco, Wajdi Mouawad, Dino Pešut, Lea Klemola, Urša Majcen.

Tomaž Toporišič, a dramaturg and theatre theorist, is a full professor of the history and theory of drama and performing arts and vice-dean of the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana. His primary research interests are contemporary performing arts, literature and visual culture. He is the author of four books on contemporary performing arts. His latest essays include: “The New Slovene Theatre and Italian Futurism”, “(Re)staging the Rhetoric of Space”, and “Deconstructive Readings of the Avant-garde Tradition in Post-Socialist Retro-avant-garde Theatre”. He was the artistic director and dramaturg of the Mladinsko Theatre and co-founded the Exodos Festival of Contemporary Performing Arts.

Gašper Troha: What Shakes the Mind and Heart in Eastern Europe at the Beginning of the 21st Century?

In *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1960), Martin Esslin observed an interesting paradox that the theatre of the absurd turned out to be a prominent means of political theatre in Eastern Europe.

At the turn of the millennium, a new dramatic form – in-yer-face theatre – developed in the UK and soon spread all over Europe and overseas. Aleks Sierz defined it in his book *In-Yer-Face Theatre: British Drama Today* (2001). A so-called new drama, with texts that were very violent and direct as well as political, marked the theatre in Eastern Europe in the first decade of the new millennia. As Polish playwright Dorota Masłowska puts it: “When I started writing for theatre, I realized that a good performance has a stronger impact than any other artistic form. It hits the mind and the heart of the audience. I fell in love with that as a writer and as a spectator.”

What are these plays in Eastern Europe like? What connects them to in-yer-face theatre?

These questions will be discussed in light of three texts from different Eastern European Countries: *The Dust* by György Spiró (2005), *Na dnu* (At the Bottom) by Vinko Möderndorfer (2006) and *Między nami dobrze jest* (All is Good Between Us) by Dorota Masłowska (2008). Their common characteristics are the themes of the post-socialist society, materialism, consumerism and radical social criticism. By comparing the three plays, we will analyse the influence of in-yer-face theatre in Eastern Europe and discuss its specificities that might once again be its social critique.

Gašper Troha graduated from the Department of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory of the Faculty of Arts and the Academy of Music, University of Ljubljana. In 2007, he received his PhD with the dissertation “Artikulacija odnosa do oblasti v slovenski drami 1943–1990” (The Articulation of the Relationship to Authority in Slovenian Drama 1943–1990). His research focuses on the sociology of literature, especially concerning the questions of the contemporary world and Slovenian drama and theatre. He works part-time at the Faculty of Arts and the Academy of Theatre, Film, Radio and Television, University of Ljubljana. He has contributed to numerous national and foreign scientific journals and edited several scientific monographs, among them, *History and its Literary Genres; Literarni modernizem v “svinčenih” letih* (Literary Modernism in the Years of Lead) and *Lojze Kovačič: življenje in delo* (Lojze Kovačič: Life and Work). His recent publications include a book on cultural opposition and Slovenian dramatic literature entitled *Ujetniki svobode* (Prisoners of Freedom).

Hanna Veselovska: The 21st-Century Drama and the New Reality of Social Networks

Social networks have become an inseparable, central feature of our life these days. Their impact is felt in practically every area, and theatre and drama are no exception. Over the last two decades, the acceptance of social networks by the European drama has occurred at both the thematic and structural levels. The phenomenon of “Facebook plays” is typically arranged following the principle of a message feed around an event to which the characters react. We have also encountered what can be called a “Facebook hero”, someone who would use several nicknames and multiply oneself depending on the situation and one’s social circle.

While this kind of text can be found in the drama of many European countries, our attention is focused on the Ukrainian experience. Here, “Facebook plays” tend to be associated with the war in the east, in Donbas, a theme so acute and painful to so many local people. The war makes our characters take off and leave their homes, part with their loved ones and learn to adjust to or almost grow into a new reality. The playwrights in question are Vitaly Chensky, who wrote his *Ulysses* about a young man who had left Mariupol for Kyiv, and Lena Lyagushonkova, who created the dramatic saga *Mother Not According to Gorky*, about her childhood years in the eastern town of Luhansk presently under the control of Russia-backed separatists.

Hanna Veselovska is a professor, theatre critic and scholar. She works as a senior research fellow at the National Academy of Arts of Ukraine. Her research and publication interests include modern theatre theory and the Ukrainian theatrical avant-garde. Among her recent books are *The Twelve Productions by Les’ Kurbas* (2005), *The Theatrical Intersections in Kyiv: 1900-1910s. Theatrical Kyiv’s Modernism* (2006), *Ukrainian Theatrical Avant-garde* (2010), *History of the Ukrainian Theatre: From Genesis to the Early 20th Century* (in co-authorship, 2011), *Modern Theatrical Arts* (2014), *Maria Zankovetska National Academy Ukrainian Drama Theatre. Time and Fates (1917–1944). Part 1* (2016) and *Theatre of Mykola Sadovskyj (1907–1920)* (2018).

Špela Virant: Contemporary German Theatre Plays or »Capitalism will not win«

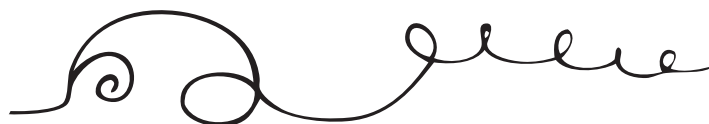
The paper will focus on some tendencies in contemporary German drama. The texts combine the experience of the postdramatic theatre and new realism with poetic elements and explicit political commitment as a reaction to the social and political context at the beginning of the 21st century, especially to neoliberal capitalism and the politics that support it. Their alliance seems so invincible that it allows no alternative ideas. At the same time, it can integrate and profit from different perils that endanger it: terrorism, economic crisis, ecological disaster, migration, illness. The world appears reductionist: the possibilities of different lifestyles are limited, the aesthetical diversity reduced, the reflections narrowed to monocausal explanations, which merge on common places about the importance of money and health. Mere provocation or comfortable realism is not enough, as mass media offers enough of them. The theatre plays use different structures and text strategies to cope with this situation. Still, some texts use "simulated shocks" or the techniques of realist literature. The focus will be on those texts resisting reductionism and offering a broader view of the complex world. In this way, the sharpening of the senses and mindfulness are the basis of contemporary drama that deals with political issues. Some examples are the plays by Sibylle Berg, Anja Hilling, Theresia Walser, Fritz Kater, René Pollesch, Thomas Melle and Kevin Rittberger.

Špela Virant is a full professor in German literature at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. She studied comparative, German and English literature. Her research focuses on modern German literature, the theory and history of drama, intercultural literary studies and ethical criticism. She has published the monograph *Redramatisierter Eros: zur Dramatik der 1990er Jahre* and several papers on contemporary German drama.

Benjamin Zajc: The Substance of Regional Millennial Playwrighting

In our region, 21st-century playwrighting is strongly marked by the arrival of the millennial generation. If the older generation of playwrights was preoccupied with the memory of wars, the questioning of collective guilt and the condemnation of past political entities, and if the established contemporary dramatic corpus is expanded by questions of lost identity, feminism and the critique of society, the millennial generation further complicates its dramatic construction with apprehension about globalisation and cultural erasure. This stance gives their work a neo-miserabilist character. In millennial playwrighting, which is less burdened by the events of the last century and more marked by the recent economic crises, we can observe even less optimism and utopian imagery. Instead, nihilism and cynicism prevail. Their material is self-referential and creates a world that corresponds to their own present. There is a particular focus on the individual's attitude to survival in an oppressive, corrupt and dysfunctional system, the individual's search for meaning and related feelings of alienation, and the inability to communicate. Through a selection of plays, this paper reflects on the key themes, form and atmosphere of millennial playwrighting, which seems to be more marked by the uncertainty of the status quo than any previous generation.

Benjamin Zajc (1997) is a theatre practitioner who works in directing, dramaturgy, performance, puppetry and playwriting. He prepared the three-year theatre project *The Last Flight of the Bees* during his undergraduate studies at the Academy for Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana (UL AGRFT). As a dramaturg, he participated in the productions *Master and Margaret* and *Bulgakov session* produced by the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre and created the solo project *Baptism on the Savica – a show for one spectator*. He also works as a theatre critic and researcher. He has written reviews and articles on the performing arts for the Slovenian Theatre Institute, Maribor Theatre Festival, Animateka Festival, Radio Študent and other online critical platforms. In 2020, he received the UL AGRFT Prešeren Award for Students for his graduation play, *The House of Flowers*. In 2021, Kotlovnic Kamnik Youth Centre published his collection of dramatic texts, *The Last Flight of the Bees*. He is currently pursuing postgraduate studies in dramaturgy and performing arts at UL AGRFT and coordinates the EU Critical Platform for Contemporary Puppetry.



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