

ZÜRCHER THEATER SPEKTAKEL

13.8.—30.8.20



«William Kentridge is one of the ambassadors on the Landiwiese of this Zürcher Theater Spektakel, the form of which excels itself. This edition is the edition one will remember.» | NZZ, 15.8.2020. Photo: ©ZTS/Kira Barlach

FINAL REPORT

ART: HERE AND NOW

It took place, the Theater Spektakel 2020, during the second half of August, as always. With a programme offering great international art, a plethora of innovative formats and 16 world premieres. This is not at all self-evident. The Theater Spektakel is one of the few international festivals for performing arts that was not cancelled this summer. Our decision to follow through with it was not without risk. Would we manage to adapt the festival with its 40-year tradition and its specific atmosphere attracting well over 150 000 visitors each year to the current situation and travel restrictions? Change it without losing its unique appeal? We were equally unsure of the programme's chances of success: How would the audience react to the variety of unusual, corona-proof formats with distance rules and occasional obligation to wear a mask? Would people show up for the radio ballet? Listen to an audio file on a boat trip? Would they gather in the districts to watch street art? Participate in a simulation of a pandemic? Would they come to the Landiwiese where there is a lot of art, little spectacle and no gastronomic offer at all?

To cut a long story short: They came, they watched, they participated with the willingness, curiosity and openness for the unknown typical of the Theater Spektakel audience since the very beginning. They went to places to meet art where given circumstances made it possible: on the boat, on the phone, in public places, in the internet, in a cartoon-like television studio

or from a bird's-eye view at the beach. They came to see the large-scale installations of William Kentridge, Tim Etchells and Shilpa Gupta on the Landwiese, which set the stage for three strong artistic statements. They sat down on picnic blankets under a starry sky for the Collective Listenings to audio pieces created by international artists especially for the Theater Spektakel.



Festival atmosphere which could not be more beautiful «in the summer of Covid»: Collective Listening with the songs and stories by Laurie Anderson. | Photo: ©ZTS/Christian Altorfer

Experiencing togetherness in very different forms and formats ran like a golden thread through the programme: Be it for the joint search for effective protective measures in the pandemic simulation «Virus» by Yan Duyvendak, the interpretation of the choreographic instructions for the radio ballet «Zerstreuung überall!» by LIGNA; be it during the public viewing of the cartoon lecture series «Zombie TV» by Bronfen, Weber, Rickenbach, Böhmer & Huber at a community centre or with Fundus Theater on the Saffa Island, where children pondered over the future, or during the three-day online conference «How to Be Together?», in which renowned artists and cultural workers from all over the world exchanged and shared their experience, ideas and visions based on the current pandemic situation.

With its diverse offer of new possibilities to experience art together, the Theater Spektakel 2020 has managed a kind of triple jump: It gave a platform to artists from all over the world to present their works in an analogue form despite the travel restrictions, it took an important step to rethink the idea of a festival with innovative formats and artistic experiments, it complied with the desire of an interested audience for possible forms to encounter art. This year's facts and figures speak for themselves.



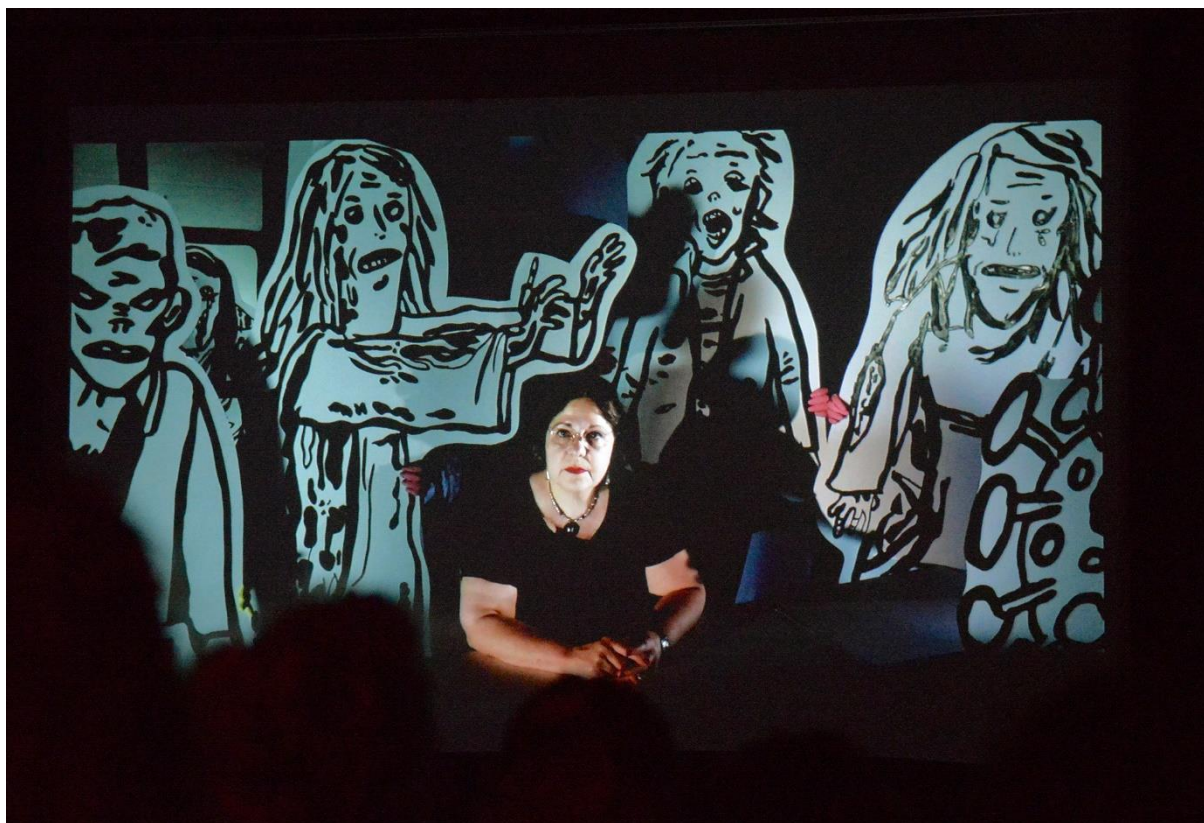
Facts and figures were crucial in the fight against the virus: The audience is stretched to its limits during the pandemic simulation «Virus» by Yan Duyvendak. | Photo: ©ZTS/KiraBarlach

FACTS & FIGURES

The programme consisted of 177 events, 115 of which were subject to charge or registration. A total of 6000 tickets or seat reservations were booked. The events in need of a ticket or registration account for an average booking rate of 86 % (2019: 87 %). This applies to internationally renowned projects such as the opera performance on climate change «Sun & Sea» with a total of 39 performances, as well as to the three intimate site visits on xenophobia in Switzerland by the workgroup ké*sarà or the transnational music theatre video installation on mining in the Congo by Elia Rediger and Dorine Mokha.

Frontrunners, with an average booking rate of well over 90 %, were the Collective Listening of «Songs and Stories in the Summer of Covid» by Laurie Anderson, the telephone performance with young teenagers «Body of Knowledge» by the Australian theatre maker Samara Hersch, the Late Night Show by Fatima Moumouni & Laurin Buser, the site visits on the occasion of «Schwarzenbach-Komplex» by ké*sarà and the opera performances «Sun & Sea» by the Lithuanian artist trio Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė, Vaiva Grainytė & Lina Lapelytė. Surprisingly, the attendance of the children's theatre productions by Studio Orka and Fundus Theater was below our expectations.

The great interest in the offers of events in the urban areas was also reflected in the number of subscribers to the Festival News on Demand: 1700 people received a daily update on the venues of the DeZentral pop-up programme, the tour of the installation by William Forsythe and further daily specials.



No fear of big viruses: Elisabeth Bronfen, anchorwoman of «Zombie TV», in the studio drawn by Kati Rickenbacher. | Photo: ©ZTS/Christian Altorfer

DIGITAL PROGRAMME OFFERS

While planning the alternative programme for the 2020 festival, we decided to incorporate digital formats which broke new artistic grounds, such as the interactive live programme by Jaamil Olawale Kosoko via the gaming chat app Discord or the lecture cartoon series «Zombie TV» by Bronfen, Weber, Rickenbach, Böhmer & Huber (1200 visits). The digital platform was also used to continue the postcolonial discourse in the series «Talking on Water» with the lecture of the renowned political scientist Achille Mbembe and a discussion of the artist Zahy Guajajara with the environmentalist Ailton Krenak on the resistance of indigenous people in Amazonia.

Moved by the central question «How to Be Together?», the Theater Spektakel, together with the Berlin festival Tanz im August, organised and curated a three-day online conference: Artists and cultural workers from all over the world discussed what the current situation means for the various parties in the international art industry and introduced ideas, strategies and presented artistic experiments and approaches. The conference was met with great interest: Around 1500 people attended one of the seven discussion panels, 600 of which participating live via Zoom.

The live events were complemented with on-demand content, such as the series «Hold on» presenting contributions of artists which could not travel to Zurich this year.

INCLUSION: WE STAY ON TRACK

Also in this special edition of the Theater Spektakel, we kept our focus on making the events accessible to people with a handicap preferably without any barriers or limitations. The programme offered several performances of «Sun & Sea» with audio description for the

visually impaired. Additionally, the inclusive offer was enhanced further: For the first time, two concerts - the spoken word performance by Jurczok 1001 & Michael Fehr and the gig of Hora'band - were translated into sign language.

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

This year's edition of the Zürcher Theater Spektakel, created under rather particular conditions, would not have been possible without the financial, non-material and material support of the following institutions, companies and organisations. A special thank you goes to our long-standing partners Zürcher Kantonalbank, Swiss Re and the Canton of Zurich as well as our media partner Tages-Anzeiger. They all confirmed their support for an alternative programme in a spontaneous, generous and straightforward way.

The following partners have supported the festival with a substantial contribution: Swiss Agency of Development and Cooperation SDC, Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Patrons of the Festival and Rote Fabrik. A very special thank you goes to the Urban Development of the City of Zurich: Their partnership on the occasion of «Zürich meets your City» allowed the presentation of the mobile installation «City of Abstracts 2020» by William Forsythe.

In addition, the following institutions have funded the festival (budget: 3,6 million Swiss Francs) with generous contributions: Ars Rhenia, Max Kohler Stiftung, Fachstelle Integration Kanton Zürich, Migros Culture Percentage, Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, Federal Service for Combating Racism, Stiftung Denk an mich and Stiftung für Radio und Kultur Schweiz. Contributors of substantial in-kind sponsoring were KIBAG AG, Zürichsee Schifffahrtsgesellschaft und Verkehrsbetriebe Zürich.

The festival direction would like to thank them and all other companies and hotels, which supported the festival with material and logistic contributions.



Dance the Forsythe: The mobile installation by William Forsythe set people in motion on its tour through Zurich. |

Photo: ©ZTS/Christian Altorfer

CHANGE IN THE FESTIVAL DIRECTION

Delphine Lyner, member of the festival direction since 2013, leaves the Theater Spektakel after this edition. As the executive director and member of the programme group, she has initiated and promoted a whole series of projects in order to increase the festival's accessibility to as many people as possible. She has greatly contributed to the development of the inclusive measures on all levels and to the festival becoming a role model example of an inclusive event. Additionally, she ensured the festival's development on financially secure grounds with great commitment. During her term, four big construction projects – Pavillon, entrance area and festival office – could be realised with the support of partners and foundations. She also intensified the collaboration with the Patrons of the Festival and is responsible for important improvements in the departments of administration, organisation and ticketing. Thanks to her efforts to digitalise those departments they are now at the state of the art.

We thank Delphine Lyner for her great commitment and continuing enthusiasm she has put into the festival and its development and wish her all the best.

Her successor to the three-member management team is the cultural manager Sarah Wendle. The 37-year old was born in Lahr/Schwarzwald. She studied history and politics at the universities of Cologne and Buenos Aires and graduated with a degree in area studies. Since 2013, she worked as editor, non-fiction programme director and finally as commercial director at the Rotpunktverlag in Zurich. From 2016 to 2018, she studied MAS Arts Management at the School of Management and Law of the ZHAW in Winterthur. Sarah Wendle, who will co-direct the Zürcher Theater Spektakel together with the artistic director Matthias von Hartz and the technical director Veit Kälin, takes office at the beginning of October 2020.

THEATER SPEKTAKEL 2021

The 42nd edition of the Zürcher Theater Spektakel takes place from Thursday 19 August to Sunday 5 September 2021.
