



● 9.02.2024, 11-18 Uhr

Bound to Perform: Theater, work, performance mania

How do we want to work /in the theater/ in the future? Which artistic work ethics will be applied? To what extent can work-fighting attitudes be developed that resist the increasing management of the sign orders emitted by the theater?

Not far from the starting point of the 'Barmbek Uprising' almost exactly 100 years ago, the Theater Academy of the HfMT Hamburg will be the venue for a symposium that addresses these artistic, academic and indeed 'trade union' questions. In view of the never-ending crises of globalized capitalism and their tangible consequences in the current theater landscape, the symposium will discuss theoretical and practical concepts of artistic work in order to link them with aspects of performance. In doing so, the symposium creates spaces for exchange, research and action that allow the levels of theoretical reflection, theatrical performance and art-affine spatial design to intertwine.

Bound to Perform can mean many things, the formula is ambiguous, aesthetic and political at the same time. A security, for example, 'performs' on the stock exchange, just as a theatrical ensemble can do on a stage. To perform implies 'to deliver', although this also applies to a new technological innovation that is being tested on the free market. Performative speech acts are linguistic acts that create and define reality as much as they are associated with its incessant 'iteration', i.e. a movement of displacement and redefinition.

The various facets of the concept of performance ('execution', 'capability', 'competence', 'making', 'performance', 'realization', 'representation' and many more) make it clear that *Bound to Perform* always also means being committed to a certain economy that is followed. What kind of economy is this? What profits are made through it? In whose name is the circulation of values associated with it staged? And if we are bound to this performance, what strategies are there to break free?

The symposium is based on the (hypo)thesis that both artistic and scientific or epistemological economies differ significantly from their market or commodity-based counterparts, which implies different work ethics. In the course of an increasing 'marketingization' of artistic universities, this difference can hardly be

emphasized strongly enough. Science and art pursue other intrinsic motivations than the so-called free market; in their own way, they always approach 'an-economic' areas whose dynamics catapult them out of rationalizable and calculable forms of development. Accordingly, the economic knowledge of the arts is as immense as it is uncontrollable. This knowledge must be used as a realpolitik line of defence against the desire for privatization, thus lending the phrase *Bound to Perform* a new and critically affirmative dimension.

The symposium attempts to take up and pursue this dimension. In addition to theoretical lectures revolving around the complexity of the artistic concept of work, as well as various performative interventions by HfMT students, the audience will be given the opportunity to participate, act, inform and gather, and extensive material from artistic unions will be made available. In addition, an audio installation on Hermann Melville's story "Bartleby the Scrivener", set in a room for sleeping and resting, leads into a zone of contemplative indecision in terms of work ethics. Different epistemological, artistic and conceptual levels are layered on top of each other to emphasize the breadth of the work at the TAH.

- The symposium is organized and designed by: Leonard Kaiser, Niyousha Azari Najaf Abad, Margit Pötzsch, Marlene Reiter, Rongji Liao, Louisa Schiedek, Georg Dirlack, Anna-Maria Kluth, Elisabeth Hoppe, Lucas Zach, Paul Marwitz, Benjamin Sprick, Joanna Sielicka, Zerui Quan, Till Gedack and many more