

Theater der Versammlung

Theatre Assemblage: Chekhov - Fieldwork as Performance/ Performance as Fieldwork performance and workshop

Since 2013, the Bremen-based Theatre Assemblage (*Theater der Versammlung*, TdV) has regularly invited groups of around 25 people to make an unusual research trip: a bus ride to the “Chekhov house”. Participants book this “introduction to field studies in only three hours” to explore the peculiar way of life of a set of theatrical figures drawn from different plays by Anton Chekhov.

During the visitors’ stay in the dilapidated country house, they experience different modes of encounter as well as different levels of proximity/distance with the inhabitants. The focus is on temporal relations: 'deceleration' – the Chekhov people live a rather slow life – remembering and playing out fragments from their lives, sometimes talking to their visitors unexpectedly or in more than one language, only to withdraw back into their own musings just a moment later. Other underlying themes are abrupt breaks and mood changes (associations with dementia are deliberate) and dimensions of precariousness. On the bus ride back, experiences and results are shared among the audience-turned-group-of-researchers.

For PP 2017 in Prague, TdV has adjusted the setting of this field trip to local conditions and will have a small group of conference participants get in touch with the Chekhov crowd. In the subsequent talk we will try to make this particular experience accessible to further participants by evoking concrete inner images from situations that occurred during the performance by means of a memory exercise carried out by members of the “research group”.

The Chekhov people are played by: Carolin Bebek, Irina Frais, Malina Günzel, Max Konek, Simon Makhali, Manfred Palm, Lena Pasberg, Annika Port, Tom Schröpfer, Anne Storm. Directed by Jörg Holkenbrink, dramaturgy: Anna Seitz and Simon Makhali

“Bio”:

The Centre for Performance Studies at Bremen University (ZPS) regularly develops projects that facilitate an artistic orientation in academic approaches, since the 1990s. The Theater der Versammlung – Theatre Assemblage between Education, Academics and Art (or short: TdV) that is affiliated with the Centre is considered one of the first research theatres in Germany.

