

Contact

Annika Wehrle, M.A. & Dr. Julia Pfahl
Johannes Gutenberg-Universität
Institut für Film-, Theater- und empirische Kulturwissenschaft
IPP Performance and Media Studies
Jakob-Welder-Weg 18
55099 Mainz
phone +49-6131-39-20659
Fax +49-6131-39-23776
e-Mail performedia@uni-mainz.de
web www.performedia.uni-mainz.de

The IP and its Partners

Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz
Institut für Film-, Theater- und empirische Kulturwissenschaft;
IPP „Performance and Media Studies“

Trinity College Dublin
School of Drama, Film and Music

Universität Wien
Institut für Theater-, Film- und Medienwissenschaft

King's College London
School of Arts & Humanities

Uniwersytet Łódzki
Katedra Dramatu i Teatru

The programme is designed to provide a forum for discussion where (doctoral) students can share their ideas and research projects among themselves and with experts from various fields. Intensive seminars and workshops constitute the core of the Summer School which will be framed by a wide range of supporting events. The aim of the IP's Summer School is to establish a tight network on both an academic as well as on a social level which will serve as fertile ground on which to continue one's own as well as joint academic efforts.

The Summer School offers a diverse mixture of

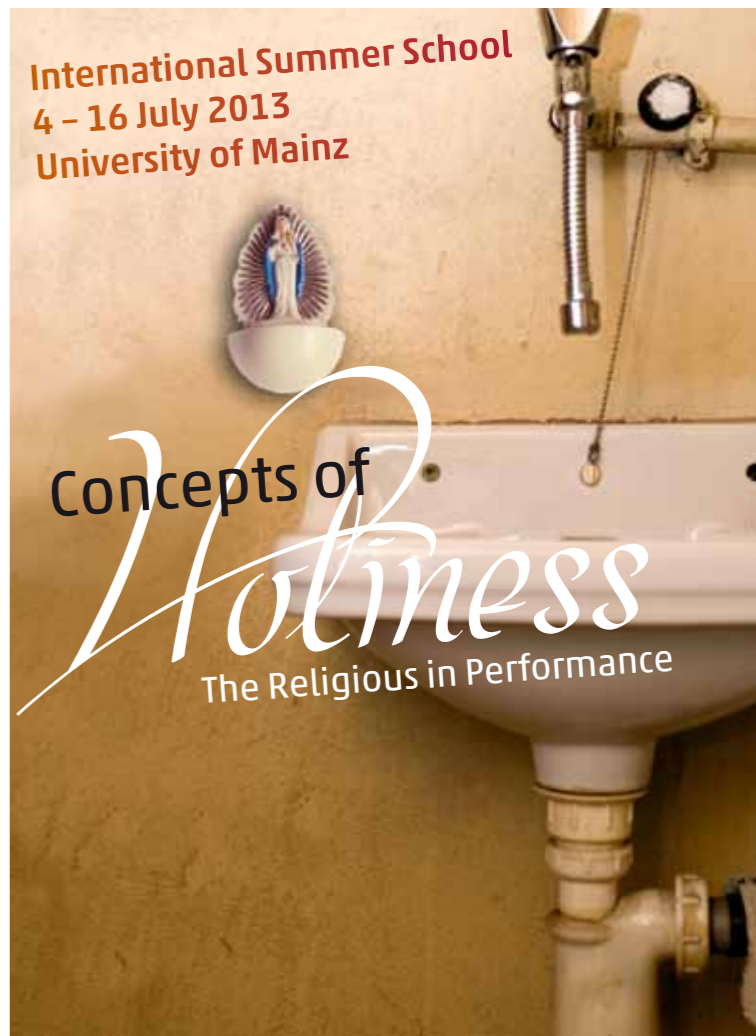
- Seminars & Workshops
- Evening Lectures
- Excursions
- Presentation Panels & Working Groups

Concepts of Holiness Rethinking the Religious in Theatre, Cultural Performance, and Media

From the perspective of the late 20th century, religion in Europe could still be conceived as a waning entity: Religious practices had increasingly become invisible through their dissociation from religious institutions and by their banishment to the realm of the private. Simultaneously they seemed to have been succeeded by "the spirit of capitalism" (Max Weber) or to have found their new place within this "spirit," as in Walter Benjamin's claim that capitalism was not beyond religion, but a form of religion itself. However, the global events inaugurating the 21st century, such as the terror attacks on September 11, 2001 and the subsequent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the near collapse of the capitalistic financial markets recently, have brought the Religious back into public discourse: While Philosophers such as Alain Badiou and Giorgio Agamben use the figure of Saint Paul in order to question the hegemony of Capitalism, the rhetoric of the former US-President George W. Bush employed an ideological discourse laden with religious metaphors, thus positioning the United States as "God's own country" against the "axis of evil". Against this background, and according to Agamben's notion of religion not derived from religare but from relegere in a sense which points at the cautious hesitation, the re-reading, in the face of forms and formulas that are to be followed when the separation of the holy and the profane is to be respected, the three year IP Programme "Concepts of Holiness" proposes an operational approach to the Religious that allows to revisit diverse concepts of holiness in a broader sense and to reevaluate the role of religion(s) in Theatre, Cultural Performance, and Media.

**The IP is divided into three research units
that are investigated at three subsequent Summer Schools:**

- 2013:** The Religious in Performance
- 2014:** Performing Belief: The Religious as Critical Practice
- 2015:** Intercultural Europe(s): Return of the Religious?



European PhD Network | Mainz – Dublin – Wien – London – Lodz



Seminars

Performative Reflections of Holiness in the Theatre of the Neo-Avantgarde in the 1960s

Friedemann Kreuder (Mainz) / Sharon Aronson-Lehavi (Bar-Ilan)

The directors of the historical Neo-Avantgarde, such as Jerzey Grotowski, Peter Brook, Richard Schechner, Joseph Chaikin, as well as Klaus Michael Grüber, searched, together with their artistic ensembles, for ways of using the body other than in the common practices for the purpose of a consumerist „paying public“. They took their point of departure from past and present rituals of their own and other cultures, which as practices of re-visualisation, offered theatrical forms of performing whose cultural meaning derived first of all from a self-reflective sense of their materiality. In this way, they were supposed to enable the audience to experience the transformative performance in the intense experience of voices, gestures and movements within liminoid frames (Turner). Grotowski, Brook and Grüber worked, each in their own way, on a kind of profanation of theatrical acting, which the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben considers today to be the last possibility of a performative reflection of holiness – in the sense of a kind of intellectual achievement of artistic acting *ex negativo*. By staging them with varying intensity and graduation of relevance within the frame of mythical contexts of holiness, they created role models for imaginary figures of holiness in contemporary theatre and performance art. The seminar focuses on the historical models in writings and performances of the mentioned artists of the historical Neo-Avantgarde.

Selling Salvation: Priests and Charlatans

Stefan Hulfeld (Vienna) / Pavel Drábek (Hull)

From a historical perspective it becomes clear that there is fierce competition between the official churches and the various agents of popular culture with regard to the relationship between their *mise-en-scènes* and their promises of salvation. The seminar will investigate this relationship from a comparative perspective, looking both at historical performances of the Religious in churches and popular culture during the 16th through the 19th century, and at correlating phenomena in present day Europe and North America. Regarding contemporary culture, specific attention will be paid to the media through which these promises of salvation are distributed, as for instance in the case of the televised (Catholic) *urbi et orbi* blessing or Home Shopping Channels. How do the performative strategies in both institutionalized religion and popular culture correlate with the symbolical capital that serves as a base for their respective promises of salvation?

The Rhetoric of Faith in Cultural Discourse

Steve Wilmer (Dublin) / Mariusz Bartosiak (Łódź)

The goal of this seminar is to investigate the rhetorical link between religious and ideological belief in cultural discourse in Europe from the nineteenth century. The seminar will examine the use of the theatre to present various kinds of ideological and religious rhetoric during periods of social change such as national awakening or national unification. It will also analyze state ideological practices that enforce or prevent specific types of theatrical events for religious or ideological reasons, and it will also consider recent performances that demonstrate the rhetorical effectiveness of a faith-based approach to engage an audience such as in the work of Christoph Schlingensiefel and the Estonian Theater No 99.

Profanation and Play: Negotiating Ethics in Contemporary Performance

Alan Read (London) / Michael Bachmann (Mainz)

Taking its starting point from Romeo Castellucci's 2010 production *Sul Concetto di volto nel Figlio di Dio / On the Concept of the Face: Regarding the Son of God, Vol. 1* (a recording of which we'll watch together in class), this seminar discusses contemporary performance practices that play on notions of profanation and sacredness. Our particular focus is on the question of whether and how this might lead to new forms of negotiating ethics or the ethical within and outside a theatrical frame. Castellucci's controversial performance – centered around an oversized painting of the face of Christ and its dynamic relationship to various stage actions – opens up multiple ways of thinking through this question: as for instance with regard to notions of spectatorship (Rancière), the relationship between profanation and play (Agamben), an ethics of the face (Lévinas), and – drawing on Michael Taussig's understanding of "defacement" as an action that sacralizes the object it tries to negate – historical as well as contemporary examples of iconoclasm.

Workshops

Grotowski, Richards, Ang: Holy Transmission Gabriele Pfeiffer (Vienna)

Jerzy Grotowski – one of the most important European theater reformer of the 20th century, influenced by K. Stanislavsky and E. Meyerhold, – will be the source of the workshop. Selected works and their concepts of theater will be followed, starting at the poor theater and ending with the idea of art as vehicle. We will investigate examples that have arisen in the last laboratory founded by Grotowski and Thomas Richards as well as with the „Grotowski reception“ of the female members Maud Robart and Ang Gey Pin. The aim is a critical analysis of the theory and method of „Grotowski's transmission of his opus“, as well as its reception up to the 21st century.

Holy the Circle: Transcendence, Ritual, and the Void in Ensemble Performance Nick Johnson (Dublin)

Drawing upon the embodied experiences of human beings in both religious and theatrical contexts, this practical workshop will seek to identify and create a spiritual element in performance. Emphasizing process rather than reception, the group will investigate the physical construction of ritual and the implications of transcendent practices in an ensemble context. Drawing on the experimental archive of collective practice, especially in the twentieth-century articulations of Jerzy Grotowski and Peter Brook, the workshop will constitute a temporary laboratory for spiritual exploration through embodiment. This work seeks a contemporary understanding of the ancient religious role of the theatre through practice-based research, together with a re-evaluation of the notion of „the void.“ The physical element of this workshop will be intensive, but it is safely designed for performers and academic students alike; no prior performance experience is necessary. Appropriate clothing for movement work is essential.

From the 'Saint Actor' to the 'Saint Revolutionary': Sacralizing the Secular Dariusz Leśnikowski (Łódź)

The workshop aims to investigate the notions of "religion" and "the religious" within the context of theatre. Over the course of two days, two thematic units shall be covered: the first part consists of exercises taken from the Living Theatre and Augusto Boal, which are part of the process of creating the saint-actor in the

theatre and the saint-revolutionary in the church of social-political activity as well as forming a new secular community substituting a religious community. The second part continues this investigation, by exploring the process of the ritualisation / theatricalisation of social-political and economic life, analysing their gestures and symbols as a new contemporary church and new religion.

Installing the Sacred – A Performance-Installation Regina Fichtner (Frankfurt / London)

Religion can be found in different forms, practices and media: in (motion) pictures, movements, sounds and music, texts... . But what happens when a portrait becomes a text, or a sound transforms into a movement? Where does the 'Sacred' aspect go? In a series of practical research tasks we are going to filter the 'Religious' out of its medium by using methods of physical and spoken theatre as well as different devising techniques and movement scores. Examples of contemporary performance-installations will give us an idea of how to work in a multimedia-based environment. The results of the workshop can be presented in a performance installation at the IPP Summer School. Please bring comfortable clothing. No previous dance/theatre experience is required.

Other Activities

- **Evening Lectures:** applied interdisciplinary lecture series conceived and given by the international IP faculty
- **Presentation Panels:** doctoral students present and discuss their current research and discuss it with the international faculty
- **Cultural programme**