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REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF GERMAN AITA/IATA CENTRE THE FEDERAL ASSOCIATION OF DRAMA AND THEATRE (BAG) in 2013/2014

The Federal Association of Drama and Theatre (BAG) is an umbrella organisation for amateur theatre, drama and theatre for children and young people both at school and outside of school, theatre education in theatres and cultural centres and teaching/education at universities and other higher education institutions.

Areas of Activity and Their Scope

- Specialist conferences for experts
- Qualified training, further education and vocational training programmes
- Target-group oriented programmes/projects at a national and international level (e.g. theatre for/with children and young people from an immigrant background)
- Intercultural, particularly development-related exchange programmes in Germany and abroad (including national programmes for/with Turkey, Israel, Morocco, Ghana, Russia etc.)
- Theatre festivals
- Specialist advice relating to project development and funding and communicating / recommending projects and consultants
- Committee function for cultural and educational policy (including expert committees on Europe and cultural education both nationally and internationally)
- Professional publications

The Federal Association of Drama and Theatre (BAG) is a member of the Bundesvereinigung Kulturelle Jugendbildung (BKJ), the Rat Darstellende Kunst and Tanz/Deutscher Kulturrat, the Fonds Darstellende Künste and the Bundesakademie für kulturelle Bildung Wolfenbüttel. It is also a board member of the Theatertreffen der Jugend (Berlin) as well as being a member of the Standing Committee *Kinder spielen Theater*, the Kulturpolitische Gesellschaft, the Working Committee of the German speaking Amateur Theatre Associations (AddA), the International Amateur Theatre Association (AITA/IATA), the Central European Committee (CEC), the European Drama Encounter (EDERED) and the Anna Lindh Foundation network.

Activities at a National Level in 2013

æsth_ploration 1.0 – Research Workshop on Aesthetic Research

as part of the Mixed UP Akademie, 27th-28th March 2013, Berlin

For several years now, there have been discussions within the field of cultural education on how to examine artistic educational processes, given that established social science methods are not suitable to this end and tend to move too far away from the medium of art. This also brings up the **question of how research can be carried out on aesthetic phenomena that is in keeping with their subject**. One possible approach here is to carry out research in an “aesthetic mode”.

“æsth_ploration 1.0” took place as part of the MIXED UP Akademie and was intended to offer a forum for shared aesthetic research. A **research workshop** such as this is not just about **presenting aesthetic research projects** in theoretical terms, but rather about **tackling questions using aesthetic research methods** or **carrying out research on aesthetic questions**. Various different approaches from everyday life, aesthetics, art and academia can be combined in such research processes: movement, music or images are thus used for posing questions, trying things out, experimenting and carrying out research. The material generated is then collected and ordered, with different points of reference being looked for and associations and contexts created. Finally, various answers to the initial question are developed into scenes, performances or installations using different artistic means.

The research workshop both offered a forum for (up and coming) artists and academics to explore their (aesthetic) research questions together (æsth_ploration 1.1) as well as inviting teachers, cultural producers, artists and those involved in communicating art to present their aesthetic and/or artistic research approaches to the other academy participants on the theme of passing on messages (æsth_ploration 1.2).

fairCulture – The World of Tomorrow **International Youth Theatre Festival and Symposium**

In 2013 the **Federal Association of Drama & Theatre, BAG**, is celebrating the **60th anniversary** with a few of theatre projects. One of these projects was the international youth theatre festival and symposium “*fairCulture*”.

Youth theatre groups from **Ghana, Malawi, Palestine, Poland and Turkey** as well as from Hannover and the region brought their various productions and projects to take part in the international theatre meeting “*fairCulture – The World of Tomorrow*”, which has taken place at the Junges Schauspiel in the state capital of Lower Saxony from June 14th – 18th. This international theatre meeting, which includes a festival and symposium, was organised by the Federal Association of Drama & Theatre, BAG, the Junges Schauspiel at the State Theatre Hanover and the City of Hanover Agenda 21-Büro and Kulturbüro in collaboration with numerous national and international cooperation partners.

The theatre productions at the festival were marked by an in-depth exploration of current themes: the **burning issues** that strike these young actors when they think about the world today and their own *world of tomorrow*. **How fair are we when it comes to dealing with natural resources, whether water or food? How fair is access to education and cultural and social participation in different countries? How it is possible to be fair in international collaboration?** Young people active in the arts, theatre directors and producers and those involved in theatre education, actors and experts from north, south, east and west will all be coming together to take part in a cultural dialogue: a dialogue about the rights of children and young people, a dialogue that draws on theatre productions and emerges from within artistic processes in concrete terms, a dialogue that brings with it personal encounters and shared action, an exchange of ideas and conceptions and the mutual understanding of values. The theatre projects invited to the festival are frequently

located at the point where social commitment and artistic demands come together, developing their own individual aesthetics and often functioning as motors for social change.

The festival was offered a platform for young people and artists wanting to make an active contribution with a spirit of productivity and a sense of criticism, experts at articulating their everyday culture who feel joy at being involved in the shared shaping of the world of tomorrow.

The symposium on development-related theatre work has taken place from June 16th -18th. The special chance offered by international exchange was in the way of connecting different outlooks and reflections: which concepts of *fairCulture* do the different theatre projects being shown have in common and which such concepts are thus shared by young people from north, south, east and west? What role do these projects play when it comes to discussing justice and participation?

Taking concrete practical examples as a starting point, a form of theatre were discussed which seeks education, social awareness and self-determination. The specialist exploration of the ideas is to be examined across **different levels of discourse:**

- 1) **Social Aesthetics:** Which aesthetic characteristics can be observed in the international projects and productions? Which artistic and developmental goals are the theatre producers seeking to pursue?
- 2) **Direction/Cultural Communication:** Which function does the director take on during theatrical work? Which working methods and methodological approaches are used?
- 3) **Cultural and Developmental Policy:** Which funding instruments exist for theatre within the context of development? What are the basic parameters required for cultural education?
- 4) **Impact Research:** What impact does theatre work have on the social situation of those involved? What role can theatre play in social change and can it itself bring about change or intensify it? Are there tangible results to this end?

The symposium tried out and made use of different formats to enable a professional debate has taken place between theatre makers from different countries with the goal of establishing new partnerships. Specialist lectures, project presentations, workshops and discussion forums were allowed experts from the field of cultural education and young people involved in theatre to enter into a critical public dialogue. In this sense, the conference was aimed at those involved in communicating theatre who is seeking to reflect upon, started to develop or build upon international activities.

Activities at an International Level in 2013

Turkey

Exchange with Theatre Experts from Germany in **Turkey** (Trabzon as well as other cities) in April.

Issuing of the Specialist Publication "Theatre and Drama Creative" in collaboration with Çağdaş Drama Derneği

A **bilingual (German-Turkish)** handout.

Goals and Background:

The publication makes a contribution to professionalisation within cultural education for children and young people as well as within international youth work

The methodological implementation of this specialist publication is two-fold: the practice-based development of a research concept and proposal as well as academic reflections emerging in the opposite direction that arise from a sense of necessity to improve practice. The bi-national, bilingual approach taken here makes entirely conscious use of the productive benefits of cultural interaction in dealing with different thematic explorations in a

world whose diversity represents a particular challenge for children and young people as well as multipliers.

The publication is a collaboration between the Federal Association of Drama and Theatre (BAG) and Çağdaş Drama Derneği, ÇDD (Union for Contemporary Theatre in Turkey). The authors from Turkey and Germany allowed both their experiences and specialist knowledge to enter into their contributions to the publication. They came from a variety of different fields, including educational studies, sociology, social work, cultural education, theatre, the museum sector, literature, academic teaching and research, intercultural work and public institutions.

BABYLON 4 - AddA Youth Theatre Meeting in Siegsdorf/Bavaria

The Working Committee of the German speaking Amateur Theater Associations (AddA) in Siegsdorf/Bayern organised the international youth theatre meeting **BABYLON 4** from 4th – 11th August 2013. Young people from South Tirol (Italy), Austria and Germany spent one week long grappling with Europe's linguistic diversity in theatre workshops, performances and meetings with the German-speaking territories forming an example, being regarded them as a sort of laboratory for the purposes of this project. Language serves to express and exchange ideas, insights, information, ideas and thoughts as well as the codification and handing down of knowledge. Language is based on cognitive processes and is characterised by continual change. Language formed the central idea running through the **BABYLON 4** project.

Numerous dialects, vernaculars, sociolects and linguistic shadings represent an expression of great diversity on the one hand whilst also sometimes leading to an almost Babylonian state of affairs in German-speaking territories on the other. This is linked to a whole series of questions relating to the subject of identity, homeland, digital languages, language in the media and the often-tense relationship between language and power, to name just a few. These questions formed the basis of the theatre workshops, whose content consisted of the different themes raised by the young people using various different methods.

The project was coordinated on directing and organizing level by the BAG.

Israeli-German Round Table Discussion on intercultural theatre in collaboration with the Berlin University of the Arts, Institute for Theatre Education, Berlin from 4-9.11.2013 in Berlin

Public Relations Work / Publications

Zeitschrift für Theaterpädagogik

Issue 62 **Regie und Spielleitung** (Art of Directing)

Issue 63 **Theaterlabor** (Theatre as a Laboratory) (to be published in October)

Specialist articles/essays by members of the board and the association executives in various magazines and publications.

Dates for 2014

21.02.2014

The Federal Association of the Drama and Theatre (BAG) General Assembly in Weimar.

22.02.2014

æsth_ploration 2.0 – Research Workshop on Aesthetic Research in Weimar.

October 2014

Specialist Conference on “Biographical Theatre” in collaboration with the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Dortmund in Dortmund.

International Exchange of Theatre Experts between Turkey, Ghana, Israel and Palestine.

November 2014

The Federal Association of Drama and Theatre (BAG) is the host of the **Annual Conference of the Standing Committee of the German speaking Amateur Theatre Associations (AddA)**.

Public Relations Work / Publications

March 2014

Presentation of the Specialist Publication “Theatre and Drama Creative” (German/Turkish) at the Leipzig Book Fair.

Zeitschrift für Theaterpädagogik

Issue 64 ***Theaterpädagogisches Wissen im Kontext gesellschaftlichen Handelns***
(Theatre Educational Knowledge within the Context of Social Action)

Issue 65 ***Theater und Entwicklung*** (Theatre and Development)

Report