



Press release

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ECHT! is a resounding success

Awards at the 7th “Politik im Freien Theater” Festival go to “Stalin – a Discussion on (Greek) Theatre” and “Hell on Earth”

The 7th “Politik im Freien Theater” Festival (ECHT!) ended yesterday evening at a ceremony granting the festival awards. The €15,000 guest performer prize granted by the festival’s sponsor, the German Federal Agency for Civic Education, was awarded to Michael Marmarinos and Akillas Karazissis’ production “Stalin – a Discussion on (Greek) Theatre”. The Goethe Institute prize, a €10,000 guest performer granted for outstanding German-language productions, went to the Constanza Macras I DorkyPark production “Hell on Earth”. The independent panel of judges included well-known journalist and presenter Tina Mendelsohn, co-founder of the online portal www.nachtkritik.de Esther Slevogt, dramatic advisor Georg Weinand and Martin Berg, the head of the Goethe Institute’s Theatre/Arts department.

In its official statement, the jury said: “With their production, Marmarinos and Karazissis – two respected representatives of the independent theatre scene – have also provided new impulses to Greek state theatre. Their production blurs the formal borders between the public and the stage, film and theatre, actor and audience, text and discussion of life. A multifaceted theatre emerges that is both challenging and deeply human. And together with children and young adults from the Neukölln district of Berlin, Constanza Macras and her dancers played with extremely diverse dreams and self-images. Something worked in the performance that seldom does in reality – the coexistence of apparent polar opposites: between different religions and nationalities, sexual roles, artists and lay people. Both productions achieved something that we want from both politics and theatre...being taken seriously, not being patronised, the creation of a vision of cooperation and overcoming barriers – whether social, aesthetic or traditional.”

For eleven days, the 7th “Politik im Freien Theater” Festival put on an exciting and diverse programme. “For our festival, which only takes place every three years, it was the right decision to head for Cologne this year,” said Thomas Krüger, the president of the German Federal Agency for Civic Education. “Cologne’s residents greeted ECHT! with open arms, and many of them took an active part in the artistic and political discourse.”

Around 8,000 people visited the various international productions, worldwide premieres, school performances and workshops, podium and audience discussions, the “Serie Deutschland” video installation and other events that took place within the festival framework. The offices of the “Büro für LauteR Kölner Wünsche” occupied by the troupe Drama Köln and the “Permission to Rock” bar with the band ‘one hit wonder’ were also part of the festival, and drew curious crowds with a series of events and ‘rituals’. More than 200 people joined Lukas Matthaei’s dramatic city tour through the fictional Cologne biography “Kurz nachdem ich tot war – von häusern und menschen”. With a total of 23 sold-out performances and many others that were near capacity, the festival was a resounding success in terms of visitor numbers.

To view or download photographs from the closing night and awards ceremony, please visit www.bpb.de/politikimfreientheater

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