

# Looking back and into the future at the end of 2008, the first two years of production

## 1 Origin

Theater Arbeit Duisburg - TAD (Theatre work Duisburg) has been officially founded in November 2006. Preparations for this foundation began in July 2006, in September TAD already started the first production. TADs origin lies in Duisburg-Bruckhausen, where Stefan Schroer founded the Junge Theater Bruckhausen (Young Theatre Bruckhausen) in 2003. In 2005, Stella Cristofolini and Oleg Zhukov joined the leading team. They became members of the Kulturbunker Bruckhausen e.V. and worked out parts of its general conception. They invented the Bunker- Theaterstammtisch (theatre Round table) to sound out the possibilities of professional independent theatre work in the peripherie. Next to the regular rehearsals of the Junge Theater they realised the “European Youth- Theatrefestival in Duisburg-Bruckhausen” and the interdisciplinary project “Der Stand der Dinge. Bruckhausen” (The state of the art. Bruckhausen) which is now, in a transformed way, part of TADs repertoire.

The structural frame of the KulturBunker soon became too narrow, and so TAD, as an independent structure, came to life.

## 2 Background

Amongst others two directors, Martin Kloepfer and Markus Schlappig, who only worked in state theatres before became part of TAD. Crucial aim of TAD is to professionalize and intensify theatrical work from the perspective of the peripherie, the space where structures of society with all its contradictions are visible in a clearer way than within its centre.

TADs theatrework is research in content and form. TADs productions differ in aesthetic signatures, but share common questions and ideas as regards content and research on the interface of artistic and social practices. Consequently contacts and cooperations with artists from other genres resulted from this first year of production.

## 3 Theatre Productions 2007

(detailed description on [www.theater-arbeit-duisburg.de](http://www.theater-arbeit-duisburg.de)- Projekte)

First production was **Marmor** by Joseph Brodsky, directed by Markus Schlappig. In the only dramawork of the Noble Price winner TAD found several of its crucial questions for its work in a dense way: the question of forced integration into the existing society when at the same time more and more people are disintegrated for several reasons.

The production was realised under precarious conditions. The learning process resulting from this is reflected in the different publications of the piece: there was a preview in the Autonomic Centre in Mühlheim/Ruhr in November 2006, followed by two shows in Duisburgs DJäzz in March 2007. The final piece has been eventually shown in Ringlokschuppen in Mühlheim in September and October 2007.

**Das Weiße wird uns immer femder- meet John Doe**, direction Martin Kloepfer, is based on a real story that happened in a Duisburg bar. One night a man entered the bar who has not been seen there before. He was a black- American Irak-war-veteran who invited everyone in the bar to drink with him. Immediately a classical theatre situation came up: on the one side there was the– quite sick- choir: the lefty intellectuals, depressive, defatistic regulars of the bar, on the other side the healthy, strong and (at least in the beginning) ostentatiously happy individual. It was clear that there would not be a happy marriage of the two qualities, and consequently the end of the night saw the destruction of the individual and the reinvention of the choirs idea of order. The piece is based on interviews with witnesses of that night, premiere was in Theater Freudenhaus in Essen in May 2007. Two shows were realised in Zariza in Düsseldorf, and in June 2007 “Meet John Doe” was central part of the project “10 Tage besser leben- TAD LOKAL” (10 days of better living) in Duisburg.

**Pop Shop** was realised with inmates of the Juvenile Jail in Düsseldorf. Three weeks of rehearsals in jail in February 2007 marked the beginning of this project. Central was the concrete situation of the juvenile men, their histories, their situation of being locked in, crucial to deal with these stories in an artistic way. Second phase was realised outside of jail. The production was not a homogenous theatre piece but a mixture of documentation and reflexion of this work. The scene turns around the situation in jail: the former inmates acted independently, free from the stories from jail that were audible from tape. Identification was not made easy for the auditory. "Pop Shop" premiered in Kulturzentrale Hundertmeister in Duisburg in June 2007 and was performed at "10 Tage besser leben- TAD LOKAL". A radio play of the piece is in the making.

Next to these three performances two international project of the Young Theatre Bruckhausen (JTB), now part of TAD, have been realised: **Die Zeitmaschine- Wehikul Czasu** (Time machine), a free adaption of H.G. Wells piece, and L. Carrolls **Die Jagd nach dem Schnatz- Pogon na Sznacem** (The hunting of the Snark). These coproductions with the polish Theatre Brama from Goleniow mainly based on improvisations by the young actors. Common rehearsals took place in the international Cultural Research Centre Schloss Bröllin close to the polish- german border, performances were shown in Bröllin, Szczecin, Berlin, Duisburg and Dortmund in January and July 2007.

Mainly because of the difficulties of finding adequate partners for showing pieces in Duisburg, **10 Tage besser leben- TAD LOKAL** (10 days of better living- TAD LOKAL) has been invented. And became more than a temporary place for showing performances: from 8<sup>th</sup> until 17<sup>th</sup> of July an empty shop in the centre of Duisburg was brought to life with vivid cultural actions. Two to three artistic events happened every day, not only TAD productions but exhibitions, performances, music events, public rehearsals and discussions within this space that combined Art and Everyday life, Work and Leisure time. Within these 10 days TAD attracted a whole new auditory and a lot of artists and young but already frustrated cultural activists that joined in with their own work and activities and felt encouraged by this public action of TAD LOKAL.

A special edition of "Zeitung für kulturelle Entwicklung- der aponaut" (magazine for cultural development- the aponaut) has been released about 10 Tage besser leben. (find it on [www.theater-arbeit-duisburg.de](http://www.theater-arbeit-duisburg.de) as a pdf).

At the end of this year TAD initiated **In dieser Armut welche Fülle!- TADvent** (What an abundance within this poorness) that was again dealing with the lack of cultural activities in Duisburg, especially in the area of theatre.

On the four weekends of December TAD appeared at different spaces that are usually hardly defined as cultural/artistic spaces: a kiosk (small shop), a light sculpture, a bar in the station. This work can be seen as symptomatic for the state of the art of TAD: more and more convinced to have chosen Duisburg (and the people that live here) as a society in nuce and because of this as the right place to work in, TAD developed faster than it was expected here.

The public invitation to search for spaces for cultural activities is last but not least an invitation to do so to TAD itself.

#### **4 Projects 2008/ 2009**

**Zum Beispiel Ruhrort: Arbeit und Leben im Wandel** (For Example Ruhrort: Work and Life in Change; in cooperation with Festival Akzente Duisburg and others).

TAD artists worked and presented in Ruhrort together with videoartist Ruth Bamberg, Avantgarde musician Phillippe Micol and in association with Theorie und Praxis (Theory and Practice) (that has already been partner in the project "Stand der Dinge- Bruckhausen") from February to May 2008. Ruhrort, a part of Duisburg, is situated right in the middle of Europes biggest and massively expanding Inland Harbour. Though it is no longer the vivid part of the city that it has been before, it is more characterised by decay, empty shops and houses and partly visible poorness. The project asked for the historical as well as contemporary connections between economic development and social and individual life. The research started in February and was supported by national and international artists from March/April 2008 on.

Concerts, public dinners, exhibitions and talks were held all over the time, TAD was present in Ruhrorts "Hennes Lokal" (a former iron products and tools shop) all these weeks.

In April this research lead to concrete artistic productions, one of them being the drama “Our Town”, an adaptation of the piece of T. Wilder combined with experiences of people living in Ruhrort, directed by Martin Kloepfer. Another performance was “SeemannsHeim” (Sailors’ Asylum/ Home), directed by Stella Cristofolini, a monolog created out of different stories and sources found during the Ruhrort research.

End of May all artistic productions and theoretical activities were shown at 12-day Festival Duisburger Akzente 2008.

### **Hennes Lokal** (now called **Harmonie** (Harmony))

The space TAD used for its research and production at the beginning of 2008 still exists and became a vital space for all kinds of encounters, artistic and cultural activities and productions

such as rehearsals, film club, concerts, lectures, readings, exhibitions, various shows and parties.

### **'Und keiner will der Kapitalist sein...'** **Der ewige Maurer** (And no one wants to be the Capitalist... - The Eternal Bricklayer) (in cooperation with Ringlocksuppen Mühlheim, Theater Halle 7 Munich and others)

This piece, directed by Markus Schlappig, is a composition of material of early pieces of Heiner Müller. The projects lies stress on the research of the differences between (the hoped for) future, our (still young) past and presence. “Where is the morning that we saw yesterday...” (H. Müller). The performance was created in cooperation with Ringlocksuppen Mühlheim and Theater Halle 7 Munich. Presentations were supported by public theoretical work and were shown in Duisburg and Mühlheim. Part of the project is a documentation and reflection on the expected different perceptions of the piece.

The Müller- project is divided in 3 parts, part two was shown in Duisburg and Mühlheim in October 2008:

### **'Und keiner will der Kapitalist sein...'**- **Zement. Probe Revolution.**“ (And no one wants to be the capitalist- Concrete. Rehearsal Revolution)

Part two is showing in April in Duisburg:

### **'Und keiner will der Kapitalist sein...'** - **Lenin. Was tun?** ('And no one wants to be the capitalist' - Lenin. What to do?)

### **Im Ausland wie Glas** (In foreign Countries like Glas)

This project was realised with asylum seekers from Berlin, Brandenburg and the Ruhrarea (inspired by texts of Aglaya Veteranyi, direction Stella Cristofolini). In her autobiographic texts Veteranyi describes a world that she is part of, but that is though strange to here most of the time. A refugee child from Rumania, she travels with her Circus family creating her own dream world in her fantasy in a cold surrounding that is supposed to be the real one. The stories and fantastic images Veteranyi creates are the source inspiration of the project.

Together with the participants possibilities of artistic transforming of own stories, experiences, thoughts and wishes have been developed with all sorts of theatre media: acting, using objects, light and shadow and audio tools. Presentations, supported by theoretical and political interventions. In cooperation with Theorie und Praxis e.V.

Took place in Duisburg, Essen, Dortmund, Krefeld, Düsseldorf, Berlin and Luckenwalde in January and February 2009.