

MARCH 2015

The Exhibition

Ever since the beginnings of his complex opus in 1957, varying between painting and theatre, Hermann Nitsch occupies a central position in the history of visionary, expanded notion of art concepts. The centre of his work is the realisation of the *o.m. theater (Orgies Mysteries Theater)*, a dramatic epic of 6-days and nights. An existential flush and cathartic realisation are the effect of this partaking, dramatic and meditative art. The multi-media exhibition, curated by Hubert Klocker, emphasizes especially on communicating the dramatic and performative nucleus of Hermann Nitsch's opus.

Central aim of both the present exhibition project and its publication, developed by the Theatermuseum in Vienna in close collaboration with the Museum Villa Stuck in Munich, Germany, is to explicitly examine the dramatic core, the scenic qualities and the contextualisation of the *o.m. theater* within theatre history and thus to allow an expanded and comprehensive view of Nitsch's work. The artist's manuscripts, shown for the first time and which, to this day, have not been explored scientifically, play a major role and act as a guide through this presentation at the Theatermuseum.

Film and audio material, a video-installation, especially created by Hermann Nitsch for the present exhibit with the topic of synaesthetics, as well as the presentation of the *Stiertrage (bull's barrow)*, used for the first time in the 6-Day Play in 1998, amplify the event character of the show and refer to the central role of the immediate experience of Hermann Nitsch's art.

Hermann Nitsch has been working on the theory and realisation of his *o.m. theater (Orgies Mysteries Theater)* ever since 1957. It is a dramatic epic, for the complete execution of which the artist has designed special, „extraterritorial“ architecture and a performance area, centred on his place of residence and work, Schloss Prinzendorf. From 1963 onwards he has been presenting central elements of the play, arranged as a 6-day *Celebration of Existence* in the form of numerous *Actions* as well as in many different international spaces.

In 1998 a complete version of the six days and nights-play was realised for the first time. Ever since Hermann Nitsch's opus occupies a central position in the history of visionary, expanded notion of art concepts ranging from Monet to Turell, from Skriabin to Artaud, from the Living Theater to Schlingensiefel. In accordance with the synaesthetic character of his art, the dramatic structure of the *o.m. theater* is organised around an extensive body of work in the visual arts, music and literature, in which the artist has been able to develop the motifs and symbolism of his material and pictorial language, as well as its spatial extension and detailed „*Action scores*“.

ExistenzFest Hermann Nitsch und das Theater

March 26, 2015 – January 11, 2016



Lobkowitzplatz 2, 1010 Wien
andreas.kugler@theatermuseum.at
T +43 1 525 24 5315

And yet Nitsch's work has been displayed nearly exclusively in galleries, art societies and museums since the 1960s. As a result his opus tended to gain attention mainly in the visual arts.

As accompaniment to the development of the *o.m. theater* an extensive theoretical work evolved, in which Nitsch proposed studies of its historical contextualisation, cultural-historical development as well as corroboration of its reception history. The central motif and theme of Nitsch's art is the representation and transcendence of the tragic, and ultimately of death, through a process of cathartic realisation.

This desire is also related to his native city Vienna, which underwent all manner of cultural and political conflicts in the 20th century, ranging from imperial splendor and apocalyptic decline to difficult cultural-political reconstitution and search for identity after 1945. Born in the year of the annexation and hence at the end of Austria as independant state, the child Hermann Nitsch lived through air raids and the battle for Vienna. This traumatic experience certainly influenced his work.

From the mid-1960s his *Actions* gained attention not only in the field of visual art, but at the same time also as part of the performance and experimental theatre scene, attempting to radically extend art. This also illustrates how the language of form and aesthetics in the theory and practice of Nitsch's theatre also provided a suitable basis for stage performances, to which he subsequently was invited as director from the 1990s onwards.

Nitsch achieved impressive successes not only in directing Jule Massenet's *Hérodiade* at the Staatsoper in Vienna and Robert Schumann's *Faust* at the Opernhaus Zürich but also with the experiment of adapting the *o.m. theater* for a modern illusionistic proscemium stage of the Burgtheater in Vienna. In 2011 he was responsible for the stage design, costumes and direction of Olivier Messiaen's *Saint François d'Assise* at the Bayerische Staatsoper.

As an artist of the first Austrian post-war avantgarde and of Viennese Actionism, Hermann Nitsch has made a powerful and, to this day, controversial contribution not only to the process of redefining the position of contemporary art, but also to many fundamental disputes and discussions relating to the development of an open, liberal social and cultural-political atmosphere in the Second Republic in Austria.

Events

GUIDED TOUR WITH CURATOR HUBERT KLOCKER

Wednesday April 22, May 20, September 23, November 18, 2015, 4 p.m.

Tickets € 3, reservation recommended!

T +43 1 525 24 5310

KULTUR-CAFÉ - "DAS IST MIN LIB: DER WIRT GEGEBEN FÜR ÜCH HIE VMB DAS EWIG LEBEN"

What is the common ground of Hermann Nitsch's theatre and the medieval games of passiontide? Which differences are essential? During this guided tour we are discussing the *Orgies Mysteries Theatre* and after coffee and cake we oppose this theatre concept with the medieval games of passiontide.

Thursday April 9, June 25, October 15, November 19, December 17, 2015, 3–5 p.m.

Tickets € 12, students and annual ticket holders € 10

Reservation recommended!

T +43 1 525 24 5310

PERFORMANCE – "MIT MIR NITSCH!"

14 students of the Institute applied theatre (IFANT; management: Claudia Bühlmann) travel through Hermann Nitsch's theatre-universe on the search of self-awareness. The site-specific performance, exclusively created for the Theatermuseum, is a scenic commentary of the present exhibition. It represents the results of an aesthetic research, not only exploring its actual effects but also the theatre aesthetics and the cultural-historical context of the mystery plays and slaughtering rituals of Hermann Nitsch's action theatre.

Saturday September 5, Sunday September 6, 2015, 2 p.m.

Tickets € 10, students and annual ticket holders € 8

Reservations: office@ifant.at

GUIDED TOURS ON DEMAND

T +43 1 525 24 5310 or kulturvermittlung@theatermuseum.at

Press photos

Photos are free of charge in relation to the press coverage of the exhibition.
They are available for the download under www.theatermuseum.at/presse/



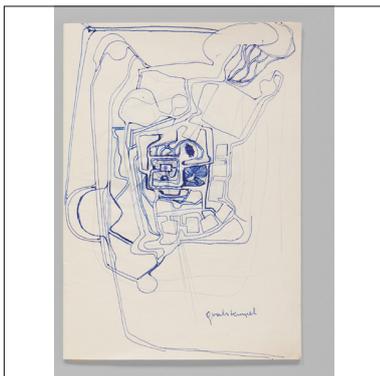
1_Hermann Nitsch, 5. Aktion, 1964
Foto Peter Jurkowitsch
© museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien



2_ Kostüm der Hérodiades, bei der Premiere
getragen von Agnes Baltza
in *Hérodiade* von Jules Massenet
Inszenierung: Hermann Nitsch, 1995
© ART for ART, Wien



3_Hermann Nitsch, Manuskript, 1965
Roter und blauer Kugelschreiber auf
Papier
© Österreichische Ludwig Stiftung Wien



4_Hermann Nitsch, Zeichnung, 1969
Blauer Kugelschreiber auf Papier
© museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien



5_Hermann Nitsch, 16. Aktion, 1967
Foto: Franziska Cibulka
© museum moderner kunst stiftung ludwig wien



6_Hermann Nitsch, *Oedipus*, 1970/2014
Partitur auf Relikt; Tempera, Filz- und
Lippenstift
Hermann Nitsch, *Oedipus*; 1990
Stucksulptur, Mullbinde, Ölfarbe
© Sammlung Hummel, Wien

ExistenzFest Hermann Nitsch und das Theater

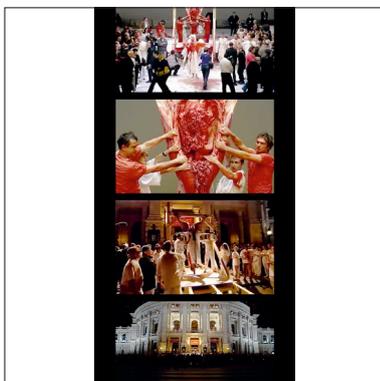
March 26, 2015 – January 11, 2016



Lobkowitzplatz 2, 1010 Wien
andreas.kugler@theatermuseum.at
T +43 1 525 24 5315

Press photos

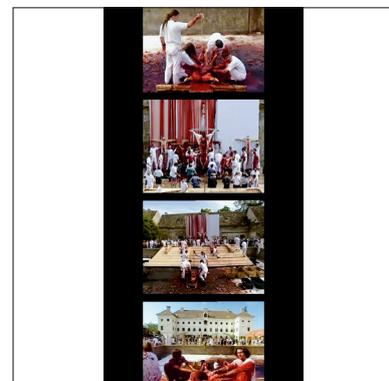
Photos are free of charge in relation to the press coverage of the exhibition.
They are available for the download under www.theatermuseum.at/presse/



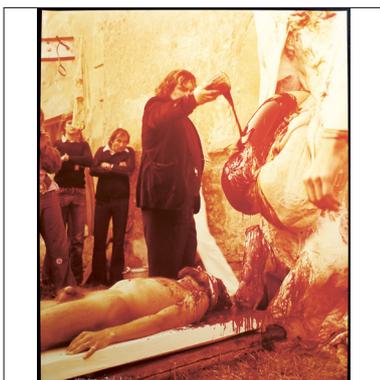
7_Hermann Nitsch, *102. Aktion*, 2005
Burgtheater Wien
Film: Peter Kasperak
© Filmstills: Peter Kasperak,
Hubert Klocker



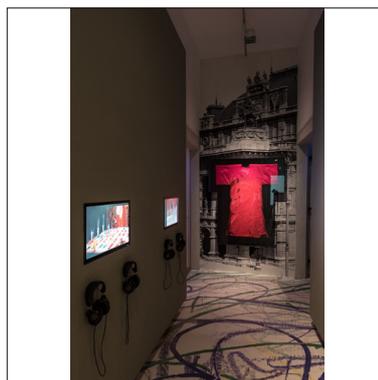
8_Hermann Nitsch, *Stiertrage*, 1998
Holz, Eisen, Blut auf Molino
© Nitsch Museum Mistelbach



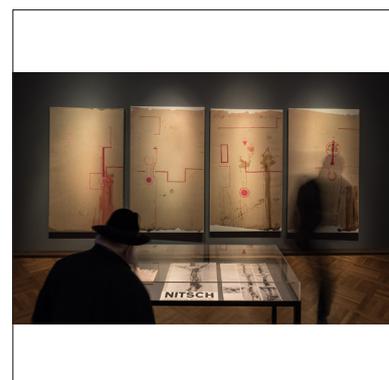
9_Hermann Nitsch, *6-Tage Spiel*, 1998
© Filmstills: Peter Kasperak,
Hubert Klocker



10_Hermann Nitsch, *50. Aktion*, 1975
Foto aus der Edition *Das Orgien Mysterien Theater*, Verona: Archivio Conz, 1977
© Sammlung Friedrichshof, Zurndorf



11_ExistenzFest. *Hermann Nitsch und das Theater*.
View of the exhibition
© Theatermuseum



12_ExistenzFest. *Hermann Nitsch und das Theater*.
View of the exhibition
© Theatermuseum

ExistenzFest Hermann Nitsch und das Theater

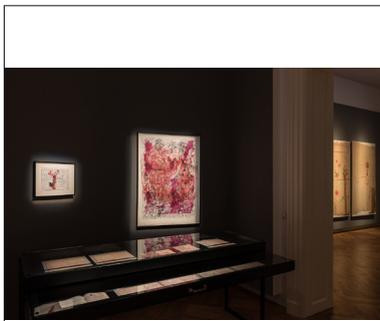
March 26, 2015 – January 11, 2016



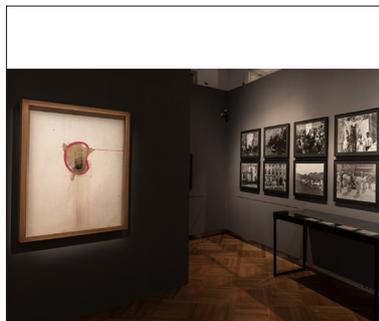
Lobkowitzplatz 2, 1010 Wien
andreas.kugler@theatermuseum.at
T +43 1 525 24 5315

Press photos

Photos are free of charge in relation to the press coverage of the exhibition.
They are available for the download under www.theatermuseum.at/presse/



13_ExistenzFest. Hermann Nitsch und
das Theater.
View of the exhibition
© Theatermuseum



14_ExistenzFest. Hermann Nitsch und
das Theater.
View of the exhibition
© Theatermuseum



15_ExistenzFest. Hermann Nitsch und
das Theater.
View of the exhibition
© Theatermuseum

Catalogue

ExistenzFest. Hermann Nitsch und das Theater

German / English

Edited by Hubert Klocker, Thomas Trabitsch and Michael Buhrs
and published by Hatje Cantz

The catalogue is available at the Theatermuseum's shop
at the price of € 35,-.

ISBN-Number: 978-3-77573-995-5

Contact

Andreas Kugler

Director deputy, Marketing and Communications

T + 43 1 525 24 5315

andreas.kugler@theatermuseum.at