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Conference: *Post-Utopia and Europe in the Performing Arts*

Dates: 23–24 January 2020

Location: Dance Studio, Unipark Nonntal, University of Salzburg, **Salzburg** (Austria)

Call for papers:

An international conference, *Post-Utopia and Europe in the Performing Arts*, will be held in Salzburg in January 2020, inviting historical and contemporary reflections on the theme of Europe and utopia in dance and performance. The conference will consider how past and present dance and performance represent and mediate ideas of Europe, and how European political, institutional, economic and social realities have affected the production and dissemination of these art forms. How do choreographic works address the topic of Europe in contemporary productions and how are they informed historically?

Our conference's aim is to create a systematic inventory of dance and performance works relating to the theme(s) of Europe from the 20th century to the present day. More specifically, we propose a framework for consideration of European-ness in dance and performance, organised in historical intervals of 30 years which mark key moments in European history: (a) the 1930s and the rise of nationalism, (b) the 1960s – social and political upheavals which radically transformed social, artistic and corporeal norms, (c) the 1990s and post-Cold War political reconfigurations of Europe, and (d) the current (pre-) 2020s echoes of these events.

The conference will also explore notions of utopia (as an idealised community) and post-utopia as tools for deciphering the images of Europe presented in dance and performance. We shall consider how these ideas have the potential to advance understanding of contemporary experiences of, and relations with, Europe: from the ideal of a transnational, unified European community, to the rise of right-wing nationalist and populist movements; from the hopes of refugee populations confronted with European boundaries, to the 2008 financial crisis and the protest movements it spawned such as the *gilets jaunes*. Our discussions will encompass both optimistic and disillusioned perspectives on the European Union project itself.

Europe's oscillations between utopia and post-utopia, central to numerous contemporary debates, are not only understood conceptually but lived, embodied, and experienced affectively. The corporeal practices of dance and performance can be seen as singularly relevant mediators between (socio-) political European realities and members of civil society; while the aesthetic practice of performance is an agent contributing to the – conceptual and emotional, individual and collective – imaginary surrounding Europe.

Post-Utopia and Europe in the Performing Arts will thus interrogate the position of dance and performance in the development, confirmation or subversion of European narrative(s) and probe the aesthetic and artistic mechanisms through which choreographic and performance practices enable Europe and European-ness to be debated and (re-)negotiated. Taking a similar diachronic approach, the conference will lastly aim to consider European-level artistic policy in historical perspective, facilitating urgently needed research on past, present and future models and networks of policy towards dance and performance.

Keynote speakers:

Milena Dragičević Šešić, Professor and former Rector of the University of Arts, Belgrade, Head of the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Management.

Second keynote speaker tba.

We invite abstracts of no more than 200 words, in Word format, on any of the issues noted above, accompanied by a short biography of around 50 words. The deadline for submission of abstracts is Friday 8th November 2019. For enquiries and submission of abstracts, please use the following email address: musik.tanzwissenschaft@sbq.ac.at

To note:

A networking/public discussion event will be organised in parallel with the conference, inviting representatives of the contemporary dance and performance scenes to discuss aspects of European-level contemporary arts policy. The conference will also incorporate an artistic intervention/workshop on a topic related to Europe.

The conference and networking event will take place concurrently with the PNEU (Performing New Europe) festival in Salzburg, showcasing artists of the EU-funded

network *apap* (advancing performing arts project) and is supported by the interuniversity focus area *Wissenschaft und Kunst* (Paris-Lodron University and Mozarteum/Salzburg).

We also plan to produce a publication, in which selected contributions to the conference will be showcased.

The conference will be conducted in English. We anticipate organising a second conference in due course, on a related topic, at Roehampton University, London.