



Just over 100 theatre artists and arts managers got together for the festival and network meeting **XCHANGES** for the conclusion of the funding programme **SZENENWECHSEL** from May 16 to 18 in Hamburg.

In coproduction with **kampnagel** and funded by the Robert Bosch Stiftung the ITI organised a three-day-event which presented some of the performances supported within the programme and invited all current cooperation partners to reflect transnational collaborations in panels, work groups and workshops.

XCHANGES kicked off with a cooking performance by **Showcase Beat Le Mot** and electro beats by **Monika Werkstatt** which created the ideal setting for intensive encounters between artists and arts managers from Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Moldova, Morocco, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Slovenia and the Ukraine.

The opening was followed by the two-part performance of **Theater Rampe & Teatru Spalatorie** reflecting 100 years of the women's movement by examining situations of women in Moldova and Germany.

The following two days saw ten more public performances of cooperations by **LIGNA & Informbureau, andcompany&Co.** and **MOMO Theatre Company, Theaterlabor Bielefeld & Kultura Medialna Dnipro, Theaterwerkstatt Hannover & Ahmed Elalfy** and **Adel Abdel Wahab & Alexander Paulick-Thiel**. Please see the full performance programme [here](#).

All current cooperation partners also gave insights into their cooperations with short project presentations. Please find a list of the projects in the [programme booklet](#).

The first two public panels raised crucial questions on transnational cooperation and critically analyzed which challenges the cooperation partners face.

These were some of the comments, claims and conclusions:





**HISTORY REPEATING – panel on Friday, May17th with Nora Amin, Helena Nassif, Adel Abdel Wahab, moderated by Hatem Hasan Salama**

>>> transnational cooperations should have long-term perspectives (like building friendships), not be project-based

>>> funding bodies should invest in own programmes rather the adopting to others' priorities and find international partners to team up with; create spaces which offer more equal working conditions

>>> discussing arts under pressure: the importance of sustaining a collective memory (not let others re-write our hi/stories, i.e. 'Arab spring'); collaborations are a strategy of survival

>>> any collaboration starts with the question: 'What is your context?' to then create a vision together – underlying power structures cannot be demolished straight away but must be reflected within the work

>>> no work of art is mono-cultural; the situation is complex; the artists aim to create frameworks to learn from each other, see interplay of curiosity <> foreignness as positive challenge

>>> idea to overcome power structures not through discourse but through shifting structures on an emotional/personal level, aim to create new imagination (post-nationalist/post-capitalist)

>>> constant reflection that we are all 'the other' and living through the same

>>> developments in the Arab world are connected to movements in Europe (one question raised was 'How long will European democracy last?') – artists are able to shift ideas from the symbolic level to a public and perceptible domain





**RECLAIMING SPACES – panel on Saturday, May 18h with Nicoleta Esinencu, Tina Keserovic, Lukasz Stawarczyk moderated by Gábor Thury**

The panel started with observations from individual countries:

Nicoleta Esinencu from Chisinau delivered a short input and pointed out that all self-sustainable structures – also in the cultural sphere – were destroyed in Moldova; economic exploitation is happening in many areas (in her work 'Requiem for Europe' she shows how the exploitation of textile workers is still being seen as an achievement), but she reckons that the idealization of Europe will end soon. How dare everyone referring to Moldova as a peripheric country? She does not perceive it that way.

Tina Keserovic commented on the situation in Croatia: The cultural scene is faced with a brain-drain; in Zadar where she is curating a festival, there is no independent scene, she 're-migrated' from Austria back to Zadar to take on the role of curator; the independent art scene from Croatia is now dependent on international money. Sustainable networks are needed to continue creating political art.

Lukasz Stawarczyk reported from Poland: After 2015 the censorship started straight away, but theatre is still able to make strong statements; solidarity from Germany and other countries is very important; strengthening civil democratic movements across borders creates hope >>> urge for artists to unite to defend principles of freedom!

Gábor Thury briefly quotes from Hungary: There is no support for (independent) arts anymore "the former government gave us money, the current one gives us topics"

>>> let's try and stop the reflection East <> West – the same questions pop up everywhere (example in Germany: Freiberg)



Some of the questions raised in the panels were followed up in **two work groups**.



## DEVISING A CODE FOR TRANSNATIONAL WORK

The group started off with discussing the paper by DutchCulture on "[Fair International Cultural Cooperation](#)" that followed up on the IETM report "[Beyond Curiosity and Desire: Towards Fairer International Collaborations in the Arts](#)".

For principles of fair cooperation the group also referred to the [Fair Practice Code 1.0](#) which defines the core values of solidarity, transparency, sustainability, diversity and trust.

The group is working on a summary of the points.

*... to be continued ...*

## NEW STRATEGIES FOR TRANSNATIONAL FUNDING

Examples of good practice:

>>> joint application process in several languages and short application form

>>> possibility of funding for research phase (no 'result' needed) as lump sum (without administrative extra burden)

Some claims and recommendations:

>>> hand in short exposé for a cooperation project and the funder further commissions the artists to do an application

>>> not think of foundations (or funders in general) as the enemy but build horizontal alliances to fight nationalist and populist forces together

>>> acknowledge the audience as alliances, too

>>> if working conditions are restrictive, use principles of subversion

>>> develop tools for long-term funding schemes rather than project-based support

>>> make all procedures transparent and fair

>>> respect minimum standards as regards fees

>>> strengthen independent funding bodies and set up network of funders internationally



## INFO SESSIONS

### MIP – MOBILITY INFO POINTS

Representatives of three European mobility info points were present at XCHANGES and offered introductions to their information portals and services: Christine Heemsoth and Jana Grünwald of [touring artists](#) (Berlin), Martina Hájková from the [Czech Mobility Info Point](#) (Prague) and Michiel van der Padt from [DutchCulture](#) (Amsterdam). It proved that many artists are not aware of the width of information available on mobility issues these info points can offer. [Mobility Information Points \(MIP\)](#) are information centres and/or websites in several European countries, and one in the USA, who aim to tackle administrative challenges that artists and cultural professionals can face when working across borders. Relevant issues can be around visas, social security, taxation, customs etc.

### BAN – BOSCH ALUMNI NETWORK

Dariusz Polok, the managing director of the International Alumni Center ([iac](#)) offered an introduction to the BAN – [Bosch Alumni Network](#). All Szenenwechsel-Alumni-artists since received an invitation to join the network. It offers a platform for keeping in touch, sharing events, announcing travels etc. The iac also offers Learning Exchange Grants for network members to visit each other and supports meetings, such as small impact sessions or practitioners' labs.



**Where From Here? – Closing panel with Anna Teuwen (kampnagel), Anne Fleckstein (Kulturstiftung des Bundes), Ahmed Eldeeb (Reflection for Arts, Training & Development) moderated by Helena Nassif (Al Mawred) and Andrea Zagorski (ITI Germany)**

Anne Fleckstein explained how the cooperation programme TURN was launched: It was initiated because there was little knowledge about the African scene and to promote the exchange between African and German artists. The first point of criticism was the imbalance of pairing one country with a whole continent. The participants were asking for achievements of the fund and for more transparency as why the programme was closed. This was linked with discussing principles of fair cooperation.

Anna Teuwen shares how kampnagel as an international production place is trying to be a solidarity institution. She explains how institutions need to create a network to share knowledge on questions such as how people without papers can be paid, how strategies to help with visa procedures etc. can be developed together. One example of how new spaces help creating new communities is the venue *Migrantpolititan* at kampnagel.

*... to be continued ...*



To sum up.... The meeting was very successful in offering a platform for exchange and creating a common ground among the participants who have now been invited to stay in touch through the Bosch Alumni Network.

Berlin, end of May 2019