International Conference  

Theatre and Trauma  

Processing the Experience of Violence, Persecution and War by Acting on Stage

Berlin/Germany March 3-5, 2011

Registration until February 15, 2011

Contact Lea Hermann: leahermann@gmx.de

Conference fee  
70 € (regular fee)
40 € (for students, trainees, unemployed and senior citizens)

including welcome reception, coffee breaks and lunches

To be paid to the bank account of
Behandlungszentrum für Folteropfer e.V.
Deutsche Apotheker- und Ärztebank
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Keyword: Conference Theatre and Trauma; Name, First Name

Speakers

- Gilbert Furian, Hartmut Richter, Mario Röllig, actors in the theatre project “Staats-Sicherheiten”,
- Clemens Bechtel, theatre director of the theatre project “Staats-Sicherheiten”
- Lea Hermann, medical student, author of the study “Processing the trauma of detention and disruption in the GDR through narrative theatre”
- Yvonne Sliep, School of Psychology, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa
- Natan Kellermann, psychologist, AMCHA – National Israeli Centre for Psychosocial Support of Survivors of the Holocaust, Jerusalem, Israel
- Melissa Eveleigh, director of the theatre production “Tariro”, Zimbabwe
- Armand Volkas, director of the Living Arts Playback Theatre Ensemble, Oakland, CA, USA

Location

Bundestiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur
Kronenstr. 5, 10117 Berlin

Public Transport

Station: U-Bhf. Stadtmitte, 5 min. to walk

Funding

The conference is funded by the Bundesstiftung Aufarbeitung.

Conference Language

Presentations and workshops will be simultaneously translated (German-English).
The target groups of the conference are caregivers, creative therapists such as art, music and performance therapists, counsellors working in the field of trauma and professionals working in theatre projects with victims of violence and marginalized groups.

Victims of violence often suffer from social isolation and stigmatization. They feel marginalized, misunderstood and rejected by their environment and society. These problems can only be partly addressed and solved by individual trauma therapy. Pilot projects with traumatized populations in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the USA suggest that narrative theatre may be a new and promising means of collective healing. The process of performing their own stories on stage mobilizes the creative abilities of traumatized individuals and groups to solve problems and conflicts, facilitates acceptance of difference, creates bonding and a sense of belonging. The lived and shared stories promote change both in the teller and in the audience as witnesses to the tale. Narrative theatre can give marginalized and victimized groups a voice, break their silence and isolation and create a network of support.

It is an externalization technique that helps people to step back and separate themselves from problems through a process of deconstruction, by which they can untangle themselves from judgement and self-blame. As a strategy of psychosocial intervention it can help to overcome fear, reduce stress and enhance coping strategies with traumatic memory.

In 2008 a group of political ex-detainees of the communist regime in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR, East Germany) presented their stories on stage in the Hans-Otto-Theater in Potsdam. Based on a concept by Lea Rosh and Renate Kreibich the theatre director Clemens Bechtel succeeded in composing a theatre play from the various individual histories of persecution. The name of the play is “Staats-Sicherheiten”, an allusion to the name of the East German secret service ‘Staats-sicherheitsdienst’ (Stasi). The play has elicited an enormous public and media response; on tour throughout Germany it seems to have changed public awareness of state repression and human rights violations in the GDR.

In a qualitative, scientific study the people involved in “Staats-Sicherheiten” were interviewed and its impact evaluated. The results of the study will be presented at the conference by its author Lea Herman and compared to the work of invited speakers from South Africa, Zimbabwe, Israel and the USA.