

17.30 „In Praise of Error” – a colloquium with Professor Jana Pilátová (Theatre Academy DAMU, Praha). About stigmatized people, theatre as laboratory of error, and the dangerous disease called grantosis

moderation – Joanna Drzewiecka - Kozielska

Jana Pilátová:

I encounter this subject working with different ensembles. I don't know what it is like in Poland, but in the Czech Republic, the independent groups and artists are in a similar situation as people excluded for social, ethnic or health reasons: today they are excluded by the “invisible hand of the market”. They and theatre people are similar pioneers of human experience, however some are under the care of the social resort, and the others – of culture departments. Usually, they are intuitively taken to be brothers and they are similarly stigmatized: they are unnecessary, strange outsiders – or a medial attraction. Perhaps this is why now, more than yesterday, they understand each other much better than the rest of the society can understand them; they can be allies. Yet, the situation is complicated by the financing policy, and grant lottery. The stigmatized, the stigmatizers and those who are fond of outsiders are losing the track of what is going on. Which is support, which is dishonour, which is a trap? Which is a necessary opportunity and which is an exploited one; what is work, creativity and learning and what is a swindle? There is a lack of criteria for what the “excluded” do or for what we do for them and with them. However, my observation about the search for criteria starts with error.

[...]

Everything that excludes us in life and that we are afraid of (mistake, fault, error) in theatre is very interesting to us. [...]

If at conferences we dared to speak about errors, and not about successes, we would sail against the winds of our times and we would encourage all the excluded. Isn't it easy: in fact, we don't know how we achieved our success, everything worked the way we wished. It may be a proof of our competence, but how to recognize where it lies? Whereas error points us straight to the moment which we can study, when something went wrong. To understand an error means to learn something more about ourselves and others, about what we do and the world we live in.