

The Continuum runs from 16 February 2004 until 25 April 2004

BLOCK 20

The Continuum

Ancient Technologies, Borders and Transcendence (featuring EXOTICA!)
De Amsterdamse School / Advanced Research in Theatre and dance Studies

DasArts

This block focusses on the continuum between contemporary practice and ancient Asian arts, ranging from Sanskrit theatre (Kutiyattum) of 1000 years ago to Thai classical painting to the Japanese Noh theatre of Zeami. How can contemporary practice draw from the conceptual frameworks of these ancient arts, for instance?

In particular, Block 20 extends beyond aesthetics to question where borders lie today. How can we initiate creative interventions which would transcend these borders? What are creative individuals suggesting as strategies for transcendence in the foreseeable future?

The block juxtaposes encounters with young asylum seekers who are suspended in a threshold zone between memory and a sustainable future in a new country; ethnic conflicts; and religious movements which have banned artforms based on charges of animistic shaman beliefs.

The urban Asian societies of today, with their increasing embrace of consumerism and functionality, have relegated traditional arts into rarefied, endangered spaces. How do these ancient practices fight back and continue to engage the life of the future? Some of them have harnessed the border itself to create further borders of 'high' esteem, such as the classical, hermetic value of the Noh theatre of Japan.

Block 20 further proposes the precision of these traditional forms (which are based on codified instruction) to be ancient technologies, programmed by books such as the Sanskrit Natyashastra, the bible of performance in India.

Concurrent with the strategy of ancient technologies, which advocates one way of transcending borders, the practice of tsunamii.net, a new media art group, also interrogates technology. Working with the students of Block 20, tsunamii.net points to the continuing limitations in the technological wave of the future.

In the middle of Block 20, the students will be introduced to EXOTICA! They will be encouraged to transgress borders through entering the performative dimension of everyday fantasy, bondage, adventurous sex of bdsm (bondage, dominatrix, sado-masochism), in sessions with Fetish Diva Midori, and Bangkok queer artist Michael Shaowanasai.

Juxtaposed with these ancient technologies and EXOTICA! will be the interrogation of museum culture in order to reveal the politics of representation. Alternative strategies to the museum for a new age will be examined with the students. Informed by inclusion. Inclusion is the antithesis of borders.

In the final phase of Block 20, students will bring everyday life, daily narratives, into the space of art. Challenging the borders of art itself, students will document narratives on the margins. Through a series of fractures, disjunctions and a subsequent wondrous reconstruction, the ultimate transcendence comes through the seduction of a specific viewpoint which disrupts and realigns.

Ong Keng Sen (SG) will be mentor to an international group of participants:

Michiel Alberts (NL), Oumar Mbengue Atakosso (SN), Alexandra Bachzetsis (CH), Hassan Choubassi (LB), Jeanette Groenendaal (NL), Brigitta Hacham (S), Rima Kaddissi (LB), Zbigniew Maciak (PL), Marta Pisco (P), Anat Stainberg (IL), Margreet Sweerts (NL), Ji-Hyun Youn (KR), Peter S. Petralia (USA)

Block 20 guest teachers will include:

Rick Emmert (J/USA), Akira Matsui (J), tsunamii.net (SG), Margi Madhu (IN), Margi Ramanunni (IN), Sakarin Krue-On (TH), Fetish Diva Midori (USA/J), Michael Shaowanasai (TH), Aida Redza (MY), Marian Pastor Roces (PH), Matthew Ngui (SG/AUS), Wu Wen Guang (CN)

Open Lab:

During the block, presentations and lectures take place that will be open to a small audience. You can find more information of the current block and presentations on our website: www.dasarts.nl

DasArts is a postgraduate 'think-and-do-tank' for theatremakers that is situated in Amsterdam and affiliated with the Amsterdam School of the Arts. Founded in 1994, DasArts offers an advanced study programme for theatre directors, choreographers, scenographers, modern mime specialists and other theatre artists. DasArts is a unique laboratory for the development of the **theatre of the future**.

A course of study at DasArts consists of participation in four study blocks within a period of three years. Each block lasts six months. During each block, a group of maximum fourteen students investigates an important current, artistic and/or socially relevant subject in depth. As a rule this is introduced by a prominent artist, who acts as a DasArts mentor for a period of twelve weeks. During the block, presentations known as 'Open Lab' or 'DasArts Dialogues' take place within DasArts and beyond. The other students work on an Individual Trajectory (IT) or a Final Project (FP). After successful completion of the FP, a Graduation Marathon follows in which diplomas are presented.

In September DasArts hopes to celebrate its ten year anniversary with a manifesto designed by students, ex-students and the graduates.

Individual Trajectory (IT):

Ali Cheri (LB), Robbert Kiem Hwat So (NL), Roberta Marques (BR), Dafna Moscati (I/IL), Michael Sahr Ngaujah (USA), Roy Peters (NL), Rebeca Sanchez Aguilar (MX), Alessandro Nico Savino (I)

Final Project (FP):

Lise Brenner (USA), Igor Dobricic (YU), Paulien Geerlings (NL), Thomas Johannsen (D), Christiane Lopes da Cunha (BR), Sarah Many (USA), Nancy Mauro-Flude (AUS), Nicola Unger (D)