

The Sick Room

Theater Phönix

The Concept – Contents and Performance

a) General

This project will be an experimental contribution by the Phönix Theatre to Ars Electronica '91 and will discuss and question the rigid mechanisms of society as well as conventional artistic ideologies in their own theatre.

It is the Phönix Theatre's first contribution to Ars Electronica and is something of a piece of virgin soil, yet at the same time it is a project of previous experiences and histories. "Der kranke Raum" (The sick room), as it is tentatively called, is a project in several parts. A piece of daytime and nighttime art.

b) Crew

From December 1990 to September 1991 all those involved performed experiments and tests on this theme. Reaction to individual experiences and events. The crew does have specifications like music, light, sound, stage, text, etc., but the result breaks these traditional specifications. The crew regards itself as being a thermometer of our surroundings, a measuring instrument for a complex and unfathomable environment. The activities and work of those involved converge to form this work. "Der kranke Raum" should question traditional acting. The actors become critics of their own years of theatre work and ideology.

c) Process

The preparations behind this Ars Electronica contribution cannot be compared to the usual rehearsals for a night at the theatre. It is much more a collection of impressions, a reaction to the environment, a reflecting of influences. It may best be explained with the term laboratory. A space, language and sound laboratory. The preparation for this project involved interactive work with the purpose of producing conflicts and friction from self-observation.

d) Result

As can be gathered from the foregoing description of the project, the result is not a traditional night at the theatre. It is a project in several parts, an attempt to combine various sectors of art in a multi-visual representation. The result should cause insecurity amongst the audience, listeners and participants and should question former habits of observation and reception and confuse habits of memory. The most up-to-date and modern media and information sources force the consumer into a very one-sided and restricted receptive position. It is in this very direction that our Ars project is aimed. It is a counterweight to all the newest forms of information flow that have already become a habit. The project is resistant to the usual media treatment of passing on information in terms of facts and interpretations of current happenings. The complexity of information in today's media society forces consumers to assume a very restricted and passive function. This project aims to throw light on these conditions. It will not only be set in the traditional framework (theatre hall), but will also be installed in several halls, i. e. the audience is forced to break away from the traditional habits of seeing and hearing. They will have to move through several rooms to get hold of the individual pieces of information, i. e. time and place should be found out directly on the spot. The contents are what is experienced on the spot, directly. No ideal superstructure but a direct confrontation with spatial and temporal impressions.

c) The Opening for the Public

In addition to the four days and nights where the public have access to the spatial and temporal installations, there will be theatrical, musical and cinematographic events at given times of the day and night to be heard and seen for the public to perceive. The intensity of impressions depends on how adventurous and perceptive the visitors are.

The "KRANKE RAUM" is a Production of Theater Phönix, Linz, by and with :

- *Sam Auinger*
- *Harri Gebhartl*
- *Rainer Jessl*
- *Martina Kornfehl*
- *Ferdinand Öllinger*
- *Franz "Flieger" Stögner*
- *Gerhard Thaler*
- *Fernando Toma*