

PRESS RELEASE

VON DENEN DIE ÜBERLEBEN OF THOSE WHO WILL SURVIVE

Premiere: Saturday, 13th September 2008, Schiffbau Halle 2
Further performances: 15th, 16th, 17th, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 28th, 29th September 2008

An nice evening based on an idea by Sibylle Berg and Raphael Gyax.

With contributions by Sibylle Berg, Gabriela Friðriksdóttir, Jeremias Gotthelf, Mathilde ter Heijne, Erwin Koch, Erna Ómarsdóttir, Jon Pylypchuk, Jónas Sen and Sina.

Director: Niklaus Helbling.

Actors: Christian Heller, Marcus Kiepe, Miriam Maertens, Karin Pfammatter, Fernanda Rüesch, Siggí Schwientek, Nicole Steiner and Susanne-Marie Wrage.

A production by the migros museum für gegenwartskunst Zürich and the Schauspielhaus Zürich.

In the project *Von denen die überleben / Of those who will survive* the migros museum für gegenwartskunst is entering the space of the theatre for the first time, and thereby pursuing once again the strategy of crossing the boundaries between the arts. As a starting point on the one hand serves an interest in working together with three visual artists and three authors, respectively their texts, thus forming an entity within the theatre space, on the other the existential question of the (im)possible survival of the human. The Icelandic artist Gabriela Friðriksdóttir uses as a point of departure Jeremias Gotthelf's novella *Die schwarze Spinne* (The Black Spider) (1842) newly interpreted with the dancer Erna Ómarsdóttir and accompanied by sound by the musician Jónas Sen. Through her text-space-installation Dutch artist Mathilde ter Heijne investigates the survival of a matrilinear social structure in South West China, that of Mosuo. Within this society marriage between man and woman is unknown. As a result this ethnic group has to struggle not only against traditional moral conceptions, but against the socialism of the People's Republic of China, and also against today's increasing sex tourism and all its side effects. This is met with scenes from a Swiss marriage, which the writer and journalist Erwin Koch has researched. The third duo, featuring the German writer Sibylle Berg and the Canadian artist Jon Pylypchuk, offer a darker future: a "victory of the animals". Are they suffering from depression these new masters of the world? Do they experience pain? Do they suffer? Do they have a father, and if so, are there family conflicts, or is the animal of the future simply material, with no burdensome and obsolete social attachments? The experience is accompanied by the singer and musician Sina.

About the artists

Sibylle Berg (lives and works in Zurich) was a puppeteer before she travelled to the West in 1984. She studied temporarily at the circus school *Scuola Dimitri* in Tessin and subsequently worked in a number of jobs. She began to write early on, initially publishing articles and reportages. Her first novel *Ein paar Leute suchen das Glück und lachen sich tot* (A couple of people look for happiness and laugh themselves to death) (Reclam Leipzig), was published in 1997. Other novels include: *Sex II* (Reclam Leipzig, 1998), *Ende Gut* (Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2004), *Die Fahrt* (Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2007). In 2008 she won the Wolfgang-Koeppen prize.

Through her drawings, sculptures, music experiments and videos **Gabriela Friðriksdóttir** (born 1971, lives and works in Reykjavik) creates a surreal microcosm peopled by hybrid, sexually charged beings that serve as metaphors for melancholy and excess. Her works distinguish themselves by an uncanny narrative structure, nourished by Nordic sagas, that breaks from rational logic. Exhibitions include: migros museum für gegenwartskunst (2006), the 51st Venice Biennial (2005), Akureyri Art Museum (2005, together with Matthew Barney).

Jeremias Gotthelf (1797-1854) first began to write at the age of 40, both in High German and in the Swiss Bernese dialect. His most outstanding work is the novella *Die schwarze Spinne* (The Black Spider) (1842), which renders an old myth into an allegorical narrative of Christian humanist notions of

good and evil. Embedded in an idyllically couched narrative framework it is also imbued with subtle social anxieties and tells the story of a pact with the devil.

The works of **Mathilde ter Heijne** (born 1969, lives and works in Berlin) frequently oscillate between social-political and personal-individual contexts, and consistently and quintessentially deal with feminine subjects. Herein she investigates human abysses, and dissects them with analytical precision. The emotional and irrational do not stand alone in her works, but are enriched by the artist with real documentary material. Exhibitions include: Shanghai Biennial (2006), Seoul Biennial (2006), migros museum für gegenwartskunst (2002), Berlin Biennial (1998).

Erwin Koch (born 1956, lives near Lucerne) is a journalist and writes radio plays and reportages for such publications as *Die ZEIT* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung Magazin*; between 1999 and 2002 he was a reporter for the German weekly magazine *Der Spiegel*. Koch became known for his finely researched "stories of human failure", which are outstanding for their narrative style, and always combined with facts and findings. He has won various awards and has twice received the Egon-Erwin-Kisch prize for best reportage. Publications include: *Wir weinen nicht. Zeugnisse, Reportagen, Berichte* (We don't cry. Evidence, reportages, accounts) (Rüffer & Rub, 2002), *Sara tanzt* (Sara Dances) (Nagel & Kimche, 2003), *Der Flambeur* (Nagel & Kimche, 2005).

Erna Ómarsdóttir (born 1972, lives and works in Brussels) completed her studies at the Performing Arts Research and Training Studios (PARTS) under the direction of Anna Teresa de Keersmaeker, and graduated in 1998. Since then she has worked as a dancer for numerous companies and choreographers, such as *Troubleyn* (Director: Jan Fabre) or *Les Ballets C. de la B.* Current projects include: *IBM – 1401, A User's Manual* (music by Johann Johannsson) and *We are all Marlene Dietrich FOR*. In 2002 and 2003 she was chosen by Ballet International as the best young dancer and received an award for choreography.

In his narrative sculptures, drawings and collages – most of them made out of simple materials such as toothpicks, glitter, paste and bits of wood – **Jon Pylypchuk** (born 1972, lives and works in Los Angeles and Winnipeg) uses the modernist psychoanalytical concept of the unconscious and mixes it with a tragic-comic totemism. His weird, intimate world of figures, half mammal or insect, half human persistently illustrate the everyday struggle for existence in a new way. Exhibitions include: MoCA Cleveland (2006), Saatchi Collection (2006), Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2001).

Jónas Sen (born, 1962, lives and works in Reykjavik) is a musician, composer and critic, and heads the association named *The Servants of the Light School of Occult Science*. In 2007/2008 he accompanied the singer Björk on her world tour as pianist/organist/harpsichordist.

Sina (born, 1966, lives in Fahrwangen) is the most successful singer in the Swiss German dialect. Her eight pop rock albums have all reached either gold or platinum status. Her latest album *In Wolkä fische* was released in Spring 2008.

!!INFORMATION!

For further information please contact the project curator, Raphael Gyax.
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For advance bookings (from 12th August 2008) and press-accreditation please contact the Schauspielhaus Zürich.
For more information please see: www.schauspielhaus.ch

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