

## New Realism and the Contemporary World

### The Re-enactments and Tribunals of the International Institute of Political Murder

Milo Rau

*Editorial note: This text is based on two sources. The first source was Milo Rau's contribution to the Contemporaneities-symposium where Rau, supported by his dramaturge Stephan Bläske, gave an overview of some of the methods and strategies in the work of the International Institute of Political Murder (IIPM). The second source was an interview with Frederik Le Roy which focused on issues that were left untouched during the presentation at the symposium.*

#### **A Theatre of the Real**

With the International Institute for Political Murder (IIPM), the theatre and film production company I founded in 2007, I always make trilogies. So far, I have made three such trilogies. The first dealt with re-enactment and consisted of *The Last Days of the Ceausescus* (2009), on the Romanian revolution of 1989 and the trial against the Ceausescu couple, *Hate Radio* (2011), on the genocide of Rwanda, and *Breivik's Statement* (2012), which was a re-enactment of parts of one of the speeches by ultra-rightwing mass murderer Anders Breivik. The second trilogy used trials and tribunals, which took place in Zürich, Moscow and Congo. After that I focused on Europe with *The Europe Trilogy* (2014-2016), and currently I'm starting a new trilogy of theatre projects that deal with the medium theatre and with theatrical effects. To be able to make three works concerning the same questions, both in terms of subject matter and representational techniques, allows me to really explore and eventually master a form without sticking to the same rules for too long. Here I want to primarily focus on the works using re-enactment and the trials because those seem to speak the most to the theme.

I first want to introduce the way we work in general and present some of the tools and methodologies we use to create our projects. When we founded the IIPM in 2007, we created a schematic map that traces the evolution of different artistic movements and their mutual relationships. For this map, we drew our inspiration from the famous cover of an exhibition catalogue by Alfred H. Barr Jr., the first curator of the Museum of Modern Art, entitled *Cubism and Abstract*

*Art* (1936) which presented a diagram of the historical development of the different styles, influences and movements of modern art. We made a kind of re-enactment of Barr's diagram, using the same style and graphics, to sketch out the different influences in our work – from romantic irony to New Journalism, from “the art of mimesis” to experimental ethnology, to name but a few. To explain our methodology, a few of the terms that we introduce in that diagram are useful.

Let's start with “investigative anthropology.” If I have to describe my work, I would state that I am an anthropologist working with film, theatre, media, politics and so on. This means that each re-enactment, theatrical trial or play entails long periods of intensive research, often supported by a team of collaborators. For *The Congo Tribunal*, for example, we spent about two years on doing research in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and other places. Such long research periods are not exceptional. They are informed by the work of researchers we engage and by interviews with specialists and testimonials by local witnesses. Importantly, our research is not only documentary: part of it is also the casting of actors, the development of the *mise-en-scène*, the writing of a script – all these I consider as research. It's difficult to distinguish between the different stages of research as they are all intertwined and inform each other.

This is also why I think our work is different from documentary theatre in its traditional sense. In documentary theatre, the main focus of the theatrical representation is on the presentation of preexisting documentary material. In documentary theatre, it is implied that what is being said on stage, has been said before. There are documents, sources, witness accounts to prove it. For me, however, documentary theatre is a *contradictio in terminis*. There are documents and then there is theatre and to go from one to the other will always involve a transposition. The transposition of historical documents creates something different: not a documentary theatre but, what I would call, the theatre of the real or also new realist theatre. There is this sentence that we often repeat and that is loosely based on a quote of Jean-Luc Godard: realism in theatre doesn't mean that a reality is reproduced but that the reproduction itself becomes real in the moment of performance. That is a perspective that is probably more performative than documentary. What counts for me is the reality of the moment of representation. What is real and what is not real at that moment? And that representation could be a witness testifying, a trial, a truth and reconciliation commission, a fictional theatre play, a museum (like in the work of Thomas Bellinck), and so on.

It is important to note here that the idea of blending fact and fiction, connected to the debates around the emergence of postmodernism, has become less and less interesting and is no longer a current issue for me. In my earlier period, I have made works – my first films for example – that were clearly inspired by the irony and deconstruction of postmodern cinema of the 90s. Postmodernism has certainly been an important influence for me, but with the foundation of the IIPM I clearly moved away from that. Instead of reflecting reality in an ironic mirror, the re-enactments of the IIPM like Ceausescus-project had a seriousness that was entirely different from a postmodern attitude. Instead of deconstructing truth or undoing realism, we paid meticulous attention to detail and the materiality of the historical reality. This method fits my larger political and intellectual vision which is entirely anti-postmodernist.

Even if my projects involve interviews, travels and other kinds of documentary research, the main research is always on this transposition, which primarily involves the production of a text that will be staged. Apart from one exception – the production *Breivik's Statement* based on the speech of Anders Breivik – the creative process of my theatre always involves the production of a text. Producing and understanding the logic of this text is already part of the creation of the *mise en scène*. There is no document prior to the creative process, instead the creative process produces the document. This also means that the document presented on the stage only exists as a finished document shortly before the première.

The next notion from the diagram I would like to shed light on is “The art of Mimesis” with the specification “Evreinov Tarde et al.” The Russian theatre director Nikolai Evreinov is a major influence on our work. Evreinov famously created a re-enactment of the storming of the Winter Palace three years after the historical event took place. Actually, Evreinov’s mass spectacle *The Storming of the Winter Palace* can hardly be called a re-creation because the events he supposedly re-enacted never happened. This illustrious moment of the revolution was originally just a rather quiet *coup d'état* executed by ten or twenty soldiers during the night. It was not this futuristic, Proletkult-like festival with hundred thousands of people that Evreinov made out of it. Interestingly, seven years later, so ten years after the Oktober Revolution, Eisenstein re-enacted the re-enactment by Evreinov and named his film *October: Ten Days That Shook the World* (1928), a documentary. Several years ago, when I opened a journal to read

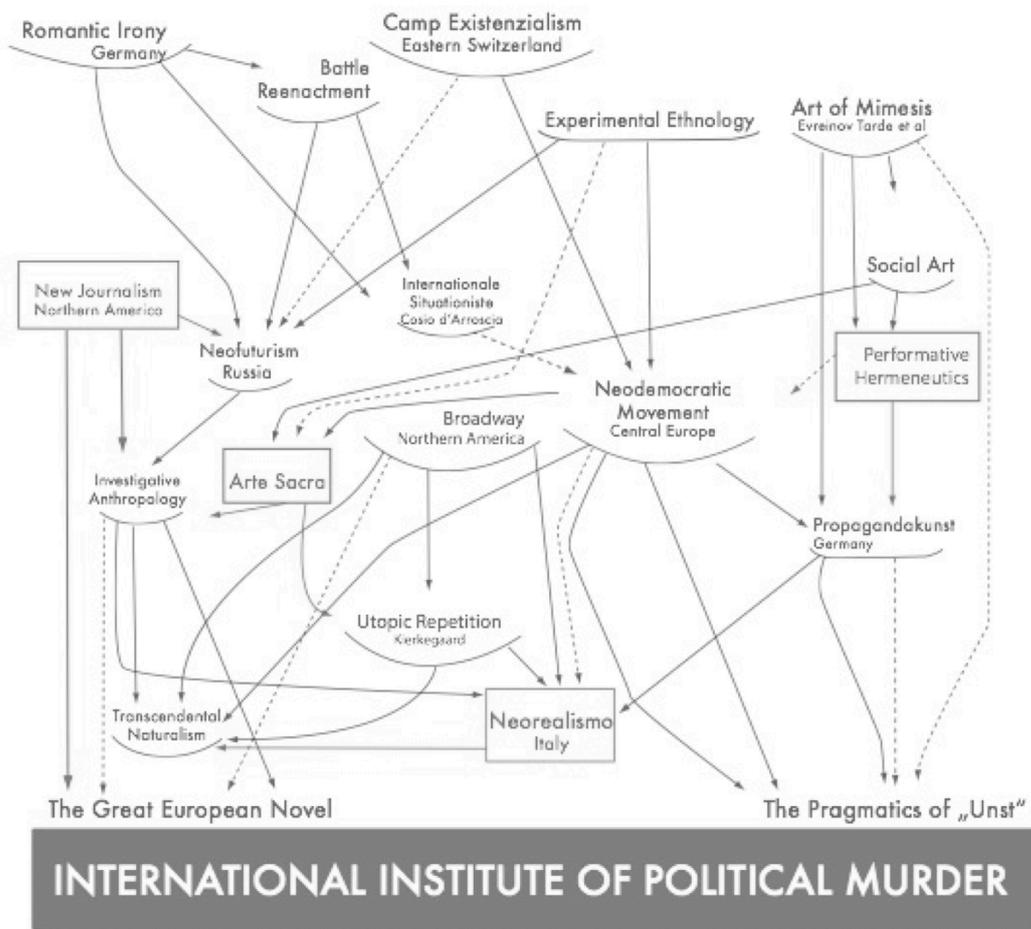
an article about the Gulag which referred to the Russian revolution, one of the images was a still from Eisenstein's film. The picture showing the re-enactment of Evreinov's re-enactment – which was totally made up – was presented there as a historical document. Of course, the reason for this mistake can be traced back to the fact that no pictures exist of what actually happened that night in October in Saint-Petersburg. For us, this is interesting. Not only has the picture entered cultural imagination as if it were a depiction of a real event, it also shows that the history of re-enactment actually starts with a lie.

This is for us “The art of Mimesis”: with the IIPM we always use institutional forms that exist outside of theatre and transport these to the stage. In this way, we have appropriated re-enactment, trials and juridical processes but also propaganda art (to which we will come back later). This brings us to one of the most important things for us in the diagram of influences on the IIPM: “Propagandakunst.” The main question of propaganda art, which of course has links to the revolutionary art of Evreinov and Eisenstein but is also connected with German fascism, is how to influence the opinion of a majority of people through art. How can art become real in a very pragmatic, political but also historical way?

Shortly after the creation of the institute we published the manifesto *What is Unst?* in a Swiss newspaper. “Unst” is of course “Kunst” (“Art” in German) without the “K.” The manifesto was presented as a dialogue between a scholar and a maestro of Unst who, as a specialist in Unst, would respond to all the questions the scholar has about Unst. The scholar asks the following: “What does the modern artist deliver to society?” The answer is: “The artist delivers a literal repetition of the present, through the past, for the future.” The scholar might ask: “What does that mean?” To explain this, it is useful to go deeper into the corpus of re-enactments we made.

### **Re-enactment and the Universal in the Concrete**

Almost ten years ago, we made the project *The Last Days of the Ceausescus*, which consisted of a theatre play and a film. The project dealt with the trial and the execution of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu on Christmas Day of 1989 in Romania. The execution by firing squad of the despot and his wife was supposed to be the inaugurating event of a new Romania. We organized a casting in Romania and found two famous Romanian actors, well-known for their work in theatre, television and cinema, to re-enact the entire one hour and fifteen



Mind map of the *International Institute of Political Murder*

minutes of the television broadcast of the trial of the Ceausescus. The only known images of the event are from that live broadcast, but show only a specific perspective on the event because the camera was fixed on the corner where the couple was sitting. We took this broadcast as our starting point, and by making a precise re-enactment of the broadcast – frame by frame, second by second – and placing it on the stage we were able to open up the camera's angle.

Our approach was more performative than theatrical. We made the re-enactment more like a choreography or a music play. The lack of "theatralization" meant that some parts were actually quite boring or chaotic because throughout the recorded trial about ten voices were talking – often even screaming – simultaneously. We did work on the acting, using techniques like method acting, but we rehearsed it as a music play, to create a complex ensemble that would be as exact a copy as possible. I'm fascinated by what happens when you re-create an event in scale one to one, so to speak. When we showed it on stage in the national theatre of Bucharest, it not only produced quite a shock, the only surviving son of the Ceausescu also pressed charges against the national theatre and our company because we used the name "Ceausescu." He lodged his juridical complaint on the fact that he was the copyright holder on the name of his father. We used that name illegally. In a very simple way, that case showed what was for us at stake in *The Last Days*, namely that after the downfall of the communist state the political power has been transformed into economical power. Moreover, because of that trial against us, the archives of the revolution were re-opened for the first time. The strange thing is that when you see the 180° angle of that trial, you see all the participants, also those who were originally outside the frame. Five of the people in this trial who were in the army at the time of the revolution, are now in the parliament, in the government or in some other international institution. It's really ghostlike, how you see them talk to their chef Nicolae Ceausescu during the trial, after which they will kill him and become social democrats.

This brings us back to the artist's statement about what the artist does, namely reproducing the present through the past for the future. If you type into Google "Ceausescu trial," then the first ten images that show up are all from our re-enactment, rather than from the actual event of 1989. Most of you will know the work *Seven Easy Pieces* by Marina Abramović which was shown in the Guggenheim Museum in New York, and consisted of seven re-enactments of the historically most important performance art works – one of which was hers. If you look for the original performances on the internet, you will always find

## Wie löst die Unst das Zeitproblem?

FRAGE: Wie steht die Unst zur Jetztzeit, zur Geschichte und zu den Problemen der Zukunft?

ANTWORT: Die Unst ist die Analyse des GENAU SO der Jetztzeit, welche aber im Augenblick ihrer Betrachtung bereits eine vergangene, also eine Vorzeit ist.

FRAGE: Die Jetztzeit ist eine Vorzeit?

ANTWORT: Oder umgekehrt.

FRAGE: Und weiter?

ANTWORT: Gegeben das gestische Voranschreiten der Unst im jeweils gegebenen Moment in beide Richtungen der Vor- und der Nachzeit, ist jede Erkenntnis des Ünstlers über das GENAU SO der Jetztzeit zugleich eine Handlungsanweisung für eine ebenfalls völlig gleichzeitig sich ereignende Nachzeit.

FRAGE: Die Gegenwart des Ünstlers ist also eine Handlungsanweisung an die Zukunft?

ANTWORT: Richtig. Unter der Voraussetzung natürlich, dass diese Anweisung nicht in irgendeiner übertragenen Weise, sondern ausschliesslich GENAU SO, also FÜR DEN GEGEBENEN MOMENT, also WÖRTLICH gemeint ist. Aber ein Ünstler spricht immer wörtlich, sonst wäre er kein Ünstler.

FRAGE: Vergangenheit, Gegenwart und Zukunft werden durch die Arbeit des Ünstlers ein und dasselbe?

ANTWORT: Natürlich.

FRAGE: Produziert ein Ünstler also Nachzeit?

ANTWORT: Selbstverständlich. Jeder Ünstler ist eine völlig objektive Weisungsagentur der Nachzeit.

FRAGE: Der Ünstler kennt die Zukunft?

ANTWORT: Richtig. Aber nur für den jeweils gegebenen Moment. Nur innerhalb der jeweiligen Recherche. Nur wörtlich.

FRAGE: Was also liefert der Ünstler der Gesellschaft?

ANTWORT: Der Ünstler liefert: eine völlig wörtliche Wiederholung der Gegenwart durch die Vergangenheit für die Zukunft.

Fragment from *Was ist Unst?* Published on the frontpage of the February 20, 2009 issue of the newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

Marina Abramović re-enacting them because this re-enacting was a true media event, with people taking countless photographs. While Abramović herself, in some cases, often had difficulty finding documentation of the original performances, there are now endless sources of her re-enactments online. The re-enactment of the original has become an image of the real event. The double is now more important, so to speak, than the original. This reminded us of what happened with Evreinov's re-enactment of the Storming of the Winter Palace of course, but also of what we did with *The Last Days*. In the present re-enactment of the images of the past, we produce how the future will remember that past. With *The Last Days* we created an image of a past that was being repressed.

That is also something you see in our piece *Hate Radio*. Here again there was a reference to propaganda style, but now we focused on the perpetrator's perspective on the Rwandan genocide in 1994. We invited actors to re-create a broadcast by one of the most famous radio stations in Rwanda back then, namely the racist fun-radio Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLMC), which played a key role in stirring up the extreme violence. With the re-enactment of the radio show, the stage became a place where all the hate and racism was present again. With this piece we moved beyond proper re-enactment because the show was a fictionalized version of the broadcasts we found in the archives. It's not an exact copy of a one hour radio show that actually took place. For example, we included a song by Nirvana in the playlist of the radio broadcast even though we knew that this song would not have been played originally. However, Nirvana was popular at the same time the Rwandan genocide occurred. After hearing the song in *Hate Radio*, many, even Rwandans, were convinced it was also played on RTLMC, while that was not the fact. That's how memory works.

That which is most visible and most frequently reproduced often loses its meaning and becomes the most invisible. The video of the last hours of Ceausescu is widely known and widely available, but strangely enough, nobody has taken the time to really look at it. It has its metaphorical and political significations that have been imposed on the image, but the challenge is to look beyond those. A similar idea is present in the projects for *The Europe Trilogy*: if you concentrate intensely and for a long time on the very concrete, on the lives of specific individuals, you will find the most unexpected and universal things. In a way, making those projects, is reaffirming the Hegelian idea that in the concrete you will find the universal, while the most universal is only materialized in the concrete. That idea is theatrical *par excellence* because the theater is *always* in the

moment, in the concrete, in the material existence. As an art form that is not dependent on reproduction and requires to be presented live, theatre is an art of the concrete. And it is in the concrete that the universal can be shown. This concrete reality can be a well-known image, like in *The Last Days*, but those images are not necessarily the starting point. In *Hate Radio*, for example, we shy away from the iconic images of the Rwandan genocide – no skulls, no machetes. With *The Europe Trilogy* we worked with the absolute concrete: I deliberately prohibited to say anything that had been made up. We only made a montage of the concrete, individual material of the autobiographical stories of the actors who had gone through particular historical or personal events. There was nothing preceding the montage we made. But such a montage creates a collective on the moment of the performance. This collective only exists on the moment of the performance, when the spectators understand that they too are somehow represented on the stage, even if the represented lives are very different from theirs or even if what they see on stage is not a fictitious “third figure.” Unlike Rimini Protokoll’s “experts of the everyday,” who aren’t theatre professionals, the people on stage are professional actors playing themselves. I’m interested in what emerges from that confrontation of the authentic and the artificial, of the concrete and the universal.

The last re-enactment we did was *Breivik’s Statement*. For this work we sort of re-enacted the speeches the Norwegian far-right terrorist and mass murderer Anders Breivik gave in court during his trial. For this re-enactment, we invited an actress to bring his speech on different stages in Europe, each time in an official building. In Ghent we presented it in the Aula, the ceremonial central hall of Ghent University. At the basis was an almost activist or rebellious gesture. I was impressed by the complexity of the speech, the rhetorics, the way in which Breivik mixes both left-wing and right-wing clichés. Apart from a few passages, the speech isn’t that extreme or different from what certain politicians claim today. I was interested in seeing what this discourse of a right-wing terrorist could produce when restaged, but restaged by an actress who very deliberately kept a certain distance while pronouncing the speech and made no effort at all to sound or look like Breivik. The focus was on the discourse and it was our intention to make the audience really listen to it, without immediately dismissing the text because it was written by a right-wing terrorist. From the outset, the piece was met with resistance and controversy. A week before the première, for example, the piece was canceled. The recurring scandals around this project became an integral part of it. Interestingly, the project took place before the



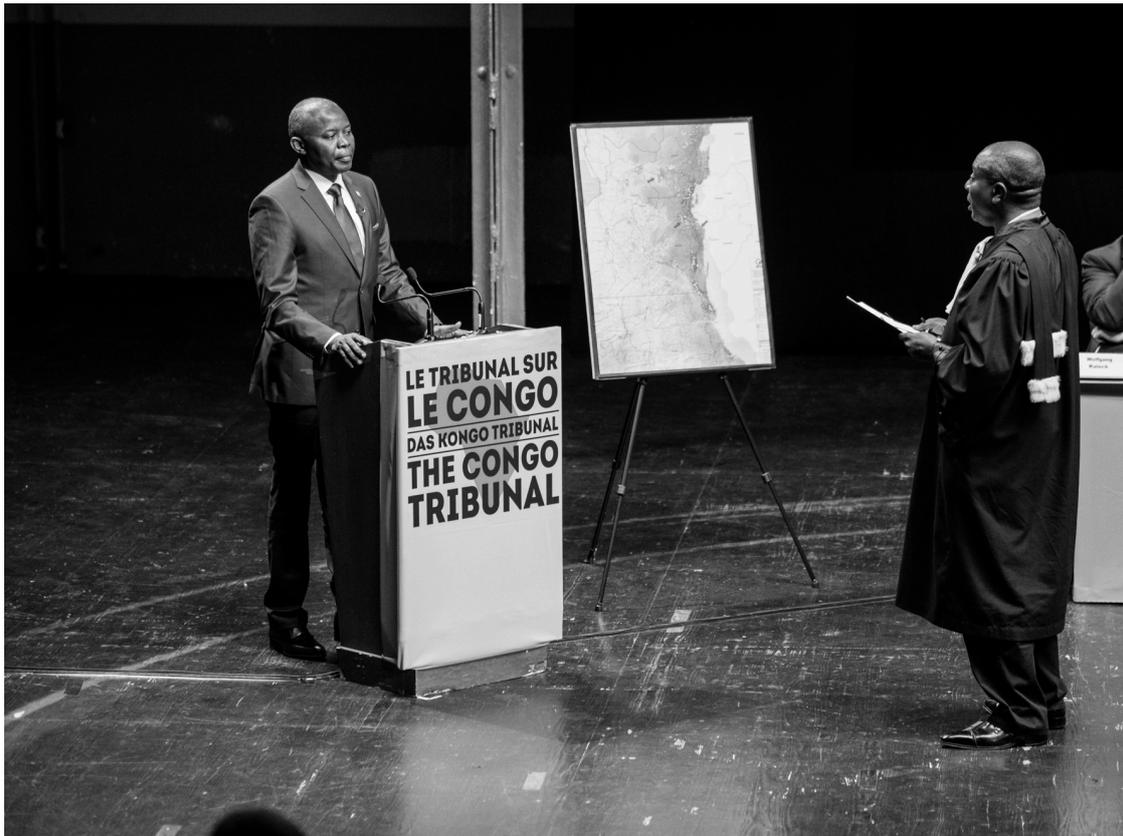
From left to right at the microphones: Georges Ruggiu (Sébastien Foucuault), Valérie Bemeriki (Bwanga Pilipili) and Kantano Habimana (Diogène Ntarindwa) (Photographer: Zeno Graton © IIPM)

terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels. These events transformed the discourse. This reminds me of Thomas Bellinck's contribution, explaining how certain works hold prophecies that might or might not be fulfilled, how the future in the reproduction of the past might actually be realized, even if only in part.

### **Propaganda Art, Theatrical Trials and Globalization**

I mentioned that propaganda art is a major influence. How can art be used to change public opinion? In 2010 we did a project called *City of Change* after we learned that demographical research had shown that between 25 and 30 percentage of Swiss people are immigrants – up until the fourth generation – and do not have the right to vote. An opinion pole had also shown that 80 percent of the Swiss thought that the immigrant vote was an absurd idea. So we decided to create a project that would try to introduce the right to vote for immigrants through art. The main influence on our idea of propaganda art is the theory by Gramsci who stated that power resides in the opinion of the majority of people rather than in the actual political institutions. Societal change can be achieved by influencing the opinion of the majority. Gramsci was, in a way, the first postmodern of the communists. In the Swiss town of St. Gallen, we created an interim government, wrote and presented speeches, mounted a media campaign with a campaign logo. It was a very rudimentary exercise in propaganda. After a month of doing this, we did another opinion pole which now showed that only 25 percent was against voting rights for immigrants. The film about the project tells this hopeful story. However, the film ends with a follow-up project we did in which we used similar techniques to organize a petition demanding a racist law – a harder version of the Nuremberg Laws. After one week we actually obtained enough support so that the law could be presented before parliament. Just to say that in Swiss democracy you can achieve almost anything.

After the re-enactment we somehow tied back to a more direct political form that was already present in *City of Change*, when the IIPM produced a series of trials which, in most cases, took place in theatrical settings. The first one, *The Zurich Trials* (2013), was against a Swiss right-wing newspaper. More recently we made *The Moscow Trials* (2013) at the Sakharov Center in Moscow. The name already shows that one of our major inspirations for these trials were the communist show trials – perfectly planned and controlled spectacles that were used by the regime to intimidate political opponents and influence the general population. With *The Moscow Trials* we re-litigated a series of trials against curators, art galleries and artists that took place between 2002 and 2012, not with



Chief prosecutor Sylvestre Bisimwa questions Presidential candidate and expert of the tribunal Vital Kamerhe during „The Berlin Hearings“. (Photo: Daniel Seiffert)

actors but with some of the real participants of the original trials. Apart from the curators and artists, some of the attorneys and even one of the judges participated, as well as several experts and even a famous ultranationalist right-wing populist. One of the artists participating was the only member of Pussy Riot who was not in the labor camps at that time. All of them got the opportunity to make their case again before a jury of real Muscovites who, at the end of the trial, could decide if art won or not. The idea was to show what would happen if the original anti-artistic trials would not have been show trials, set up by the Russian regime and with a predetermined outcome, but real trials. In the end, with a very close vote, art won.

The last trial we did was *The Congo Tribunal* (2015), which was made on location in Congo with an international cast and which consisted of both a film and a theatre part. In it, we wanted to investigate the causes of the civil war – sometimes called the Congo war or even, due to its enormous scale and the huge number of victims, the “third world war” – that has been raging in the Great Lake Region for more than 20 years now. We did three symbolical trials, two of them on the economic underpinnings of the conflict, which focussed on industry for natural resources and the deportation of people, a massacre which was more or less caused by the UN, together with the Congolese Army. The other tribunal was organized in a city in the middle of the region Bukavu where the civil war was raging. We invited judges from the International Court of Justice in Den Hague, Congolese judges but also rebel leaders, government representatives like the minister of interior and citizens who survived the massacres, some of which testified anonymously. We worked closely together with some political parties. After *City of Change*, this project was our first try to have a direct impact on politics and on public opinion.

A question that is asked often to me with regards to these projects is what my stand towards globalization is and how I, as a European, relate to those different realities given the history of colonialism for example. There are two ways to think globalization. The first way is really tragic. Take the Rwandan genocide for example: you do not have to be a paranoiac to realize that this genocide is also, even primarily, a European genocide. The same goes for the conflict in the Great Lake region in Congo which we dealt with in *The Congo Tribunal*. If the natural resources that power our computers and telephones were not found there, or if our phones and computers would be produced in Rwanda or Congo instead of Taiwan or South Korea, those conflicts would probably not have happened the

way they have. Showing the connections with our way of living makes the networks of culpability in globalization visible. That is the reason why we “Europeanized” the radio show in *Hate Radio*. Changing the ratio between African and European songs helped to emphasize that this crisis was a globalized crisis. It was the first globalized genocide committed on the tunes I, as a youngster, was listening to at the same time.

A second way to think globalization is culturally. I am astounded that in theater we continue to stage the plays of Chekhov or other canonic dramatists. Why don't we try to create contemporary writings that reflect on our globalized reality? Why do we do Shakespeare and not Ceausescu? Why Euripides and not the war in the Great Lake region? Why do we reproduce the tribunals in the plays of Büchner, instead of creating tribunals in theatre that reflect on the injustices of today? Why don't we create new plays that speak about the revolutions of our time across the world? This questions primarily concern theatre because the contemporary visual arts, cinema and popular culture are already totally globalized. My children know more about American and African music than they do about German music but they will, eventually, know the German theatre a lot better than American or African theatre. In theatre we are behind on globalization. Theatre remains traditionalist and Eurocentric. It is supported by a system that allows my plays to travel to Singapore, to the United States, to Africa, to everywhere, but that pseudo-globalism borders on neo-colonialism. We see this in France: the French look at what the Germans are doing in theatre and they do it themselves ten years later. Today they start to work like Frank Castorf twenty year ago. That's very sad and strange at the same time. In music it isn't possible to make the music that was made ten or twenty years ago. But in theatre it is. That's why there is a ridiculous colonialism in theatre, something I fight against. So, there is an economic side to globalization with often very tragic effects, but there is also another form of globalization, that is an interest that is truly ethnographic. If we use an ethnographic approach to German theatre, we will quickly recognize the enormous influence of Protestantism in the way theatre makers work with space, the way of acting, the overall minimalism and so on. It's interesting to consider that, not only in Germany but also in other global contexts. That is the kind of globalism that interests me.

I have always tried to create an art that you could be called “global realism” because *I am* in Congo, just like I am in Romania or Russia. I am there not only



Setting „The Kongo Tribunal“ at Sophiensaele Berlin  
(Photo: Daniel Seiffert)

because I consume products which, in our globalized economy, in part have their origin in those localities, but also because our histories are interconnected. Switzerland, Germany or Europe *are* or *have been* in Congo and Rwanda. Local perspectives are important but my perspective is also local. When I was in Rwanda, I really tried to talk about myself and situate myself in a direct way. Moreover, we have worked in central Africa since six or seven years now and have built strong relations. We discuss and exchange thoughts and sometimes, after a few years, we know what we want to work on, what could be an interesting project.

Take Russia, for example. When I was very young, growing up before the fall of the wall in 1989, I was very attracted by the idea of communism. My parents were Trotskyist. Given that history, the idea of making a project in Russia was very exiting for me, so when I was invited to create a project on the Gulag I immediately proposed to do something about the second show trial of 1937. After one and a half years in Moscow, I saw that what happened in the thirties in the Stalinist show trials was being translated to the present with the trials against artists and curators, and eventually also against Pussy Riot with whom I had been in contact. The action of Pussy Riot that unleashed the scandal and led to their incarceration happened when we were working on a first version of *The Moscow Trials*. Only after two years with many side steps we eventually created *The Moscow Trials*. Every time it's a long process. And in these different local contexts, I enter with a certain framework, for example about justice and injustice, but within the set-up the trial allows for other frameworks in which the participants can place their own reality. During *The Congo Tribunal* for example, one of the participants very strongly used the tribunal as his own platform to promote his candidacy for the presidency. I often hear the critique of Eurocentrism, implying that my European perspective would dominate, but I would also get the critique that I allowed this person to use the trial as his platform for local political reasons. The same can be said of some of the ultranationalist interventions during *The Moscow Trials*. These different and often diverging points, however, should be allowed to meet in the trials.

### **Coda: Theatre and the Voyeuristic Impulse**

Returning to the question of documentary which I addressed at the start of the talk, I do want to stress that it is often important for the spectators of my theatre plays to know that what is being presented on stage has really happened once before – even if it has been transposed. It helps to pass through the trauma.

Therein lies the performative power of the sentence "based on actual events" at the start of a film or novel: it provokes an emotional expectation which is very different from the expectation we have as a spectator when we go to see Shakespeare. While in rhetoric you have to implement a *captatio benevolentiae* in the start of a speech to capture the goodwill of the audience, the "based on actual events" induces the spectator's instinctive voyeuristic impulses. My theater induces from such a voyeuristic *captatio*, which, rather than rhetoric, is a question of "Pavlov": it is provoked by the theatrical situation as such. The theatrical effect, in my opinion, does not stem from an intellectual interest but should be understood in relation to the moment of the performance. It is no coincidence that in 2017 I will make a piece called *The History of Theatre* in which I will reflect on the machinery of theatre, on voyeurism, on the myth of authenticity and on the voicing of politically provocative opinions – all these elements that make us feel addressed but also aggressed by what happens on a stage.