

Theatres in crisis and the political turn

In recent years we have experienced a radical contestation of the post-political vision through both economic and social crises, triggering a political turn across the arts, a turn that questions the effectiveness and potentialities of theatre. In places undergoing radical crises, such as Southern Europe, we have witnessed a series of theatres occupied by cultural workers, amongst these are Teatro Valle in Rome and Embros in Athens. In these theatres questions regarding the fugitive relationship of the political, the cultural and the social are practically examined. Agamben proposes a perspective on the current crisis suggesting that this is a moment in which 'the doctor has to judge, to decide if the patient will die or survive ... the day in which this decision is taken are called *crisimoi*' (2013). Leaping off from this position contemporary forms of critical political theatre practice might then seek to produce 'crises' that challenge the structures of power.

This paper will examine such issues through a discussion of the occupancy of the Embros theatre at the outset of the economic crisis. The evolving organizational structure and production programme of the occupied theatre spatialised debates regarding critical theatre practice through diverse forms and aesthetics of political theatre. What forms of theatre practice might emerge in a 'state of emergency' and how might such practices situate themselves critically in relation to the histories of theatre practice? This paper seeks to theorise the potential role and forms that political theatre might institute in the coming years within the changing socio-political landscape in Europe.

Bibliography

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Biography

Gigi Argyropoulou is a researcher, director and scholar working in the fields of performance, theatre and cultural practice based in Athens and London. Gigi has initiated and organised festivals, performances, conferences, actions and cultural collaboration projects both inside and outside institutions. She is a founding member of Mavili Collective, Institute for Live Arts Research, Kolektiva Omonia and F2

Performance Unit/Mkultra. During the last twelve years her artistic work has been presented in theatres, festivals and found spaces in Greece, the UK and throughout Europe. Gigi received the Routledge Prize for PSi 18 and papers have been published in journals and magazines. She has taught at Universities and drama schools in UK and Greece. Currently a Research Fellow in Birkbeck University and PhD candidate in Roehampton University. More information: www.gigiargyropoulou.org