

Theatre/Activism: Performing Public Interventions (advanced level, 7,5 ECTS)

The course analyzes both historical and contemporary examples of the myriad intersections between theatre, performance and political activism. Apart from demonstrating how the stage has been and continues to be a necessary public forum for political activism and identity politics, the course also explores how social activism in the public realm can be analyzed using theories and methods from performance studies. It focuses on how notions of play, theatricality and performativity can help us understand public interventions that fight discrimination and marginalization and demand democracy, welfare and human rights. A key concept is the idea of “playing politics” which will be discussed from multiple perspectives and illustrated with numerous examples from the performing arts (ranging from conventional stage performance to stand-up comedy, radio and TV theatre, music videos and concerts, performance art, as well as demonstrations and other cultural performances in the public space), literary texts, movies and the visual arts. The course also outlines how the theatrical methods and strategies devised by HIV/AIDS activists inform the public interventions of the global justice movement. A final aspect will be the growing instances of violent encounters in large-scale protests and how these contrast with the idea of playing politics. The course addresses students in performance studies, art history, film and literature studies and other aesthetic disciplines as well as gender studies, anthropology, ethnology, political science and sociology.

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