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Call for Papers for the Fourth Issue of the Polish Theatre Journal

The editors of Polish Theatre Journal announce the open call for articles for the journal's coming issue, with the theme 'Post-Theatre and Its Allies: New Experiments in Polish Theatre.' The deadline for proposals for the fourth issue is **18 April 2017**.

Polish Theatre Journal (PTJ) is an online English-language research journal examining contemporary Polish theatre and performance, which is published twice a year by the Zbigniew Raszewski Theatre Institute in Warsaw and the Department of Theatre Studies at the Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw.

In the fourth issue of PTJ, we focus on new practices in Polish experimental theatre. Our starting point is the intuition that in recent years a new movement within Polish theatre has developed, driven by a set of objectives and methods distinctly different from those utilized in previous decades. Key artists of this new movement, in our opinion, include Anna Karasińska, Marta Górnicka, Wojtek Ziemilski, Marta Ziólek, Grzegorz Laszuk, Wojtek Blecharz, Weronika Szczawińska, Anna Smolar, and choreographers affiliated with the Center in Motion, Warsaw. Their works have common elements, but to date these similarities have attracted insufficient attention from Polish theatre critics.

We intend to fill this gap, making an effort to formulate a more precise definition of this new phenomenon while determining its distinctive features. In the hope of stimulating further discussion, we propose to refer to this new movement as post-theatre. This seems justified for one fundamental reason: almost all of the artists mentioned above experiment with a formula of theatre that is acutely economical, devoid of traditional spectacular attributes – it can be said that they deprive theatre of its typically understood theatricality – while intentionally situating their efforts in the institutional framework of theatre. Often the very phenomenon of theatricality becomes the focus of their attentions. They therefore remain part of theatre yet make various attempts to escape it at the same time.

Crucial features of post-theatre thus understood may include:

- reducing the level of theatrical fiction (in post-theatre performances, the artists on the stage are rarely actors performing previously prepared roles, but are performers performing tangible actions; the settings does not create an illusion of a represented world and objects retain everyday purposes: a piece of cardboard remains a piece of cardboard, a floodlight remains a floodlight (these objects only take on metaphorical meanings occasionally)
- tendencies toward auto-thematic or autobiographical narratives (which can be understood again as proof of an aversion toward traditionally conceived theatricality)
- sophisticated attitudes toward the notion of spectacle (post-theatre artists often admit to finding inspiration in the achievements of American *postmodern dance*, especially Yvonne Rainer's *No Manifesto*, beginning with her famous call 'No to spectacle'; sometimes their aversion toward external spectacularity is supported by diagnoses found among French

situationists. At the same time, some post-theatre artists make the spectacle of contemporary culture an important subject of their work: they recreate its mechanisms on stage, intentionally exaggerating them and presenting themselves as its satisfied or rebellious participants)

- conceptual approaches to a theatrical situation (post-theatre artists very frequently design their performances to reveal one or at most several precisely constructed theatrical situations; what the audience observes is primarily the development of possible variants of such situations, their internal mechanics; this is yet another way in which post-theatre reveals its auto-thematic interests: it makes the structure of dramatic action its own subject)
- an aversion to treating the local theatre context as privileged (the post-theatre movement is perhaps the first movement in the history of Polish theatre that does not orient itself toward achievements of local artists from previous generations, but instead toward selected aspects of the experiences of the international avant-garde, and not only those related to theatre but also to dance, visual arts or performance arts).

This last quality seems to us especially worthy of attention. We will therefore welcome contributors' reflections on artistic strategies implemented by post-theatre artists accompanied by attempts to place these upon a wider background, in the contexts of theatrical and performative traditions distinct from the local contexts. We believe the practices of Polish post-theatre are to be interpreted in relation to important international phenomena of theatrical arts of recent decades, especially conceptual choreography (Jerome Bel, Xavier Le Roy, Boris Charmatz), new documentary theatre (Rimini Protokoll, Gob Squad) and so-called performative theatre (Forced Entertainment). To widen the terminological provocation, we inquire explicitly if symptoms of post-theatre are being noticed in the world, and if so which symptoms are being noted, and whether Polish experiments are a part of an international phenomenon tentatively diagnosed by specific theoreticians (an example could be a discussion around Josette Féral's concept of 'performative theatre'). In this context, we are also interested in attempts at theoretical conceptualizations of these phenomena not exclusively related to its Polish instances. We invite articles that elaborate on such preliminarily formulated diagnoses by analyzing them in detail, supplementing them with additional contexts or questioning them from specific critical perspectives.

Abstracts of proposals (summaries as well as articles may be written in English or Polish) of up to 300 words may be sent to the editors: ptj@instytut-teatralny.pl or submitted via the PTJ website: www.polishtheatrejournal.com. The deadline is 18 April 2017. The lead editor of the fourth issue of PTJ is Dr. Tomasz Plata.