

CALL FOR PAPERS

BAUSTELLE Brecht 2024

Actualizing Brecht: Current and Historical Practice-Theory Structures

Workshop / Performance / Public Event

Literaturforum im Brecht-Haus, Berlin, 13 December 2024

Every actualization of a text or thought by Bertolt Brecht takes place within particular organizations, with specific media tools, for a certain group of contemporaries in a particular place. What appears at the moment of the creation of / with / about Brecht's theoretical and artistic practice is conditioned by its institutional, economic and geopolitical location and the respective understanding of theoretical and / or artistic practice. This applies not only to artistic but also to academic fields of work. Any writing about Brecht's theatrical theory and practice, any reading process, any performance of Brecht's texts is a transactional and transformative actualization that takes place in a particular situation and material infrastructure for and / or with specific contemporaries.¹

In cooperation with the Literaturforum im Brecht-Haus and the AG Schauspieltheorie (Working Group Acting Theory) of the Gesellschaft für Theaterwissenschaft (German Society for Theater Research), the International Brecht Society invites contributions from early career researchers and artists who will examine these conditioning structures of practices aimed at actualizing Brecht as author, thinker and theater maker in a public workshop: Which historical and current structures of practice are engaged when we actualize Brecht as author, thinker and theater maker? To what extent does Brecht himself operate with various theoretical and practical structures, recognizable in the concept of "interventionist thinking,"² which he developed in the early 1930s in the context of the *Threepenny Trial*, for example, but which changed during his exile years to become in the early 1950s dialectical theater,³ something newly envisioned in "From Epic to Dialectical Theater 2"?⁴ Which and whose present was or is meant, which and whose perspectives are synchronized or collectivized and to what extent are they experienced differently as simultaneous? These questions also include reflections on the economic and geopolitical localization of our own artistic and / or scholarly practice. To

¹ See Steffen Martus, Carlos Spoerhase, *Geistesarbeit. Eine Praxeologie der Geisteswissenschaften* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2022), 21ff.

² Brecht, "Eingreifendes Denken" (1931), BFA 21 / 524-525.

³ Brecht, "Notizen über die Dialektik auf dem Theater" (ca. 1954), BFA 23, 299-301.

⁴ Brecht, "From Epic to Dialectical Theater 2" (ca. 1954), in *Brecht on Theatre*, Co-edited by Marc Silberman, Steve Giles, and Tom Kuhn, 3rd revised and expanded edition (London: Bloomsbury Methuen, 2015), 300-301.

what extent did and does the mediation and reception of Brecht differ in East and West Germany after 1945, for example, and how did it proceed in other geopolitical contexts, for example in countries of the Global South? In what contexts were Brecht's texts used and are they being used today? To what extent do differences emerge depending on the institutional framework (e.g., universities, art academies, acting and theater schools, municipal and state theaters) in which this work was and is carried out? What are the specific conditions in relation to the practices' situatedness, the urgency in the flow of time of the respective present, physical routines, or material objects, in which artistic and / or academic work with / on Brecht is currently taking place or has taken place? To what extent are these questions especially virulent in the present time of digital transformations, in which an ideological pressure of illusions -- perceived by Brecht in the Weimar Republic as originating in the theaters and other 'public institutions' -- is exerted by the Internet and in particular by AI-generated ideas in social media?

Abstracts for 20 to 30-minute lectures or project presentations during the workshop should be submitted in German or English. Please send your submissions with an abstract (300 words) as well as a brief biography (150 words) by 1 September 2024 to: baustelle@lfbrecht.de

A lump-sum honorarium of 300€ (incl. VAT or sales tax) is planned for those contributors selected to present at the workshop (depending on additional funding partners for the Baustelle Brecht). During the workshop, the contributors will work with established representatives and senior researchers from the International Brecht Society, the German Society for Theater Research and beyond to discuss practices of actualizing Brecht's work and their situatedness on the basis of different practice-theory structures. The event is not only conceived as an intergenerational and international workshop, but also as a public literary and cultural mediating format that can be visited on site in Berlin.

Organizing contact persons:

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