## **Re-enacting Post-revolutionary Theory**

With Armen Avanessian, Anke Hennig, Sir Henry, Janine Kress, Simon Mantei

Roter Salon, Volksbühne am Rosa Luxemburg Platz May 16 2019, 8pm

On this evening we will stage a dramatised reading of the debate about the term "theatre" that originally took place at the State Academy of Artistic Research (GAKhN) in post-revolutionary Russia. The re-enactment will intertwine past and present, artistic and academic methods, in other words, will practice the theory of theatre by theatrical means.

The State Academy of Artistic Research (GAKhN), a large interdisciplinary network of artists and researchers, was founded in 1921 by Vasily Kandinsky and Anatoly Lunacharsky, Commissar for the People's Education.

The body of our performative investigation concerns the "protocols" (that is, the minutes of the GAKhN discussions) which were made in large numbers while working on the central, unrealised project of the Academy—their Encyclopaedia of Artistic Concepts.

We understand the debates at the GAKhN as being a varietic form comparable to the forms of the literary sketch (ochers) and the experimental correct (étind) of the avantaged.

of the literary sketch (ocherk) and the experimental concept (étjud) of the avant-garde constructivists.

We learn from the minutes that the discussion of Vasily Sakhnovsky's thesis on the term

"theatre" was so controversial that Pavel Yakobson was asked to prepare a thesis and a talk

on the same subject.

The two talks and two theses by two scholars on identical subjects sparked a debate that

lasted over several months in 1926 and took six discussions in total.

In the debate Yakobson took a position from the point of view of a philosophy of theatre.

For him it was essential who has which kind of consciousness of what in theatre, while his opponent, Sakhnovsky, took the point of view of poetics. For him the quintessential question was, what is created in theatre? He saw the actor as the one and only artist of theatre. Although the actor creates a mimesis of actual actions in life, the fiction of action created by the actor differs from all kinds of other actions by its complete freedom from restraints (as in religious or magical rituals, mass demonstrations or dances).

Drawing by Aleksandr Gabrichevsky

A collaboration between Armen Avanessian & Enemies at the Volksbühne Berlin and the research project "Artistic Research. Strategies for the Acquisition and Documentation of Knowledge used by the State Academy of Artistic Research in Moscow (1921-1930)" at Ruhr University Bochum (lead by Nikolay Plotnikov), funded by the DFG, organised by Anke Hennig.

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Entrance fee: 8 EUR, Tickets https://www.volksbuehne.berlin/de/tickets/527/informationen