

Gillian Drake
Festival Artistic Director
gilliandm@gmail.com
301-652-9522

Norma Broadwater
Goethe-Institut Washington
nbroadwater@washington.goethe.org
202-289-1200 ext. 106

Becky Reed
Production Manager
256-585-7970

www.zeitgeistdc.org
Access high-res press images [here](#).

**The Austrian Cultural Forum, the Goethe-Institut Washington,
the Embassy of Switzerland
and the Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics at
Georgetown University**

**Host “Participatory Theater:
The Intersection of Theater and Social Action”
Washington, DC
May 10 – 12, 2014**

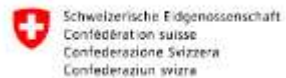
In partnership with Shakespeare Theatre Company, Studio Theatre, and dog & pony dc

(Washington, DC, March 28, 2014): The cutting-edge theater genre “Participatory Theater” will be the focus of the 2014 Zeitgeist DC International Festival and Symposium. Theater innovators from Germany, Switzerland and Austria will collaborate with Washington, DC actors and directors on audience-interactive performance events and a unique hands-on symposium. The Festival, which takes place at the Goethe-Institut and at Georgetown University May 10-12, 2014, will examine integrative techniques, technology design and theory.

Participatory theater lies at the intersection of aesthetics, action and experience. A highlight of this three-day theater event, now in its fourth year, will be the transatlantic dialogue addressing the shifting balance between the artist and the audience in performance and its potential for questioning form, aesthetics, and content in theater art, civil engagement and social justice.

Organized by Zeitgeist DC, a collaboration of the Goethe-Institut Washington, the Embassy of Switzerland and the Austrian Cultural Forum, in partnership with the Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics (Georgetown University), the Shakespeare Theatre Company, Studio Theatre, and dog & pony dc.

Festival Artistic Director: Gillian Drake; Symposium Director: Derek Goldman



Confirmed Artists and Experts:

Michael Rohd, Artistic Director, *Sojourn Theater*, and Founder, *The Center for Performance and Civic Practice*

Sabine Heymann, *Center for Media and Interactivity, University of Giessen, Germany*

Rachel Grossman, Ring Leader, *dog & pony dc*, with other company members

Laura Schaeffer, Philip Steimel, *machina eX*, Berlin, Germany

Jessica Huber, Karin Arnold, Mischa Robert, *MerciMax*, Zurich, Switzerland

Simon Steinhauser, Boris Ceko, representatives, *God's Entertainment*, Vienna, Austria

Derek Goldman, *The Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics, Georgetown University*

Natsu Onoda Power, Assistant Professor of Theater and Performance Studies, *Georgetown University*

Serge Seiden, Jacob Janssen, Elizabeth Dinkova, Artistic Staff, *Studio Theatre*, Washington, DC

Drew Lichtenberg, Nathanael Johnson, Artistic Staff, *The Shakespeare Theatre Company*, Washington, DC

About the Performances:

Coffee & Prejudice (Swiss)

Coffee & Prejudice invites the audience to test its powers of judgment live in a 1:1 confrontation. Each participant faces a single performer at a table, listening to his/her story. Participants are not expected to (re)act to the story, interrupt, or terminate the performance. After the first performer leaves, the second performer enters. 20 minutes.

Developed by Karin Arnold, Jessica Huber, and Mischa Robert from *MerciMax*, a Swiss theater collective that displays a special interest in theater forms beyond the stage while playfully experimenting with the spectators' perspective, in collaboration with *The Shakespeare Theatre Company*.

15'000 Gray (German)

In *15'000 Gray*, the audience members solve a mystery in the office/laboratory of Professor Hövel and prevent his groundbreaking discovery from falling into the wrong hands using techniques familiar to them from classic point and click video games. The audience members make decisions for the actors about where to look for clues, what action to take, etc. The technological elements, including lights illuminating specific areas of the room, phones ringing, etc. will help guide the audience through the puzzle to save the professor and the world. 40 minutes.

Developed by Laura Schaeffer, Philip Steimel and others from *machina eX*, a group of young German media and theatre artists designing computer games in real life environments, in collaboration with *Studio Theatre*.

Urban Performances: The Intersection between Art and Politics

Video highlights issues which participatory theater excels at addressing. 10 min.

Ticketed performances for 16 audience members at a time (divided into two groups) on Saturday and Sunday, May 10 and 11, at 11 am, 1 pm, and 3 pm. Location: Goethe-Institut (812 7th St. NW). Tickets \$10 at www.zeitgeistdc.eventbrite.com

dog & pony dc Devising Event

"What's possible?" That's what dog & pony dc has been investigating through the creation of their newest audience-integrated theatrical work, *Toast*. An exploration of innovation, invention, group-process, and creativity, *Toast* invites audiences to take a second look at the opportunities within common technology that, when adapted or harnessed, might alter everyday life as we know it. This event is a public devising session in which dog & pony dc company members and their collaborators will share character, narrative, and design concepts for *Toast* (some of it for the first time!) and ask everyone present to imagine how these pieces might fit together into the final production.

Saturday, May 10, 7 pm. Location: Goethe-Institut (812 7th St. NW). No charge; RSVP at www.zeitgeistdc.eventbrite.com

Love Club (Austrian)

Austria's brash and fun-loving performance collective *God's Entertainment* stages an interactive "Club Event" that challenges the performer/audience relationship in surprising, uncomfortable and thoroughly entertaining ways. The performance is based on the videogame *Fight Club*, but with lovers instead of fighters. Audience members enter a Club with cushions, pillows and a center spot where the action will take place. There is a table to place bets, there is a bar for drinks, there is a spot for two audience members to take control of a pair of joysticks and begin to control the "Avatars" in a round of loving. The game begins and one of the pair of lovers will at some point call it quits. And then the next round begins. There is a tension between the controller, the avatars and the audience since they are all in it together. Adult content.

Developed by *God's Entertainment*, an experimentalist theater group in Austria that seeks to transcend (theater) conventions, in collaboration with *Georgetown University's Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics*.

Saturday, May 10, 10 pm. Location: Goethe-Institut (812 7th St. NW). Tickets \$10 at www.zeitgeistdc.eventbrite.com

About the Symposium:

The Performer/Audience Relationship: Politics, Intimacy, and the Barriers Between Private and Public

Hosted by **Derek Goldman**, **Michael Rohd**, and **Rachel Grossman**, this symposium will alternate between planned audience integrative experiments and reflective response sessions. Visiting experts from *MerciMax*, *God's Entertainment* and *machina eX* and local theater artists from *dog & pony dc* will give presentations which encourage audience participation and highlight their aesthetics, methodology and practice. **Sabine Heymann** (Managing Director, Center for Media and Interactivity, Giessen, Germany) will address the global political perspective and trends during her multi-media presentation *Urban Performances: The Intersection between Art and Politics*, revealing her research into different aspects of this cultural phenomenon with several video examples (from Russia's Pussy Riot to Turkey's Standing Man).

Monday, May 12, 11 am – 6 pm. Location: Georgetown University, Davis Performing Arts Center, Gonda Theatre (37th and O Sts. NW). No charge; RSVP at www.zeitgeistdc.eventbrite.com

About the Festival Producing Partners:

Zeitgeist DC is a collaboration of the [Austrian Cultural Forum Washington](#), the [Embassy of Switzerland](#), and the [Goethe-Institut Washington](#). Its mission is to create cross-cultural understanding and awareness of universal social, political and environmental issues through performances of new cutting-edge plays and theater events by innovative theater artists from their countries.

The **Laboratory for Global Performance and Politics** at Georgetown University is a joint initiative of the [Theater and Performance Studies Program](#) and the [School of Foreign Service](#). Led by Professors [Derek Goldman](#) and [Cynthia P. Schneider](#), the Lab leverages Georgetown University's distinctive strengths in international relations and theatrical performance, developing new interdisciplinary approaches to fostering cross-cultural dialogue and understanding, and to advancing peace and social justice through performance. In addition, the Lab is a generative creative space to foster collaborative artistic projects that realize these goals. Finally, the Lab is a hub and a resource center that, in actual and virtual spaces, brings together an expansive global network of artists, policymakers, scholars, cultural organizations, embassies, faculty, and students. The Lab recently received a "Building Bridges" grant for ongoing programming from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters and the Doris Duke Foundation.

###