

PLETA Summer School and Festival "Freedom Street"
July 15-30, Cesis, Latvia

On July 15-30 the Summer School "Freedom Street" of the Platform of European Theatre Academies (PLETA) took place in Cesis, Latvia. *Time Machine Stops in Cesis* – with this motto 26 emerging theatre makers from 8 European countries made a debut in Cesis with a series of site-specific performances on July 28 and 29. For two weeks they participated in workshops of internationally recognized artists, explored Cesis and the Latvian context, made friends and created six site-specific performances interpreting the concepts of history and freedom. The Summer School and Festival "Freedom Street", that was organised by the Latvian Academy of Culture and PLETA, was a satellite programme of Cesis Art Festival and one of the major events of the international programme of Latvia's Centenary celebration.

The participants of PLETA Summer School were selected through the application process conducted in 8 PLETA partner academies. As a result 6 project ideas for site-specific performances and altogether 26 participants of the Summer School were accepted. PLETA Summer School took place at Rucka Artist Residency in Cesis. During the first week students participated in several workshops that were designed to feed their ideas and to introduce the means and methodologies of a site-specific work. The Body and Movement workshop was lead by the Swedish choreographer Erik Eriksson, Latvian choreographer Krisjanis Sants and Lithuanian choreographer Ieva Gaurilcikaite, and it was focused on how the way we move in relationship to the surrounding environment affects the way we see and perceive the world around us. Dutch theatre maker Marike Splint run the workshop "Performance in a Public Space" giving tools and excersises for working site-specifically and already testing the performance sites in the city. Dutch actor and acting teacher Jorn Heijdenrijk led the Acting Workshop about the presence of actor in a performative situation. Latvian music theatre director Margo Zalite and choreographer Olga Zitluhina conducted the Directing Workshop trying out the dramturgical method of teichoscopy in different genres. During the first week also the teams of performances were formed and students started to develop the ideas helped by mentors Jorn Heijdenrijk, Marike Splint and Latvian dramaturge and documentary theatre maker Janis Balodis.

The second week was fully devoted to the production and rehearsals of 6 site-specific performances with the help of the production team of PLETA Summer School. Performances were presented in the framework of Cesis Art Festival on July 28 and 29. Altogether there were 10 public performances that reached approximately 500 members of the audience.

PERFORMANCES

Born in 1991

performance in a fountain

Saturday, July 28 at 17.00

Sunday, July 29 at 12.00

Location: Rose Square

Director: Ieva Dzindza (Riga)

Performers: Ieva Dzindza (Riga), Nina Willems (Maastricht), Vilma Kinnunen (Helsinki), Anssi Niemi (Helsinki)

Mentor: Jorn Heijdenrijk (Brussels)

Producer: Lelde Hermane (Riga)

The impulse for this performance comes from the director's research about what freedom means to citizens of Latvia after regaining independence. This performance consists of interactions between body and space in given situations where the performers interpret the definition of freedom. The central element of the performance is water – the most important substance for sustaining life. "Born in 1991" is a movement piece-collage about fear and freedom here and now.

T.E.S.T.

performance like a sports game

Saturday, July 28 at 18.00

Sunday, July 29 at 13.00

Location: Flower Pavilion of Cesis Farmers Market on Uzvaras boulevard

Director: Oscar Briou (Brussels)

Performers: Oscar Briou (Brussels), Jannik Gorger (Salzburg), Julia Hammerstiel (Munich), Emil Kihlstrom (Helsinki), Karlo Juhani Haapiainen (Helsinki)

Mentor: Janis Balodis (Riga)

Producer: Patricija Kolate (Riga)

Put a ball in a space with two teams of two different European cultures and let's see what kind of sport they invent. Let's write stories about identity and insert them in the game. Let's test. Let's play. "T.E.S.T." is a performance – collective manifestation about identity with elements of sports games.

Free the Monument

the ritual of purification

Saturday, July 28 at 19.00

Location: Victory monument at the Vienibas square

Directors: Pamela Leonczyk and Agata Koszulinska (Warsaw)

Performers: Karlo Haapiainen (Helsinki), Steffen Recks (Munich), Barbara Liberek (Warsaw), Ieva Dzindza (Riga)

Mentor: Marike Splint (Amsterdam/Losangeles)

Producer: Lauma Kaudzite (Riga)

Words have the power and cities have souls. The streets, squares, buildings and monuments are inhabited by patron spirits they are named after. Changes of names leave a strong influence on the energy of the place. Not many people are aware that it is necessary to carry out a purification ritual to clean the aura of the place. The performers will embody scientists and together with the audience members will carry out a ritual around the Victory monument to clean the energy and expel the spirits of old patrons.

Cesis Street

street parade with a happy end

Saturday, July 20 at 20.00

Location: The beginning of Riga street at the Vienibas Square

Director: Demjan Duran (Munich)

Performers: Britta Janssen (Munich), Berit Vander (Munich), Peder Ulven (Oslo) and the rest of PLETA Summer School participants

Mentor: Marike Splint (Amsterdam/Losangeles)

Producer: Lauma Kaudzite (Riga)

If the social importance of a street name has expired, it is no longer valid. What does the past have to do with the present time? What does it mean to be liberal? How does the environment we live in create meaning? Can the conservative and the progressive live next to each other? Is the main street in a city also the best street of the city? The performers will go on a colorful and loud procession on the best street of Cesis. This street will be announced during the performance. Starting point – the small square in the beginning of Riga Street.

Spots of Freedom

freedom in documentary stories

Sunday, July 29 at 14.00 and 15.00

Location: Meeting at Cesis St. John's Lutheran Church, Liela Skolas Street 8

Director: Diana Kaijaka (Riga)

Dramaturge: Anna Belkovska (Riga)

Performers: Diana Kaijaka (Riga), Anna Belkovska (Riga), Oula Rytkonen (Helsinki), Asta Svelholm (Helsinki), Barbara Liberek (Warsaw), Steffen Recks (Munich), Vilma Kinnunen (Helsinki), Anssi Niemi (Helsinki)
Mentor: Janis Balodis (Riga)
Producer: Patricija Kolate (Riga)

The performance invites for a journey in time and space to visit the spots of freedom of the people around us. The main stops in the journey are three interpretations of personal freedom of local inhabitants of Cēsis told as stories and memories by three different generations. The courage to long for freedom during the Soviet times, the freedom offered by coming closer to the world of art, the seemingly neverending freedom of choice in the virtual era – these thematic arches will unite in a final scene where the audience members are invited to free themselves in a game of imagination.

Shadows of the Past

performance between the past and the present

Sunday, July 29 at 16.00 and 17.00

Location: Cesis Castle ruins

Directors: Janet Oosterlaken and Augusto Pedraza (Brussels)

Performers: Janet Oosterlaken (Brussels), Augusto Pedraza (Brussels), Una Eglite (Riga)

Geoffrey Erista (Helsinki), Nina Willems (Maastricht), Lelde Hermane (Riga)

Mentor: Jorn Heijdenrijk (Brussels)

Producer: Lelde Hermane (Riga)

What does freedom mean for those who lived the horrors of war and the fight for independence? And what does it mean to the younger generation of today? Only shadows of the past remind of events that took place within the walls of the old castle ruins. The past and the present is revealed through the stories told by the walls of the castle inviting us to dream about the future. "Shadows of the past" is a performance-walk with elements of shadow puppetry and movement.

Organizer: Latvian Academy of Culture and PLETA in collaboration with Cēsis Art Festival and Rucka Artist Residency. With the support of the EU Programme "Creative Europe", the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia and Cēsis Municipality. The event is part of the programme of the centenary celebration of Latvia.

Participants of PLETA Summer School

Latvian Academy of Culture

Anna Belkovska, Ieva Džindža, Una Eglīte, Diāna Kaijaka

The Toneelacademie Maastricht

Ayisha Siddiqi, Nina Willems

Theatre Academy of the University of the Arts Helsinki

Geoffrey Erista, Karlo Haapiainen, Emil Kihlström, Vilma Kinnunen, Anssi Niemi,

Oula Rytkönen, Asta Sveholm

RITCS – Royal Institute for Theatre, Cinema and Sound in Brussels

Oscar Briou, Janet Oosterlaken, Augusto Pedraza

University Mozarteum Salzburg

Jannik Görger

Theaterakademie August Everding in Munich

Demjan Duran, Julia Hammerstiel, Britta Irene Janssen, Steffen Recks, Berit

Vander

Aleksander Zelwerowicz National Academy of Dramatic Art in Warsaw

Agata Koszulińska, Pamela Leończyk, Barbara Liberek

Westerdals Oslo School of Arts, Communication and Technology

Peder Ulven

Mentors and workshop tutors

Janis Balodis – Mentor for the performances "T.E.S.T." and "Spots of Freedom"

Jorn Heijdenrijk – Mentor for the performances "Born in 1991" and "Shadows of the Past", Acting workshop

Marika Splint – Mentor of the performances "Free the Monument" and "Cēsu Street", Site-specific theatre workshop

Margo Zalite – Directing workshop

Olga Zitluhina – Directing workshop

Erik Eriksson – Movement workshop

Krisjanis Sants – Movement workshop

Ieva Gaurilcikaite – Movement workshop

Team of PLETA Summer School

Peteris Krilovs – Artistic Director

Zane Kreicberga – Project Leader

Katrina Duka – Executive Producer

Karlis Lapins – Technical Director

Paula Podniece – PR and Social media

Ugis Albins – Vizuālā identitāte un dizains / Visual identity and design

Lelde Hermane – Producer

Lauma Kaudzite – Producer

Patricija Kolate – Producer

Dainis Sumiskis – Technical assistant

Christina Khomenko – Photographer

Elizabete Mezule-Gricmane – Director of the video documentation

Krisjanis Pleiko – camera man