

claudia bosse / theatercombinat  
**THYESTES BRÜDER! KAPITAL**  
anatomy of a revenge

a production by claudia bosse  
based on «*thyestes*» by seneca



photos: elsa okazaki, claudia bosse

*«mankind's  
veins opened like a book  
leafing through the bloodstream»*

[www.theatercombinat.com](http://www.theatercombinat.com)



# FLESH

*«present bodies,  
which with their biography,  
which is deeply  
inscribed in their flesh,  
encounter the ancient tradition  
of a fraternal dispute,  
moving it through and within  
themselves.  
they spit out the result.»*

claudia bosse

# GREED

the site-specific works of claudia bosse and *theatercombinat* have been creating transitional spaces between installation, choreography, experimental theatre, social rituals and forms of assembly, individual and collective speech acts (choirs) and ancient texts, for more than 20 years.

**THYESTES BRÜDER! KAPITAL** is a story of the (re)production of guilt and revenge, a conflict about unconditional power and superiority. it opens resonance spaces and perspectives on the present with choreographies of fragile bodies and the language of the roman empire, in which the myths and motives of greek democracy echo; the basis of our political system.

this work of claudia bosse is the treatment of the ancient myth thyestes with a transdisciplinary team of artists. the audience forms a shared space together with the international actors.

theatre as thinking with bodies in space, as temporary community



photos: elsa okazaki

# MYTH

*«tantalos, king in phrygia, robs the food of the gods,  
slaughters pelops, his son, and presents them to the gods.  
the gods recognize the meal,  
only demeter eats from one shoulder.  
this is how she punishes the robbery: tantalos hangs from a fruit tree  
that grows from a pond under a hanging rock  
in the triple walled centre of the hades,  
in eternal hunger between the fruits.  
thirst above the water, fear under the stone.  
the gods curse his kin.  
thyestes, son of pelops, breaks the marriage of his brother atreus.  
atreus slays the sons of his brother  
and feeds him with their blood and flesh.  
thyestes does violence to his own daughter.  
her son aigisthos kills atreus.  
agamemnon, son of atreus, takes klytaimnestra as wife,  
his brother menelaos her sister helena.  
helena is seduced by paris, follows him to troy,  
the trojan war begins.  
the first victim of the war is determined by a proverb of iphigenia,  
daughter of agamenmnon and klytaimnestra.  
klytaimnestra and aigisthos kill agamemnon,  
after his return from ten years of war,  
in the bath with net sword hatchet.  
elektra, second daughter of agamemnon, saves orestes,  
her brother, from the sword of aigisthos and sends him  
to phokis. for twenty years klytaimnestra dreams the same dream:  
a snake sucks milk and blood from her breasts.  
in the twentieth year orestes returns home to mykene,  
kills aigisthos with the sacrificial axe, and after him his mother,  
who stands before him with bared breasts  
and cries for her life. »*

heiner müller (opfer und täter, 1969;  
quote from the front page, 1984)

# COMPETITION

**THYESTES BRÜDER! KAPITAL** adapts senecas *thyestes* (1st century ad) in the translation by durs grünbein (2001):

two brothers struggling for power. staged cannibalism as a demonstration of (political) superiority and audacity of atreus, who lets his brother thyestes unknowingly devour his own children. a story of the recurring production of revenge, which continues a cycle of violence, whose greatest tenderness is digesting one's own children. a touch within. an incorporation and linguistic ejection of (mentally) digested.

in negotiating the past and the future, the ancient theatre touches and questions the present – the violence and language of ancient myth, which triggers a cycle of competition and the production of revenge, while territory, power, property and (family) solidarity are at stake.

in claudia bosse's production the five actors tantalus, fury, atreus, thyestes and messenger are at the same time the choir and negotiate the constantly surpassing thirst for revenge until the state of the world becomes chaos, the elements collapse, and daylight disappears.



photos: claudia bosse

# MOUTH

*«the mouth,  
which swallows its own flesh,  
emits words,  
that meet other bodies,  
describes their dissection,  
conjures up the past  
and the future  
and forms community.»*

claudia bosse

# WITNESSES

the audience becomes part of the different situations, which are concentrated centrally in the room or take place simultaneously and decentrally – they become witnesses and confidants of the intrigue of atreus, who kills the children of his brother in a sacrificial ritual and presents them to thyestes as a meal of reconciliation.

in contrast to the poetic language of the roman tragedy (with 1112 verses) by seneca, the economic-philosophical language of karl marx stands in relation to the relationship between production and consumption (*grundrisse der kritik der politischen ökonomie*) – the circulation of people, power, goods, capital and history.

*«the individual produces an object and returns to itself through its consumption, but as a productive and self-reproducing individual.»*

karl marx

after the world premiere of **THYESTES BRÜDER! KAPITAL** in düsseldorf in a former film theater, a canteen architecture from the 1980s becomes the location for the negotiations of the choreographic productions in vienna: the dining hall of a former siemens factory in the tenth district of vienna in the project area kempelenpark.

# CLOSENESS

the distance to seneca's language and motifs is interrupted by the absolute closeness of the spectators to the actors. the unfolding of the action into different choreographic constellations in the room, through which the spectators can move freely, marks the tension between the action and the present – the ambience of a work canteen.

atreus, who lures his brother thyestes out of fear of civil war with the promise of a shared power out of exile, is the host of this tragedy, who makes the audience aware of the tragic escalation and stages the downfall of thyestes.

the different time layers of the spoken texts interact with the imaginative power of the language, which describes the unthinkable inexorably and poetically.

**THYESTES BRÜDER! KAPITAL** is a plea for language that confronts us with the unthinkable: an insatiable society that devours itself.

*«everything turns. it burrows my entrails through and through.  
in my stomach, what's throbbing? what is the pressure on my chest  
that makes me moan, and that moaning – that's me.  
do you hear me, children? in misfortune, the father, he calls you.  
come to me! – seeing you, i feel better in a moment.  
i feel as if i hear them speaking. »*

thyestes (seneca)



# CHOIR

the choir is orchestrated by a spoken score developed by claudia bosse. formed by five actors, who conclude four of the five acts: they leave their captured figures and synchronize themselves as a jointly breathing and dependent organism that moves through the space with the audience.

the choir is a dependent structure that measures, mixes up and infiltrates the space of the spectators. it moves between them or forms an opposite. this means transitions, changes for the individual. instability.

the choir moves as an organism stretched out in space, partly counter-rhythmically to the text. the individual bodies coordinate and find each other, they find a common breath. the sound in this work is produced almost exclusively by the breath and the language. at the center are the actors, who move through this language and are moved by it.

Und wenn/schon, **ach**, blieb es doch immer/Jort **Nacht!** //

Es **zittern** die Herzen, und **wie sie zittern**, erschüttert

Vom **Schlag**/zeug der **Angst**:

**Was**, wenn es ein/**stürzt**, das **All** unterm An/**prall**

Von **soviel Schicksal**, und über **Götter wie Menschen bricht**

Aufs **neue das Chaos** herein und zer/**trümmert** das **Sein?** //

**Was**, wenn Natur sich zurück/holt die **alte Erde**,

**Sämtliche Meere** und die **Stern/bilder alle**,

**Kreisend im Welt/all?** **Kein neues Jahr/hundert ent/zündet**

Mit **ewiger Fackel** von **nun** an der **Fürst** der **Gestirne**. //

**Keiner befiehlt mehr** der **Sommer/hitze**, dem **Winter/frost**. //

spoken score, excerpt 4. choir

# THEATRE TEXTS

*«theatre texts are historical-aesthetic vis-à-vis,  
which offer confrontations and applications  
for contemporary theatre practice.  
they commit along their construction of language and action,  
they concentrate and exclude.  
this creates resistances which require structural,  
historical and political analysis.  
these resistances and analyses require  
precise translations for contemporary theatre practice,  
translations into working models, into spatial dispositives,  
into the appropriation of body and speech techniques.  
with this translation, the texts  
become starting point and material for overcoming.  
they become clear and at the same time disappear  
in their contemporary appropriation,  
in the montage with other texts.  
they are counter-read, practiced and re-written  
through the confrontation, through bodily re-reading.  
these texts are confronted with the present  
and we with the foreign concepts long ago»*

claudia bosse

*«seneca, the philosopher [tn.: educator of the brutal emperor nero]  
wrote tragedies characterized by glaring pathos  
and excessive passion.  
death was omnipresent, making life all the more precious.  
it showed the workings of man's destructive powers,  
but on the other hand it challenged us to reassure ourselves of our  
indestructible substance»*

marion gibel (1997)

# THYESTES BRÜDER! KAPITAL

## anatomy of a revenge

**world premiere:** 11<sup>th</sup> september 2019 weitere

aufführungen: 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> september

**botschaft am worringer platz**

worringerplatz 4, 40215 düsseldorf

**start:** 20:00h

**vienna premiere:** 2<sup>nd</sup> october 2019

further performances: 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> october 2019

**kasino am kempelenpark** entrance: kempelengasse 6, 1100 vienna

**start:** 19:00h

**duration:** app. 2.5h (no break)

**concept, space, artistic direction:** claudia bosse

**with:** rotraud kern (fury + choir) mun wai lee (atreus + choir)

nic lloyd (thyestes + choir) lilly prohaska (tantalus + choir)

alexandra sommerfeld (messenger + choir) juri zanger

**youth choir düsseldorf:** finn cam, nina daumen, sumejja

dizdarevic, emma fuhrmeister, friederike kemmether,

djordje mandic

**youth choir vienna:** costance cauers (junges volkstheater)

gabriel blasl, sonia nicole brindus, emma edwards, magdalena

frauenberger, valentino gallo, anna grobauer, ines kaiser, franz

perko, elina elisabeth pratter, josephine radojković, hannah

resatz, victoria simon, jonas e. tonnhofer, roswitha zeillinger

**sound, video:** günther auer

**technical direction:** marco tölzer

**critical witness:** reinhold görling

**assistance:** dagmar tröstler

**communication:** oliver maus, michael franz woels

**press:** barbara pluch

**intern:** len-henrik busch, ella felber

**head of production:** alexander matthias kosnopfl

**stage rights:** suhrkamp verlag berlin

**translation** of senecas «thyestes»: durs grünbein

a production of **theatercombinat**

in co-production with **fft düsseldorf**

in cooperation with **junges volkstheater**

visuals supported by **resolume**

funded by **wien kultur**

## **theatercombinat**

is a formation for the production of independent art and theatre works based in vienna, led by the artist and director claudia bosse. it brings together actors, performers, dancers, theoreticians, sound and media artists, architects, visual artists, technicians and citizens to explore and implement theatrical concepts that initiate new, provocative ways of communicating with the audience, space and organizing the public.

the choreographies use unusual spaces, understand existing structures as a starting point for (choreographic) work and explore possibilities of co-presence of different space uses. the productions create spaces of action and perception between theatre, installation, choreography, performance and discourse in different periods of time and are created in cities such as vienna, tunis, zagreb, prague, düsseldorf, new york, geneva, kiev, braunschweig, berlin or cairo - invitations to international festivals as well as to the tanzplattform deutschland 2018.

the works of *theatercombinat* understand themselves as radical attempts of bodily thinking in spaces. they interweave multi-media research on projectspecific questions with texts of political theory, archive material, poetic, ancient texts, media footage and their own research documents. the public and semipublic space as a place of negotiation of political and social difference comes into focus.

recurring is the use of (spoken) choirs as a political-aesthetic practice. in mostly multilingual, interdisciplinary ensembles the works of *theatercombinat* create social sculptures as temporary communities of a physical confrontation with questions of our present.

the documentation of all previous artistic works can be found on the website: **[www.theatercombinat.com](http://www.theatercombinat.com)**

## BIOS

**claudia bosse** (de/at) is director, choreographer and artist. diploma studies in theatre direction from 1991-1995 at the *hochschule für schauspielkunst ernst busch*, berlin. after productions in berlin and geneva (berliner ensemble, bat studiotheater, theatre du grütli) she is co-founder and since 1998 artistic director of *theatercombinat*, a transdisciplinary company for the production of space-specific independent art and theatre works, founded in berlin, based in vienna.

her artistic works include choreographies, ancient tragedy productions, city interventions, installations, hybrid theatre and performance works in shared spaces (with spectators), space-specific and multi-media performative productions and space narratives, choreographies (in public space) with the participation of different publics and media, performances, as well as discourses of artistic and performative practice.

her artistic themes are concerned with the thinking and acting of bodies in space, choirs, myth, catastrophes and tragedy, the production and politics of space, territorial orders, postcolonial theories, political philosophy and forms of political action in the arts, democratic narratives, archives and museum collections with their orders and forms of knowledge production, multi-media political hybrids, urban spaces as textures of choreographic thinking, dissonances of body and language as well as phonetic thinking.

claudia bosse creates international works, productions and installations for museums, festivals, theatre and urban spaces. she has been a visiting professor and lecturer at various universities and academies, gives lectures, publishes and initiates or participates in research projects. continuous collaboration with artists and theoreticians of different genres, especially with the composer günther auer. among others 2009 nestroy award for *bambiland 2008*. 2018 invitation to the *tanzplattform deutschland* with *the last IDEAL PARADISE*.

## BIOS

her works create cross-border areas and transitions between installation, choreography, theatre, individual and collective speech acts, social rituals as well as site-specific forms of assembly. the works are shaped by transdisciplinary teams or mixed, mostly multilingual ensembles of dancers, actors, performers and lay people with bodies of different generations. in a special way, the works penetrate the performative space in which the audience is involved. at the same time the works create social sculptures and constellations as temporary communities of a physical confrontation with questions of our present age: theatre as collective thinking with bodies in spaces. [claudiabosse.blogspot.com](http://claudiabosse.blogspot.com)

**günther auer** (at) is a composer and media artist. he studied composition and electroacoustic composition at the *university of music and performing arts* in vienna, where he subsequently worked as a lecturer in the field of music and computers. he works in cooperation with a wide range of artists and in a variety of formats. 2012/2013 senior artist at the *university of applied arts* in the field of digital art. since 2009 he works mainly with the director claudia bosse on voice and sound extensions in public and private spaces, among others for the multi-part cycle (katastrophen 11/15) *ideal paradise* and the long-term project *some democratic fictions* - an interview series on political and social upheavals and revolutions as a transnational archive. most recently he composed the romantic singspiel *POEMS of the DAILY MADNESS* for four actors with texts by claudia bosse, premiered in october 2017 in vienna. [guentherauer.com](http://guentherauer.com)

## BIOS

**rotraud kern** (at) was born in upper austria. 2000-2003 training in contemporary dance at *sead* (salzburg experimental academy of dance) with a focus on choreography and pedagogy. since 2004 freelance dancer and choreographer. since 2005 close collaboration with dancer and choreographer paul wenninger. own projects and collaborations in austria and abroad with lisa hinterreithner, daniel zimmermann, amanda piña, twof2, clélia colonna and mirjam klebel, among others. she has worked for saskia hölbling, lucie strecker and klaus spieß, anne juren, georg blaschke and theatercombinat. she is a founding member of the *cowbirds*, who are working with traditional polyphonic songs. release performance of the 1st album polyphonic tracks at *impulstanz* 2018. last own work: *where we meet* 2016 at *tanzquartier wien*.

**mun wai lee** (sg) is a dancer and performer from singapore. during the last 2 years he has been performing and developing independent artistic works, which deal with performance and choreography in a broader sense. before his career as an independent performer, mun wai lee was a founding member of *the t.h.e dance company* in singapore (2008 - 2015). with this company he performed internationally at festivals such as *les hivernales* in avignon (fr), *the oriente occidente festival* in rovereto (it) as well as in china, south korea, poland, india, indonesia and malaysia. he has worked with the choreographers xing liang, kim jae duk and boi sakti. in 2014 he received the young artist award from the national arts council singapore. currently he is studying for his master degree in choreography and performance at the *justus-liebig-universität* in gießen (de).

## BIOS

**nic lloyd** (gb/nz) is a performer, dj and sound designer. he first performed 2005 with simon aughterlony, since then he has worked in numerous projects in the field of contemporary performance, together with directors and choreographers such as tine van aerschott, jonathan burrows, alexandra bachzetsis, isabelle schad, julia schwarzbach, as well in numerous other collaborations with aughterlony. he has worked on stage, in urban space, in film projects, in galleries, in nature, as well as in other site-specific settings; also in projects for young audiences. his field of activity includes text, movement, singing and music. he graduated in 2011 from the ma performance department of *roehampton university london* and is performing and touring throughout europe, especially in switzerland, germany, the netherlands and austria. in 2014 his first solo piece *don't judge* premiered at the *gessnerhalle* in zurich.

**lilly prohaska** (at) lives as a freelance actress in vienna. after studying acting at the *max reinhardt seminar* vienna and a contract at the *burgtheater vienna*, there followed engagements at the *grazer schauspielhaus* and at the *vereinigte bühnen krefeld-mönchengladbach*. further engagements at the *schauspielhaus bochum*, *volkstheater*, *theater der jugend*, for *toxic dreams*, *theater in der drachengasse*, *werk x*, *tag*, *kosmos theatre*, *tanz\*hotel*, *3raum-anatomietheater*, *off-theater*, *nestroyhof/hamakom*, *bregenzer landestheater* and *theater zum fürchten*. besides that involved in film and tv-productions like *zero crash*, *my daughter anne frank* and others. teaching as a guest lecturer for acting.



## BIOS

**alexandra sommerfeld** (at) born in scheibbs. dance, singing and acting education in linz, vienna and new york. participation in numerous freelance productions among others *theatercombinat*, *theatre.punkt* (sabine mitterecker), *toxic dreams* (yosi wanunu), *tanz\*hotel* (bert gstettner), *proscenion* (karin koller), *w.u.t.*, also engagements at the *schauspielhaus wien*, *theater in der josefstadt*, *volkstheater*, *theater der jugend* and others. participation in numerous film and tv productions. collaboration with the composer günther rabl in own productions (*rilkeabend fast tödliche vögel der seele*, *relativitätstherapie*, *liederzyklus belcanto*, spoken opera *betiri*) and event of the *electric orpheus academy* in waldviertel. nestroy award 2000 for *nothing better* with *theatre.punkt*. in addition, she teaches her own practice as a trainer in the field of body/voice in seminars.

**juri zanger** (at) has been on stage since 2009. he first started out as an actor in the children's ensemble *gutgebrüllt* and was then part of the youth ensemble *junges ensemble hörbiger* for three years. he worked with directors\* such as erhard pauer, barbara schulte, maria köstlinger and nicolas charaux. finally, in 2016 he played at the *schauspielhaus wien* in a 504-hour installation by the swedish installation artist thomas bo nilsson and in 2017 in *die zukunft reicht uns nicht - klagt, kinder, klagt* by author and dramatist thomas köck. besides his practical stage and film set experience, he has also been working as an author and director for one year now, for example, he shot his first short film *max* in the summer of 2018. he is currently studying political science at the *university of vienna*.

## **CONTACT**

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