

THEM

hey, I'm just a person reading this. it is THEM, starting soon...lights will come and the atmosphere will change. Please try your best, do it for THEM

hey, I'm also a person reading this text, is an advert program text about a performance called THEM. It sounds interesting...I would love to go to a performance where I can also be creative, play with them, make music and sing for them, watch them and clap at the end.

hey, I'm an audience member, this text is not about THEM...is about Me, reading this text now, breathing, watching, wanting, wondering, waiting to go to the theatre to see a performance called THEM

hey ! I'm the other, also reading this text. I'm not like them, I don't like this text as it is, i think it should be more descriptive and in German, like this for example: " Die Performance schafft einen poetischen Rahmen der ermöglicht auf gleichermassen angenehme wie schmerzliche Weise den anderen zu begegnen. Es entsteht eine fragiele Sprache der Begegnung die wie ein scheinbar steuerloses Schiff durch den Theatersaal gleitet."

Hey. I'm not a person I'm an object, I'm the theatre building, I'm here, I will be there, I'm everywhere. In different cities waiting for THEM.



Would it be forcing the meaning of "communication" to say, starting from this point, that there exist two major forms of communication, one between man and man, and one between man and the world [...]? Tzvetan Todorov, *The conquest of America: the question of the other* (69)

"Them" is for the Teens what the early works of Superama were for the Naughtyies, and for the Nineties, the impossible couple Meg Stuart and Jérôme Bel. And, not less. Thought through to the most minute detail, persuasive in the quality of the performers as in its dramatic execution and the integrity of the concept, "Them" is ground-breaking, a pivotal moment of a young, contemporary, and socio-critical choreography.

(Helmut Ploebst „Austreibung der Peinlichkeit“ corpus Internet Magazin für Tanz, Choreografie, Performance 12.12.2009)

The Other's View

Our recent choreographic work "WE" dealt with Elias Canetti's description of the behaviour of the mass in the theatre, and focused on the thought processes and the behaviour of the audience during a dance performance.

In "THEM" we investigate the problem of the Other, the Other as a group, but also as an individual. For this we will set up two audience galleries directly opposite each other. While in "WE" the audience were sitting in relation to their own mirror image, in "THEM" one half of the audience will sit opposite the other. All spectators will simultaneously be watching and being watched. Inadvertently, there will be assessment, categorisation, appraisal, evaluation and judgement. The perception of the audience itself becomes the protagonist within this piece. Without being under the pressure of having to act or initiating something, the audience itself is used as medium and its active role becomes the issue.



"THEM" is based on the idea that we define ourselves through the "Other", that we assess our situation through the gaze of the "Other" and that how we feel is related to our perception of the Other. Conditioned as they are by our experiences, our ideas of the Other are always limited. This means that we ourselves, too, see ourselves mostly in a clichéd light.

Tzvetan Todorov is certainly right in saying: "We can discover the Other in ourselves, realize we are not a homogeneous substance, radically alien to whatever is not us: As Rimbaud said: 'Je est un Autre' [I am an Other]."

We should like to investigate whether and how it is possible to influence this view of the "Other", to manipulate it, and what the means would be to do so. For that we will be using the given elements of theatre, such as seating, light, sound, language, rhythm, dramaturgy, performers, and the audience itself.

We will influence the view of the "Other" by way of changing the lighting, generate various ambiances through sound collages, off-voices, various other tools and performative interventions will define those present as different groups. Appropriate action and manipulation will create situations where people will take sides. The audience becomes an accomplice, it identifies with the content of the situation or does not.

We imagine the piece as being a kind of picture book. A picture may last long in order to be able to extract various interpretations of perceptions. Perhaps the rhythm of the dramaturgy will be reminiscent of Tarkovski's long-takes.

Credits:

Concept, Direction and Dramaturgy: Amanda Piña and Daniel Zimmermann

Athmosphere, Dance and Performance: Ewa Bankowska, Laia Fabre, Markus Frietsch, Thom Kasebacher, Amanda Piña, Daniel Zimmermann

Text :Thom Kasebacher and Amanda Pina

Design and Visuals: Daniel Zimmermann

Light design and on the Board: Markus Frietsch

Productions Manager: Elisabeth Hirner

Music: Christian Dergarabedian, Ima Sumac and all the others

Artistic Counciller: Marcus Dross

Thanks to: Wolfgang Haas, Axel Fussi, Nicole Beutler and all the others

Co-produced by Frascati Amsterdam. Funded the by Department of Culture, City of Vienna and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture. FREISCHWIMMER - PLATFORM FOR YOUNG THEATRE - a joint project between Sophien-saele Berlin, FFT Düsseldorf, Kampnagel Hamburg, brut Vienna and Theaterhaus Gessnerallee Zurich. Funded by Capital Cultural Fund Berlin, Kulturamt der Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf, Kulturbehörde der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg, Pro Helvetia Swiss Arts Council, City of Zurich Kultur, Migros culture percentage and Fachstelle Kultur Kanton Zürich.



Press text:

The Other's View

In their last performance work "We", Amanda Piña and Daniel Zimmermann dealt with the concepts of collectivity and unity. In the test arrangement "Them" this complex subject is expanded towards the phenomenon of the "other".

The piece is based on findings of research on the behaviour patterns of small, primitive, mobile and fluctuating groups with weak leadership structures, who produce no surplus, pay no taxes and maintain no standing army.

What does "primitive" or "development" in the context of society mean? Have the codes for physical or social behaviour changed? Is it enough to put on the right coloured shirt to feel part of a group?

Why are we annoyed by our neighbour, even though he is so similar to us? Could it be a solution, if we played music together? And how can we live grassroots democracy in theatre? The performance Them creates a ritual-like poetic frame enabling us to encounter the "other" both pleasantly and painfully.

EXPELLING EMBARRASSMENT

AMANDA PIÑA AND DANIEL ZIMMERMANN SHOW "THEM" AT THE BRUT THEATRE IN VIENNA AS PART OF FREISCHWIMMER

by Helmut Ploebst

To begin with, everyone is always someone else's other. Apart from the fact that every one person is obviously unique, none of this would be so peculiar if it were not for the particular social tendency of herding. The herd is nothing but complicity within a group, the function of which is to strengthen its own sense of uniqueness. This, in itself, should not necessarily be suspect; because, with such uniqueness comes the wonderful capacity for showing solidarity with other individuals. One of these solidarities, for instance, does not exist a priori in a temporary group situation such as an audience in a theatre. Because, what connects the audience is that they are watching "others" perform.

What might happen, when the homogeneity of this connection is disrupted, has been demonstrated by the Viennese nadaproductions (Amanda Piña and Daniel Zimmermann), in their most recent piece "Them" shown at the Freischwimmer festival. In the foyer of the brut theatre, where the piece was staged the audience is segregated into two groups as they await entrance. One of the groups will be led out of the foyer. This is how a sense of "we" is established and duplicated. And, in the theatre space, these two "we" units then sit opposite one another, whereby each becomes an "other" for the other, respectively.

Those who had first been led away will develop a different feeling of "we" than those who remained outside the theatre since they will play a different role. After this selection is made, and the division established, each of the visitors will ask themselves whether they were "lucky" or not. And, what does it mean to be lucky, anyway, in a situation like this? Of course, it begs the question: "Will I be exposed or not?" Already this sensation shows that there is no true solidarity in an audience. Because, one knows that one's own gaze might be voyeuristic or dismissive for that matter.

The spectator is the spectator's wolf

This implies that each spectator is becoming afraid of the "wolfish" character of their own behaviour of reception. It is a deep-seated fear of failing in the eyes of the others. Performers—dancers, actors, circus artistes or politicians, lecturers, priests—present themselves before groups to win their approval. This is a law so deeply ingrained that even artists who oppose it have to prove themselves before it. The audience, too, as part of the game, has to prove itself. To applaud at the wrong time, or to laugh or to expose oneself in the 'talk afterwards', is a risk. And, then, to be torn out of the relative security of the seats does indeed increase the pressure. However, this is not a pressure that comes from the performers—it comes from others within their own group.

Implicit in this piece is the premise of lacking solidarity in a "we", which doesn't exist; because, it is all about our own performance within a social system. Following their successful piece "We", nadaproductions present a different proposal: "Them". Those, there, who could be "we", had it worked out differently. In "Them" two groups are created from one pool of people sitting across from each other. Among these groups are the performers of the piece, comprised of Thomas Kasebacher and Laia Fabre on one side; and, on the other side, Daniel Zimmermann, Amanda Piña, Ewa Bankowska and Markus Frietsch. In between these two groups hangs a large piece of gauze that serves as a projection screen. It shows the painting "Echo and Narcissus" by John William Waterhouse (1903).

The tragedy of the nymph Echo

A doubly tragic story. The one of Narcissus is popular, the tragedy of the nymph Echo is largely unknown. Echo had been punished by Hera for letting herself be lured into assisting Zeus in being unfaithful to Hera. She could henceforth only parrot whatever was said to her. When she fell in love

with Narcissus, she had to grasp the fact that he despised her for this parrot-like behaviour. She became desperate, because her love for Narcissus wasn't reciprocated or returned—there wasn't an echo. Then, Thomas Kasebacher walks up to a lectern in front of the painting that had been altered by Daniel Zimmermann. A kind of megaphone is pasted in front of Echo's mouth and Narcissus holds a staff in his hand. The first embarrassment: Who in the audience can decode this picture? A classical education might trigger a sudden "heureka" moment, but this would only apply to a small and select part of our society. Yet, the echo of this concept of education still reverberates. We know who this man might be, but who is that girl? Which story does the picture tell?

Kasebacher starts off a lecture on the topic of the "Other" in modern and postmodern philosophy. It is a name-dropping talk that produces a second feeling of embarrassment. Who then has really read Nietzsche, Sartre, Derrida or Levinas? And how serious is this lecture, which stumbles along like an echo of a "real" lecture presented by a "real" intellectual? If we only knew about the nymph Echo, we could show solidarity with her. Had we only read Levinas, we might be able to denounce the lecturer as a charlatan.

Embarrassing, this security

When Kasebacher asks the technicians for the first slide for his lecture, the Waterhouse painting disappears, and one of the two groups (the one sitting behind Kasebacher), is revealed under light. The lecturer then goes on describing a fictitious painting by Goya: "Cortés at his arrival in Sevilla". Only when Kasebacher describes that Hernán Cortés' face is all green and that he vomits, and that Goya actually never used such a green in his paintings, the suspicion might creep in: something's not quite right here.

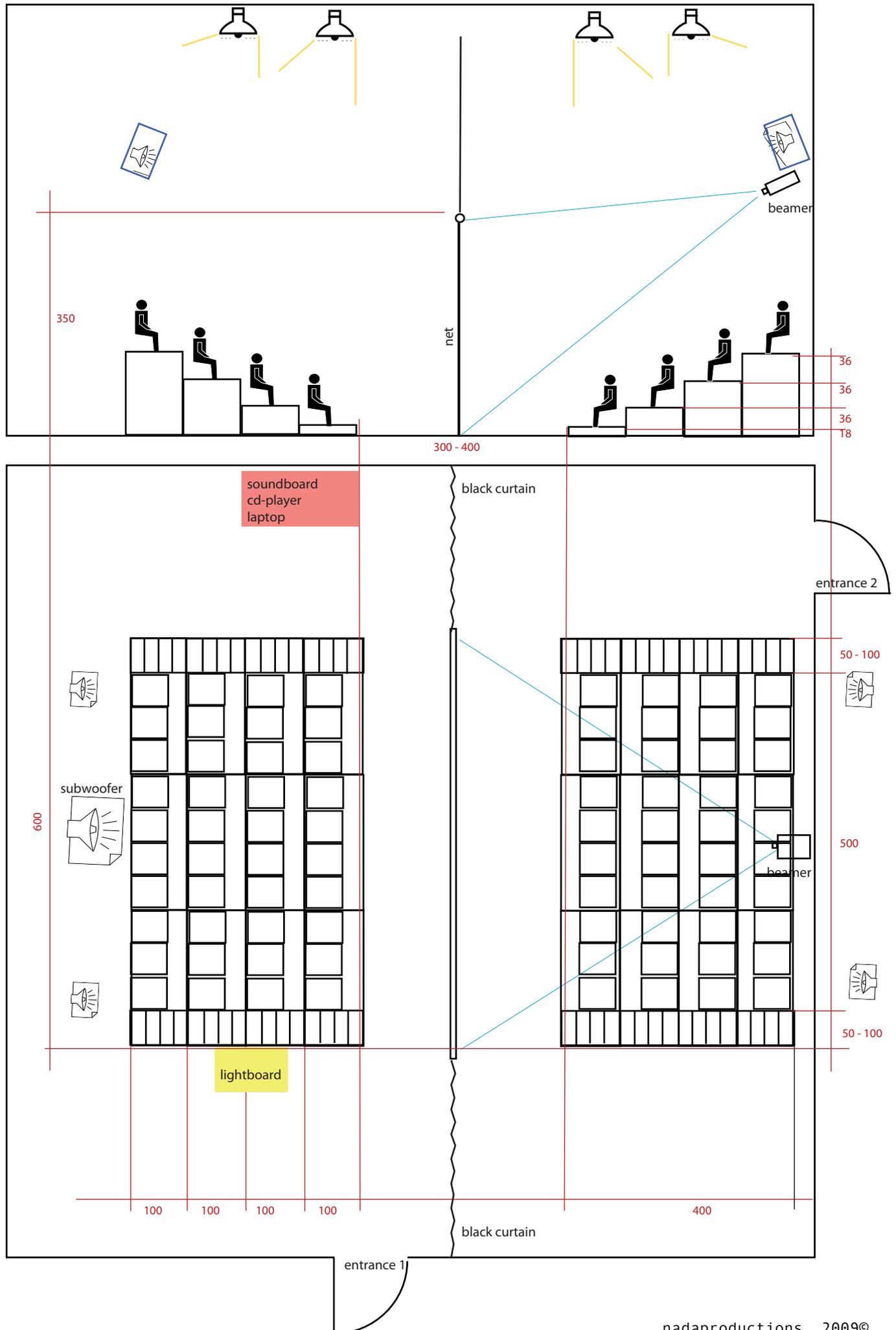
Theatre is an educational institution charged with atmosphere. The connection between the figure of Echo and the performance of education in a formative institution is the actual entrée to "Them". The educated as the tragic-antisocial Narcissus, and Echo as the horror model of embarrassment. This metaphor could now be taken up and used within the context of gender— an approach that is clearly dedetectable in this piece, too. Each member of the group that had been led away, and which clearly becomes the performing group in "Them", is given a staff, the same one as that which Narcissus holds in the image. This is the group with the higher potential for embarrassment, the group that will have to undergo a costume change, which is going to perform actively. And, this group now is instructed to charge upon the "Others" through the gauze curtain and to fetch personal belongings from them.

The group that remains within the traditional frame of perception is, like Echo, the one that is actually embarrassing, because their gaze is the one that parrots, that imitates. With an incredible sensitivity, nadaproductions gradually leads the two groups back out of the double tragedy in which they were just involved. Playfully, full of empathy and with subtle wit, the audience is brought into a situation that reveals embarrassment's potential for abuse. Without the authoritative gestures of an historic "participation theatre" from the good old Seventies, and without the confrontational provocations of denouncement of the Eighties, the performers and dancers dribble past the new conceptual aloofness of the Nineties or the neo-spectacularism of the closing decade, in a new approach to performative choreography, which, with its references, takes a pass that has been shot 15 years ago, when choreography re-adapted the medium of performance and developed "soft" approaches to critical art.

"Them" is for the Teens what the early works of Superama were for the Naughties, and for the Nineties, the impossible couple Meg Stuart and Jérôme Bel. And, not less. Thought through to the most minute detail, persuasive in the quality of the performers as in its dramatic execution and the integrity of the concept, "Them" is ground-breaking, a pivotal moment of a young, contemporary, and socio-critical choreography.

THEM

Setting for 74 audience (80 Stühle) by nadaproductions



Equipment required for „Them“

by nadaproductions

7.9.2009

Pedestals:	24 Pedestals 2m x 1m each
Height:	first row: 18cm / 2 - 4 row: 36cm
Staircase:	Both Sides 50cm/100cm
Distance between the Grandstands:	3 - 4 m (depending on the space)
Seats:	56 Seats
Curtains:	black
Pipe:	6 m length
Self-adhesive Velcro:	6 m length x 4cm wide (fixing net on pipe)
6 Microphones with Cable	
6 Micro Stands	
cd-player	
Beamer:	3000- 4000 Lumen / wide angle / connection lead to laptop
Sound:	4 speakers (D&B E3) 1 subwoofer
Video camera:	2 Professional/Semi-professional 2 wide angle attachment / remote control / 2 tripod

Transfer list

4 guitars
4 guitars suitcases
4 guitars stands
50 woodensticks (270 x 10 x 5 cm)
Net (Feintüll) & costume (box: 80x60x50cm)
Megaphone (carton: 100x30x30)
Lectern (110x60x50cm)

13

7
m
200

7
m
200

Tribüne A



14

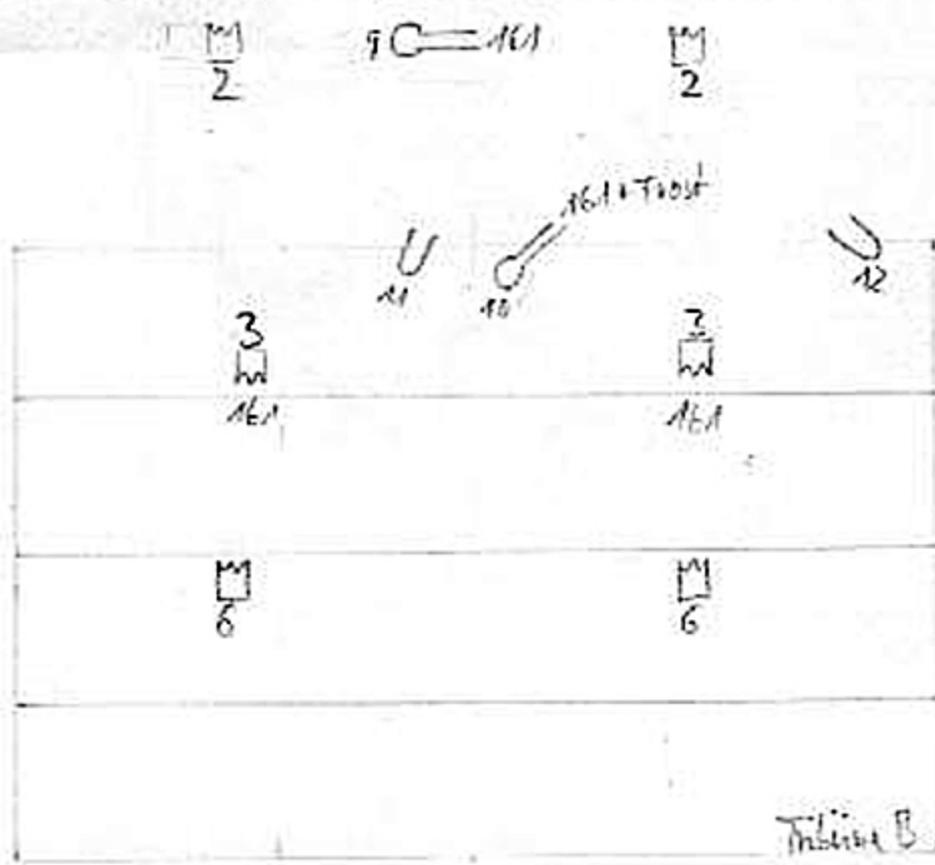
- ☐ = Fresnel / PC
- ∩ = Profiler
- U = Par 64
- ∪ = Fluter
- ☐ = Beamer

15

8



17



- 12 Tribüne A Front
- 13 Tribüne B, Front
- 5,6 Bühne Front/Back
- 7 Tribüne A back
- 8 Gasse Bühne Mitte
- 9,10 Sprecher
- 11,12 Bühne special
- 13-16 Ecken unpräzise, wie zufällig
- 17 Tür von steil oben

16 Frost

13

Tribüne A

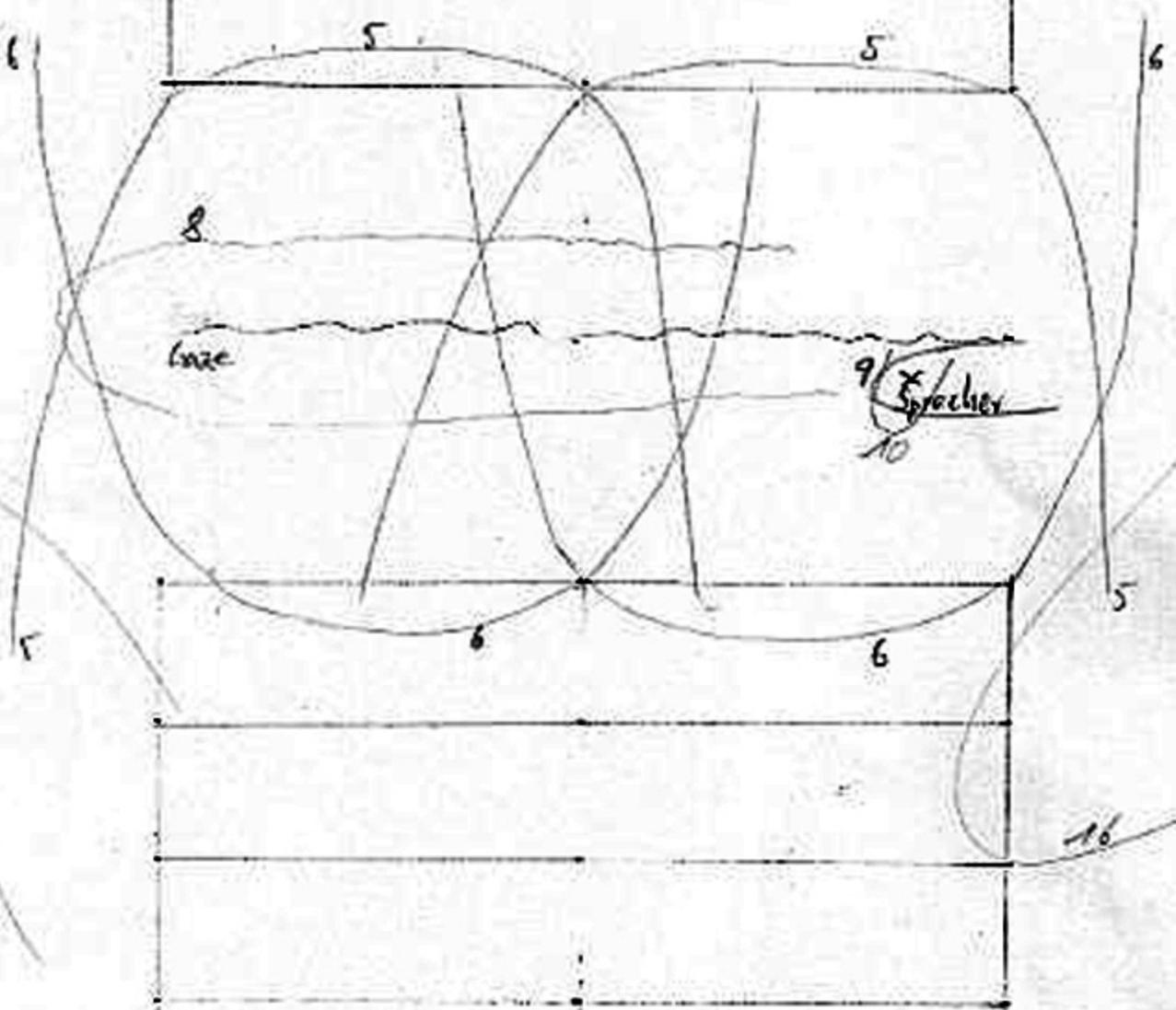
Them

by nadaproductions

Lichtprojektionen

Licht: Markus Frietsch +41 76 508 89 84

14



15

16

1-4 Tribüne Front: Jeweils zur Bühne abklappen, zu den Aufstiegen seitlich auslaufen lassen.

7 Tribüne A back: Zur Gasse abklappen.

5+6 Bühne: Jeweils zu den Tribünen abklappen

8 Gasse Bühne: circa 1,2m breit, unscharf

Tribüne B

