

Abstract

Considered, during his lifetime, as the “enfant terrible” of German cinema and theater, Christoph Schlingensiefel has remained, to this day, the figure par excellence of the provocative artist. This work proposes the first monography in French on the work of an artist who belongs to the pantheon of contemporary German theater but remains unknown to French-speaking public.

The method of interviews with his direct collaborators allows the thesis to draw on living sources in order to contribute to the dissemination of his work. German scholars are accustomed to find two distinct phases in his creation; before and after his cancer, which he was diagnosed with in 2008, and ultimately succumbed in 2010. Through the image of “living organism” which he never ceases to claim, this work approaches Schlingensiefel’s productions, from cinema to theater and performance, through opera and up to contemporary art.

Discovering on the one hand, the virtue of contingency as a result of a cinematic manipulation error and on the other hand, the vaccine as a call to a physiological reaction, he constantly resorts to provocation in the form of performances. Since his first productions at the Volksbühne in 1993, he systematically involved his own body and with his motley crew, he experimented with the modalities of interaction between actors and spectators, between work and “environment”.

Overflowing with vital energy, he created the *Chance 2000* party for the German unemployed, blurring the line between reality and fiction as he also sets up a container to continuously film sequestered migrants inside. From the announcement of his cancer, the provocateur in turn is provoked by the disease, from which he draws the inspiration to realize two final works examined in this thesis, making himself and his death to come, the new material of his art.

Keywords: provocation, performance, Volksbühne, experimentation, contingency, Opera-Village