



# **Leaving is not an option?**

**Current artistic positions  
from Hungary**

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**HAU**



**ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU?** 10 or 2. A 10 when it comes to work. My colleagues are very nice, and we laugh a lot together. But when I leave my workplace, I'm not so happy and I'd say 2. The political mood in the country and public life are bad. Everything's going in the wrong direction.

**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?** In Hungary, if all goes well, but that's not likely. Staying here or going away is a question that has no simple answers. I came back from Austria when I was 10 years old. But at 40 or 42, if you want to work in the humanities, there aren't any better opportunities there either.

László, 43, historian and museologist

# “It’s a life without illusions.”

Since the collapse of the socialist states, many of the newly formed countries of Eastern Europe have been going through a process of renationalisation. This development has been gaining momentum in Hungary over the last few years. The economically and socially desolate situation that the country finds itself in became a central election theme in 2010, and served as the starting point for the national-conservative Fidesz party after they took over government affairs, radically restructuring the country, both in terms of the politics of power and of ideology.

Social dissatisfaction and disorientation were meant to be offset by a kind of “ethnonationalism”, distinguished from western positions. The current situation represents the results of a decade-long development in the cultural and political life of the country. It marks the provisional end of a European process of transformation that began after 1989.

All of this involves significant restrictions for the work of the independent theatre scene. The Fidesz government has left no doubt that they are not pleased with having a bothersome art scene. In view of increasingly precarious working conditions, many artists are asking the question more and more often: to stay or to leave? Árpád Schilling, director of the internationally renowned theatre company Krétakör, recently commented that this is not only a personal or existential question, but a thoroughly artistic one as well.

Nonetheless, there is, as there always has been, a unique independent scene in Hungary with a realistic outlook—both on current developments in their own country as well as outside the borders. It is a perspective beyond romantic ideas about political and cultural unity within the EU. It is marked by a growing scepticism toward a politics of pan-European identity, which seems less and less within reach.

A deep chasm pervades the society. On the one side is a harkening back to the nation and a call for delimitation and control. Other, critical forces in turn cast a glance at history without illusions, and have made a ruthless inventory of the here and now. While the one side bemoans the loss of belief, this is what forms the starting point for the other side’s thinking and self-positioning. It is about not closing one’s eyes – and about always also reflecting on one’s own social practice.

Plays by directors such as Árpád Schilling, Kornél Mundruczó or Béla Pintér play to sold-out houses in Budapest. Here the spectators find artists dealing with everyday reality in Hungary and the fundamental changes within society that are increasingly getting lost in the public framework. The festival “Leaving is not an option?”, organized by HAU Hebbel am Ufer and funded by the German Federal Cultural Foundation, see itself as a platform for these critical voices.

Instead of pointing a finger at Hungary, the festival will seek out the overlappings and common questions between Budapest and Berlin. In a borderless, flexible neoliberalism that co-opts everything, what room is left for critical artistic discourse? Aren’t competition, distribution struggles, and questions of participation matters of concern all over Europe – and even beyond? How do artists produce under increasingly erratic conditions? What are the forms in which they take up political developments in their works?

“It is a life without illusions.” With this sentence, Kornél Mundruczó gets to the heart of the current situation in his country. Perhaps, now 25 years after the profound political transformations in East and West, this sober view to contemporary Hungary could serve as a starting point to learn from one another and to start a dialogue. How – starting from difference – can commonalities be found, and therefore ways to new perspectives? No one formulated it better than the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze in his “Postscript on the Societies of Control”: “There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons.”

*Aenne Quiñones (curator)  
and the team at HAU Hebbel am Ufer*

# “Is leaving an option?”

*“No other spot in all the world can touch your heart as home.”  
Mihály Vörösmarty<sup>1</sup>*

## Kornél Mundruczó

There are several hundred thousand people who have left the country so far. This number includes acquaintances of mine. I am not one of them.

There is not a family which hasn't talked about looking for work abroad. Like relatives who have passed away, the number of emigrants continues to grow exponentially over time. But the desire to leave is by no means a cheerful thought, as one might imagine. The European idea, which can give us common identity or keep us afloat, doesn't seem to be gaining any traction in Hungary even after so many years. The ecstasy of unrestricted border traffic, the romanticism of the pan-European dream, the hope that common values would set everything aright have become passé today.

A new generation has arrived which is no longer bent on dashing off to Vienna and buying refrigerators on Mariahilfer Strasse. It doesn't dream of a land of milk and honey which lies just beyond the Carpathians. Instead of new beginnings, success and envisioning other countries in glowing colours, they have decided to lead a life of sacrifice which demands work, loneliness and loss, yet is more dignified and predictable. This is the path they will take as long as their legs carry them. It is a life without illusions.

Today, those who leave the country are accused of being traitors to the fatherland in the rhetoric which is prevalent nowadays in Hungary. Why is an emigrant a traitor? Because apparently he shows no solidarity with those who choose to stay. For “those who aren't with us, are against us” – the reversal of the Kádarian slogan so typical today. Paradoxically, the accusation unintentionally reveals that people at home are worse off than in other countries.

Like so many other Europeans, Hungarians are faced with a dilemma arising from the terrible realisation that progress cannot be achieved without responsibility, or that the term “national identity”

requires occasional rethinking. They challenge the senseless struggle between their national self-awareness and the renunciation of their home country.

As for myself, I belong to neither group. In the West, I feel like someone from the East, and in the East, I feel like a Westerner. Among whites, I'm black, and among blacks, I'm white. Those, who feel foreign in their own country, continue to feel foreign abroad. Your homeland is not a question of choice; it is inside yourself. Having no home is the same as being foreign.

Therefore, I find myself in a hopeless situation. And it's impossible to make a decision. In this silence after the din, I think to myself that there has never been a happy period in history which hasn't been preceded by something horrible. I stand around. To be honest, I like border regions. The place where two cultures meet, where the frontlines touch, that is where the intellectual stimulation is stronger than in milder inland regions. Naturally I never would have imagined it possible that freedom could be so easily dismantled as is happening here and now. You can remain an artist. This is my only possibility on this or the other side of the border.

The time could come when people get tired of defending themselves and their independence. When you get the feeling that dignity means living in peace and being permitted to choose between different ways of life. And you lay down their weapon. To either collaborate or be forced to go. That is the moment when all ties are cut. You take the step. Even with an abyss before you. In fact, falling might be the greatest freedom of all.

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<sup>1</sup> Mihály Vörösmarty (1800 – 1855); lines from the poem “Appeal”, the “second” national anthem of Hungary



**ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? 8.** I couldn't really say why. Some really good things have happened to me lately and I'm always happy.  
**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?** I think I'll still be in Budapest. I will have a full-time job and have a really great relationship.  
*Dóra, 23, intern in pharmaceutical counsel*



AUF EINER SKALA VON 1 BIS 10, WIE GLÜCKLICH BIST DU? 9 ½. Ich musiziere seit meinem neunten Lebensjahr. Ich spiele sehr gerne Cello und finde, dass es das schönste Instrument ist. Wir werden jetzt auch ein Konzert in Gödöllő haben, da bin ich Solistin im Weihnachtsoratorium von Corelli. WO SIEHST DU DICH IN FÜNF JAHREN? Ich möchte hier in Budapest im Kreise meiner Familie sein, so dass wir einander Liebe geben können. Jetzt habt ihr vielleicht Glück, dass ihr nicht nur so pessimistische Ungarn gesehen habt, denn im Allgemeinen sind sie immer pessimistisch. Katalin, 72, Cellistin des Opernhauses, im Ruhestand

# Group Time Travel, No Future

The profound restructurings in politics, culture and society that can be observed since the electoral victory of the Fidesz party do not follow any coherent ideology. They awake memories of quite different chapters in Hungary's chequered history.

An essay by **József Mélyi**.

In troubled times, people presumably think more often about the possibility of time travel. They spend a lot of time reconsidering what they might have done differently in the past or how they might escape the present into the future. Since the electoral victory of the Fidesz party in 2010, people in the press, on international forums or in conversations are increasingly wondering what time they have been thrown back into. What past period, they wonder, which they have experienced or studied, is similar to the regime that has now so quickly redefined their everyday lives. What is it that this government is seeking to force onto the contemporary world, either methodically or merely instinctually: the era of János Kádár or of Miklós Horthy; does it go back to the '40s or to the 19<sup>th</sup> century?

It's not easy to find a clear answer to this. Even to be able to understand the "world" in the first place, it would be necessary to take a trip a quarter century back in time, back to 1989. Only then would we have the comparative basis that would allow us to look back and see what kind of images of the future – and from today's perspective: illusions – we had then. What appears to us today as a reliable corner point is our belief at the time of getting closer to Europe. We had the feeling that we only needed to hold out a few

more years before we would arrive, for culturally and historically we have actually always belonged to the West. This is what we based our world on, our utopias – and starting from this basic idea we began, albeit hesitatingly and constantly clinging to our past, to restructure the system of our cultural institutions. Now we stand here, almost paralyzed. And to find the key to describe our situation, we turn our gaze to the time before 1989.

Anyone with at least 40 years life experience and who was possibly also a pioneer in his or her time, takes the first time travel back into the '80s, but even better to the Hungary of the '60s and '70s, to the period of the more and more consolidating era of János Kádár, head of state at the time and General Secretary of the Communist Party. Ultimately, one can exist here... It is not certain that the system forbids everything; instead it tolerates things, and if you're prepared to make a couple of small gestures, it will even support you.

What has remained with us from this Hungarian version of real socialism are the intention to co-opt or at least to make an effort to compensate, fraternalisation, self-censorship, reading be-

tween the lines. According to the old pattern, fidelity is also praised by the new "system of national coherence". The actors who years ago stood in a row like human decorations at political campaigns for Viktor Orbán are today theatre directors, almost to a man. But even critics, if they behave somewhat gently, can take part in the pleasures of state charity – from the hands of the "benevolent". In this complicated, and yet transparent world, one can see the whole group of dilemmas familiar from earlier times: How far can you go? What can you still accept? Where does opportunism start? But above all: How can one "hold out" and survive?

At the centralised state-run television stations, which since then have continually been used for party propaganda, a new channel was set up – where television programmes were broadcast from the Kádár period. Pure entertainment programmes in which the Communist Youth are erroneously glorified over and over. These programmes are regularly interrupted by current news, the style of which is reminiscent of the '50s. If the time travellers look around today, they also know that ideology is secondary. What's much more important is that

How can one "hold out" and survive?

the national festival of hit songs and the image of the ones who are always “more efficient”, of the country in oblivious celebration, is broadcast into everyone’s living room.

The next station of the journey is 1948, the time after a short, provisional phase, when democratic leftovers were set aside and nationalisation began with the era of socialism. The centralisation of art and culture introduced at the time, the guideline controlled by the centre of power, dawns on us again in the developments of today. At the time, socialist realism, enthroned above everything, to-

**The centralisation of art and culture dawns on us again.**

day, the all-embracing Hungarian Art Academy with its obligatory “National Duty” for all members. After a half century the term “coordination” is applicable once again. Within four years they managed to get one hand to prevail over each of the specific areas. They were controlled by the “lords of life and death” – as they were called at the time. The leaders of the individual segments were chosen by the government. This doesn’t necessary follow the pattern of the former party. It is more about a kind of “outsourcing”. Over the course of this, the institutions for film, theatre, museums and classical music – according to the interests of power or the fixed ideas of individuals – were reorganised. The state secretary nominally responsible for culture largely relinquished the variety and coordination of the individual areas and is merely a tiny department in a larger conglomerate called the “Ministry for Human Resources”. This designation reminds our time travellers of the film *Matrix*, in which machines get their energy from people. Or not only of 1948, but also of: 1984.

In the palimpsest layers of the journey in time, the epoch between the two world wars is the next one. The era under Miklós Horthy, the administrator of the Kingdom of Hungary. After the failure of the council republic in 1919, the new regime expelled leftist intellectuals from the cultural life of the country. At that time, those who found themselves forced to emigrate included the chemist and philosopher Mihály Polányi, the film director Alexander Korda or the painter and photographer László Moholy-Nagy. Today, liberal and leftist intellectuals, or those who have been categorized as liberal or leftist over the course of an incessant political campaign, no longer feel at home in their own country. The word “cosmopolitan” coming from the mouth of power has once again become a dirty word. The spokesman of the Hungarian Art Academy attacked critics of the regime as if they were “the reds” of 1919. If Horthy monuments are sometimes erected here

and there, this is tolerated. Anti-Semitic allusions are so widespread in parliament and in the press that they hardly get noticed anymore. Every week there are irredentist memorial events. At Kossuth Square in front of the parliament building, the government had had everything torn down with the express and symbol-laden goal of rebuilding this site to its condition before 1944. Sticking out among the old houses of the inner

city are carefully restored, richly equipped buildings with schools and cultural institutions of the church. The coffee-house Loyola stands, as they say, open to everyone with its vast offerings. Perhaps less

Hungarians left the country due to the unbearable political climate after the revolution of 1956 than did during the Horthy era. They architect and designer Marcell Breuer, the photojournalist Robert Capa or the composer Bélas Bartók opted for a different country at the time. Today, one proudly relies on the flag – as if it were precisely this that could imagine the current system as a spiritual home.

The fourth epoch of the journey in time is the outgoing nineteenth century, the economically prosperous time of the K.u.K. monarchy, in which we were defending our freedom from the Austrians, and not from the European Union – as is insinuated today in posters hung up all over the country. In reality, the government wishes it could go back to the time of the millennium celebrations of 1896, which is why they set such great store in implementing the megalomaniac

idea of a museum quarter, and that in an economic situation that is inadequate in every respect. Today, for the same reason, just like after the Compromise with Austria at the time of the monarchy, an artistic company could be considered and in fact implemented, the self-proclaimed holy site of Hungarian culture, the Hungarian Art Academy. It would hegemonically guard the arts and organize salon exhibitions in its art gallery, at its own discretion, “played off underhandedly”, just at had been done at the end of the nineteenth century.

All the traveller need do is to cast a brief glance at these development to confirm that no single epoch is being reinstalled here – rather elements are being mixed from various periods. The occupation of the space by the Hungarian Art Academy means invoking a world that existed a hundred and twenty years ago, sixty years ago and thirty years ago. The new buildings for sports stadiums, state sponsored football as a replace-

**The current system wants to shut off the future.**

ment for culture, on the other hand, open up a completely new dimension. I can think of no example from the past in which a state institution held a mass for the salvation of a sportsmen from another country, as the Ministry for Human Resources did for the Portuguese Eusébio.

Genre sculptures have been put up in every epoch. But at no other time would anyone have dared to put up a monument to the German occupation, in the name of a total falsification of history, on which the German eagle descends on the angel Gabriel, symbolising poor Hungary, from whose hand the orb falls.<sup>1</sup> The regime, with no consideration for the passage of time, focuses on the long tradition of the wounds suffered at the hands of the West, on that sometimes consistent, but usually self-exonerating principle with which it opposed the isolation of Hungarian culture to that of western civilisation, that hears nothing unless you speak its language. The self-proclaimed “system of national cooperation” shows itself to have no sense for time, even with regard to deep faultlines of archaic tribal culture, the irreconcilable contradiction between the courage to be small and the courage to dream big.

There is no clear epoch to be selected and copied, because there is also no coherent ideology. What holds everything together is only the striving for power itself, seizing it and holding on to it. In order to achieve this, those who have rewritten the constitution have no other means that to sink ever deeper into populism, and – adjusting to the rumour mills of the people – to find

the common denominator of undemandingness. Parallel to the deep restructuring in the area of education, all of this will leave behind serious damage to the fabric of culture. The system that has arisen in this

way will one day bequeath us the institutional cynicism with which even the basic values of western civilisation can be called into question. What remains will be a centralised cultural institutional construct that is nonetheless tailored to individual persons and their interests, disconnected more and more from any autonomy. In these sentences, the “one day” is the most glaring and most significant point. The current system basically wants nothing other than to shut off the future. It no longer has any image of it, because it takes itself for irreversible. It expects its subjects to have no thoughts for the future. But that’s exactly what the time travellers would probably never accept.

# “Is leaving an option?”

## Péter Kárpáti

I remember how unexpected and incomprehensible it was, a miracle, when we were allowed to travel to the West once a year starting at the beginning of the ‘80s. The euphoria of freedom. Those who did not return were no longer sentenced to long prison sentences. All at once, emigration was nothing more than a breach in the rules. Even then, however, it was still unimaginable for us to be able to trade in our forints for western currencies, unrestricted and at any time, no longer forced to buy German marks, American dollars, and French francs illegally and at unrealistically high prices, snatched with trembling hands in inner city doorways from groups of Arabs walking around. Even today, it seems strange to me that I don’t have to hide my Euros in my shoes when I travel abroad.

Later, when the borders were in fact opened, we still couldn’t imagine that someone from the East, a second-class citizen, could work in the West without problems. Now we seem to be suffering from amnesia. We hysterically try to forget that the freedom in our region is a precious and rare treasure. Even now, a shudder still runs through us, instinctively and secretly, when we travel to another country without stopping – at the same time we act as if we didn’t know or had forgotten that the Iron Curtain is much more fitting to us.

An absurdity, a mystical miracle, to go away at any time! To be able to choose a place to live! This consciousness even made it easier to bear the inner confinement, the foreignness in one’s own country, the powerlessness in this hideous and aggressive Bermuda Triangle.

Five hundred thousand have presumably already left the country. Fantastic, I envy them. The biggest dilemma with emigration today is that it gives rise to a new kind of confinement. Once I’ve gone, I can’t come back, for even the mere thought of it would be unspeakably depressing. If I stay away, I would be a refugee for political, moral or economic reasons, but no state would recognize this status, for on paper, officially, we are European citizens like any others.

The borders are only seemingly open, the economic and cultural Iron Curtain still surrounds us in its monstrosity. Most people who have gone and who could still go are also those who would be in a position to live at a European level here, albeit a modest one. For the millions who are vegetating in deeper poverty and who should be the first to flee in a mad rush, this option continues not to exist for them.

<sup>1</sup> German translator’s note: From the mid ‘30s to the end of the war, Hungary was a close ally of Italy under Mussolini and then Nazi Germany. After being occupied by Nazi Germany, the annihilation of Jews took place with the active aid of Hungarian henchmen.



ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? I'd say 8, since I'm healthy. There are times when I don't have anything to eat. The circumstances in Hungary are pretty crap, but that's no viewpoint. Or I've given up seeing it that way, I have friends and a fantastic family, so 8.  
WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS? No idea, man. I don't know. Working abroad, I think.  
Zoltán, 23, Student of social work

# “Schilling, Mundruczó and Pintér are just the tip of the iceberg. Everything below is melting away.”

**Andrea Tompa**, , theatre critic and writer, on the current situation of the independent theatre scene in Hungary. An e-mail interview by Aenne Quiñones.

**Aenne Quiñones:** The independent theatre scene in Hungary has to struggle against significant restrictions. After taking office in 2010, Fidesz – the ruling party – annulled the guarantee of state funding for independent theatre groups. In the current system they are treated in the category “Other”. Internationally renowned venues such as Trafó<sup>1</sup> now have to get by with reduced state support. On the other hand, there are new productions and performance locations in Budapest, such as Jurányi or MŰSZI, and the Átrium has been reopened. This has given rise to a lot of exciting new plays, including those by Béla Pintér and Kornél Mundruczó.

**What does the situation of independent Hungarian theatre makers look like today – after the collapse of the socialist system, the growing disenchantment after entering the EU in 2004 and with the constantly increasing influence of national-conservative governmental circles?**

**Andrea Tompa:** Independent theatre had already played an important role, even before the fall of the Wall, because the political system was more permeable. In neighbouring Eastern European countries such as Romania this was different. One could also say that in Hungary, alongside the repertoire of traditional theatre culture, there was another theatre culture with significant artists. The state's attitude toward them was sometimes tolerant, sometimes intolerant – like in the case of Péter Halász, who had to relocate his work to the US, where he founded his legendary Squat Theatre.

Independent theatre makers today come from two sources, either from the institutional system, that is, from the University of Performing Art. People like Árpád Schilling, Viktor Bodó or the filmmaker Kornél Mundruczó founded their ensembles after graduating there. Other figures, such

as the group around Béla Pintér, came out of the amateur theatre movement. At the beginning of the '90s, after a longish break, a new generation of directors starting speaking up, and contemporary dance also experienced a kind of heyday, until Árpád Schilling's Krétakör also started attracting international attention at the beginning of the last decade. This group, but also Viktor Bodó, Pintér's ensemble, the Artus group with a new theatrical language of movement, the music theatre of HoppArt and many others form a vibrant independent scene, which has gradually become capable of lobbying for itself. During the liberal period of government, they managed to secure a guarantee from the state of ten percent of theatre subventions for the independent scene. This provision was preceded by at least a decade of targeted work and lobbying activity. The law was meant to go into effect in 2010 – I was a curator myself – but with the change in

<sup>1</sup> Trafó is subsidised with an annual grant from the Budapest cultural budget. The problem lies in the fact that, after the radical cuts in funding for independent groups, fewer and fewer pieces are created that could be shown at Trafó in the first place. (A. T.)

government, the entire plan was immediately frozen. This cultural-political measure was thus not in effect for even a second. The law with the state guarantee had disappeared overnight, without any referendum or voting. Since then, financial support for the independent scene that runs by application process is permanently in danger.

Liberal cultural politics yielded no significant reforms whatsoever in the area of culture. As a whole everything was left as it had been. Everything that started with the conservative turn almost four years ago is rooted deep in the weakening democratic practice that had begun in the two decades after 1989. Even back then, decision-making processes were not particularly transparent. Any interests that were seen through were due to personal lobbying work. Civil society and the control of politics by professional organisations never came to be. Although Hungary was the first Eastern European country to introduce the principle of a public application call for theatre directors by ministerial (!) initiative in the mid '80s, politics and area expertise were never really liberated from one another in the decisions.

However, the cultural politics of the liberal government was different from what we're experiencing today in one decisive point, that there was no – ideological – battle against independent art. Since 2010, even the way that power is concentrated has changed: directors and decision makers at institutions have absolute and sole control. The new director of the national theatre, Attila Vidnyánszky, is a member of the minister president's advisory body, to name one example. This means, he advises his own boss and furthermore he holds various public offices. In the areas concerned, the ideological campaign has caused even more serious damage than the dismantling or even abolishment of grants (which can also be partially explained by the

economic crisis). The goal of this defamation is to equate non-institutional artistic work with dilettantism, hostility to the state, pornography or negativity. This is reminiscent of slogans from the '50s. All this can be extremely demoralising

**“There are no opportunities to experiment – not even to fail..”**

for an artist, who constantly has to justify his or her existence anyway. It unleashes anger and makes communication degenerate into farce. The chief ideologues of official Hungarian culture – whose representative and by now oversized organ is the Hungarian Art Academy – exhibit their own ideological preferences quite openly. They have installed a “new elite” and have equipped it with extraordinary power. In addition, they have managed to play subsidised theatre off in-

dependent theatre, and to significantly restrict their mutual permeability. Independent art could blossom, because they have enough topics to deal with. Support for it, both material and moral, has been shut down – at the same time, however, audiences have increased. Today above all, the ensemble around Béla Pintér has a stable and constantly increasing audience. But a considerable problem can be seen in newly founded organisations. New initiatives have few opportunities, they can hardly get by, since Schilling, Mundruczó and Pintér are just the tip of the iceberg. Everything below is melting away.

**AQ:** Current independently produced theatre is said to have increasingly taken on the critical role that most recently was occupied more by Hungarian film or by the theatre in Kaposvá in the '80s and the Katona József Theatre in the '90s. What topics are dealt with on stage? Can one speak of a counterproposal to the currently reigning populist understanding of culture? How can the relationship to the audience be described?

**AI:** I don't see it quite that way. In the so-called artist theatres in Budapest or in the national theatre, led until recently by Róbert Alföldi, there was in recent years and there still is today a thoroughly critical theatre, responsive to social issues. I see the difference as being more in the question of how thinking takes places that is critical of the system. That is, with what aesthetic means and what communication forms. The repertoire theatres generally prefer to communicate indirectly and to do this by means of classical plays. The reason for this lies on the one hand in their relation to tradition, and on the other hand in the dependence of theatre. Formulations that are too precise might put them at risk. A

provocative performance would immediately get to the powers that be, and that can have consequences today. Independent theatre can express itself more directly, it can be harsher, forthrightly calling things out for what they are.

For a while one could experience a certain tone in the national theatre that is more characteristic of independent productions, but that's over now. In Budapest – I'm not familiar enough with the provinces – many theatres today are attempting to act responsibly, critically. But the performances are based on a kind of fraternization with the audience, “we get it already”, “we know what's going on”, “we think the same way”. Often the theatre expresses itself about questions of pow-

**“The ideological campaign has caused serious damage.”**

er, of mechanisms, about individuals as victims. What's missing is a real dialogue with genuine spectators, with the intelligencia from the middle class, which lives in secure circumstances, is not very young, and above all is liberal. The audience needs to be questioned and interrogated about its responsibility. Gradually, the performances that are appearing are the same type that we saw before 1990: opportunistic theatre (which is uncritical and sees itself in agreement and is produced within the context of dominant ideological expectations), and oppositional theatre with critical and subversive tendencies.

**AQ:** Is it possible to speak of solidarity among independent theatre makers? To what degree can collaboration with international partners be a way to encourage survival in Hungary in the long term?

**AI:** There is perhaps solidarity, and individual groups can also represent their interests collectively, but they have no advocate in the offices responsible for culture. In the last three years, no cultural politician has emerged from the format that might have come to the defence of contemporary theatre productions, theatre makers or ensembles. Although they have been exposed to attacks many times over.

International cooperations unfortunately only represent a lifebelt for known, recognized artists – for instance for the four directors mentioned above. They can use it to get large productions up on their own feet that would otherwise have no financial support here in Hungary. Ensembles can't save themselves in this way. However, if we look at how these four got started – with small groups, experiments, not always with successful performances, and with real risks for artistic and existential uncertainty, which for me is the very essence of artistic self-discovery – then one can say: Such initial developmental work can't be helped by international cooperation any more than it can be by the climate here in Hungary. And this is also what should be seen as the greatest lack: Today hardly anyone of the quality of a Schilling, Mundruczó, Bodó or the Pintér ensemble will turn up anew. There are no opportunities to experiment, to form an ensemble – not even to fail.



**ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU?** 7 or 8. Because I do things that I like and also that I'm good at.  
**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?** I think at university. Afterwards I'd like to work in a company where you get interesting tasks as an electrical engineer. I definitely don't want to go abroad.  
*Bence, 17, student*



**ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU?** 8. I have the good fortune of being more satisfied that I was in my youth, since I have achieved a kind of quiet wisdom over time.  
**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?** I would like to meet someone and be together with this person. At the moment I'm also doing well, I don't have any problems, that's the only thing I still want to accomplish.  
*Etelka, 73, psychiatrist*



**ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU?** It could be better, so 8, but I feel good.  
**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?** Here in Hungary, I'm not planning on going abroad.  
*Gergely, 27, botany student*



**ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU?** 6. My life has developed splendidly. I'm happy, I have friends and my family is doing fine. But my long-term relationship has just broken up, and that makes me sad.  
**WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS?** I definitely want to live abroad, preferably in an English-speaking country and at the sea, which Hungary doesn't have. Miami Beach, that's a big dream.  
*Brigitta, 22, cashier*

Operating manual for the demented Merci Sápy, an 85-year-old poodle.

Take me home with you and put me in your drawer.

I've taken care of all the bigwigs: blew Rákosi, licked Kádár. And now?

Should I live in the forest? Just because I'm demented? Croak with the others? I have 10 Kossuth awards.

Can we disgrace Kossuth's name in this way? Never.

I've lost my spatial thinking. This always makes me furious. My greatest desire is to empty postboxes.

I need a sense of achievement! But I always mess everything up.

Then the shit with the shoes. Not lacing them up. Always missing the holes. Then I get aggressive!

Aggression is pain. I can only express it like that. I'm not motivated, so I'm aggressive.

Film and theatre only hurt me. I want to see demented films with demented contents and quite simple plots.

The dialogue rather quiet. Demented culture, politics! A demented minister president! Long live dementia!

I don't spit, I water. That's my hobby. Please don't take that away from me! Those are my new husbands:

Feri, Pisti, Zoli. They grew out of the humus of the old ones.

I grow them here in this little pot. They'll get big if I water them. And my humour therapy!

I have to go regularly to the therapeutic Laugh Club. You get a cap, inside you see things from the outside and

you talk about yourself. After therapy the symptoms have receded by 20% in my case. Who wants me?

Who will take me in his drawer? Nobody? Only death? No one wants me. Not us. The spit comes out of me.

You wanted to grow, you dirty swine?

You'll croak here with me. Nobody wants us, nobody needs us. Here's my body. Take it, eat it!

I'll show you the meat counter.



# “Is leaving an option?”

## Little Warsaw



ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? 8. Because I was a guest on the radio program “Pop Bag” yesterday and I won a book. Now I’ve picked it up.  
WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS? In five years I’d like to be working at a radio station.  
Miklós, 40, video studio employee



ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? 7. I’m a little happier than the average, but for me as a Japanese person it’s difficult to get used to other countries. For instance, I have a communication problem with children. They speak Hungarian and mine is very limited. This is something I struggle with, and that’s the explanation for the missing 30%.  
WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS? I just finished my management studies. My wife is doing her doctorate and will finish next year. If we have the opportunity, we’ll move to a different country. But it’s difficult to predict what it will be like in five years.  
Yamastha, 41, employee in a Japanese automobile company



ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? 7. Living conditions could be better, and young people should get better chances. Retirement and the health system could be reformed. The country is at its end.  
WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS? I would like to own my own house in a quiet rural area, work and live with children, an idyllic life.  
Viktória, 26, psychology student



ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? 9. This is determined by a lot of factors, such as my surroundings, my friends and my family. And by the fact that I have a goal in life and want to convey something, and that I see a way out into the future. I didn’t say 10 because it’s not this way everywhere around me. There are people who don’t feel well, and I can’t help them.  
WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS? First of all, I definitely want to continue school. But what will happen in 5 years? I don’t know, I’d like to travel. Get to know the world, but in order to support Hungary in doing so.  
Eszter, 15, student

*I’ve always just wondered about such surveys. About the way that anointed dignitaries express themselves on the same question. Who invented it? Or was it always already there? In the cinema we see an Indian chief’s tent, his people are squatting in a circle saying something, one after the other.*

Suddenly she was ashamed of her childish fantasy. She’d rather be taken for an adult. Stubborn-infantile thoughts impede communication. In situations like these, she wanted to appear competent. But it was only important to her to seem grown up in particular cases, otherwise she wanted to be anything but grown up. In this point she was negation itself.

*Surveys have the intention of giving those surveyed a – at least presumably – common denominator. They are meant, in the ideal case, to be agents in an image of unity. The concept comes from the host, and those invited, if they contribute productively, want to position themselves in the circuit, in the desperate attempt to maintain the appearance of their freedom.*

Now she was back on top again. She felt how good the mask fit her, how the shame that paralyzed her in view of her previous childishness started to evaporate and how her irritable aggressiveness started to ease.

*What am I doing here if I feel so crappy? Why don’t I get up and leave?*

It was clear to her that she’d rather avoid the answer. Nonetheless, she started thinking about it. The fact that there were questions was not new to her. Part of her job was to be confronted with such tasks. So far, however, she’s always tried to elude them. She wasn’t so crazy about public navel gazing. She didn’t like to think that her answer to the survey could become psychobabble.

*Is going away even a possibility?*

She decided to respond as if she’d understood the question, even before answering it, as if she’d quickly let run through her head what the meaning of it could be, in view of the problems that she was otherwise still concerned with at the time. She decided to supplement the answer by describing her current situation.

*I understand going away as a process of self-distancing. I will attempt to interpret it by means of the web of relationships of an acting subject.*

It was important to her to separate the professional and the private. Isn’t it enough to be idiotic in love? Does it also have to be that way with every other issue? As if there were a reassuring, real world of emotionless, optimal maintaining of distance, threatened by a confused, affective irrationality. Feelings are active in every situation. They constantly affect everything – even when their presence is denied or even forbidden in the name of a general agreement. But even when their existence is seen as justified, feelings do not completely get out of control. In her job she has a grip on them. It gave her a sense of security. In her work she found a certain equilibrium. She could always tackle the questions that arose calmly and objectively. Or at least she could maintain the appearance of it to the outside – thanks to the etiquette that ruled in her workplace, which allowed her to keep enough distance. Her private life, however, a terrain of close personal relationships, was a segregated zone for her, in which she was both compelled and free enough to enjoy life unrestrained in her own feelings, both good and bad.

*Going away exists. It’s a fact. Leaving, letting go is not only a possibility, but a pure necessity. Sooner or later people let go of what they had always taken to be the world. But how can this development, which will appear with certainty at some point, be reflected at all as a condition ahead of time? How could one imagine letting go in terms of attachment, and attachment in terms of letting go? I understand attachment to be when I can’t imagine separating*

*myself from something or someone. And I understand leaving, letting go as no longer knowing, but only attempting to explain, to myself or others, what my attachment actually consisted of.*

She asked for an extension. She wasn't ready in time. What was it again, that she'd called work? Time proved to be too short. Too short for what she'd had in mind. A vicious circle: the expectation with regard to oneself that originated in impulsiveness, frightening uncertainty, external pressure, only the pressure of deadlines helps, dissatisfaction after the fact, vulnerability, than again impulsiveness.

*Where could one find the ideal life? I think the question is secondary, for everybody is born into some place or other. This is the fixed point from which everything will be measured. So you think about yourself starting from there – and about the place where you are.*

The unmasking of the adult world led her to formless aggression that swirled around in her, mixed up with expectations of her ideal. Facing up to reality – both at a private level as well as a social one. She already knew how it is when you realize something that is far removed from the ideal. But she hadn't drawn any personal consequences from this. She didn't see any link between her idealizing expectations and her negative feelings in relation to her past. She thought she could basically judge what was good and what was bad. She could choose. The decision was completely her own. She bigotedly took it for a moral question.

*Basically, the ideal place is in ourselves, in our imagination, and the big question is the degree to which we can discover it and realise it in ourselves, but above all, the degree to which we accept being able to identify with what we have been able to realise of our ideal.*

If all goes well, you get praise, if it goes badly, you get cursed or even punished. Now that she is grown up, her behaviour toward her surroundings follows this principle. The bad is not good, it's shame, fear, rage. The good gets its reward. Did she call that love?

*Going away is arriving somewhere else. Going away without arriving is merely one half of the question. Breaking out of the given system of relations, but without any transition from one situation to another.*

Suddenly she saw the situation the other way round.

*I'm not distancing myself, things are getting distant from me.*

She was dismayed by this thought.

*Distancing oneself – that comes without warning. Taking off is unsettling. The only thing I can think when I'm taking off is that I'm weak. And how few resources I have. How very alone I am. At the mercy of everything. I'm afraid of distancing myself. But what am I distancing myself from? It would be absurd to act as if I had a clear opinion, for that's not the most important thing. It would only cover up the feeling of how painful the opinion of others about me is. How hurtful, horrible and depressing it is to be rejected.*

Gradually she admitted it, she let it come near. She didn't cling any more.

*Distancing oneself, that's pretty sad. Loss is sad. That it no longer exists, is no longer here, that it no longer exists for me. You miss that.*

Now an empty, missing part resonates in you.

*It would be good to be loved, embraced, understood, supported. But I'm grown up, I should know that all of that is up to me, to how I see things, how I experience them.*

To what degree can your own self-image contradict the image that others have of you?

*Distancing oneself is a feeling that appears every before conscious thought. It is not something chosen according to one's own principles, but is a randomly incurred state. Above all it is characterised by the fact that you can't deliberately influence it, you can't cope with it that way. How can I behave at the level of consciousness in relation to this situation, which designates my condition, which I in turn perceive and interpret as distancing myself. Passively, patiently, describing, judging, that is, condemning? That is, opposed to what my deep, involuntary, emotional reactions have triggered? Or do I accept the situation, actively experience it. That is, according to and in resonance with my real emotional aspirations?*

The persons who respond to the survey see themselves faced with a task that they attempt to tackle, while their involuntary thoughts continue to supplement and comment on the question posed. It lures them into a trap. It picks a fight with them, criticises them, doubts them, exposes them.

*Hidden behind going away is usually the intention of escaping oneself. Why should I go far away? After all, I'm happy being close. What I would most like is to distance myself from proximity – this is often less the reason than the explanation for what has already happened to me. And I merely attempt to find an explanation for what happened to me against my own will. By no means do I want to get out of anything, on the contrary, my own intention is much more to get closer to things. Saying I want to clear out is a lie, since I'm only drawn away from outside forces. This is what pulls away from me. While I come more and more into unity with myself, numerous things from the world that I know are always getting detached from me.*

Those who write carry on conversations themselves. They communicate alone. They present themselves, invent, think, speak, express themselves. In their loneliness they only make everything more complicated. No typical action heroes. It would be so fantastic to act in this!

*Getting-closer appears to me in my field of vision as an increasing size that I perceive quantitatively, while distancing-myself refers to a decreasing quality in perception, both in relation to the entire field of vision and to the sum of all layers of perception. As soon as we experience presence in our bodies, learn how to use them instrumentally, ground our existence as human beings step by step, we found ourselves in a process of continually increasing distancing, measured some kind of proximity – given ahead of time and now to be understood as the first phase of distancing. Falling away from the warmth and comfort contained in identity into the world, measurable by means of distances between the human being and the separated things, we only learn how to recognize, interpret and identify the motherly subject in the space of emptiness. This means that the unconscious totality of the space of emptiness is gradually arranged by the recognition of the singular entity, separated from the context. This recognition is filled out to totality by the receptive spatial perception as the only thing that can be recognized in face of the unknown, as well as – in a figurative as well as a literal sense – as a close perception of the senses. But in this, and starting from this point, we already begin to distance ourselves continually. The borders of our individual egos become more rigid and more expansive. Until in the end the lifelessness forces its way into the centre of the body, drying out the sea of the living being in our bodies – there is no sea anymore, only dead ground.*

An action hero doesn't think, doesn't imagine anything, doesn't remember anything, hasn't a care, isn't ashamed, isn't angry, isn't afraid, isn't sad, isn't even happy. He doesn't talk much. The only dramatic event is when it turns out that he feels.

*My relentless longing for closeness only proves the permanent self-distancing of my life. The delusional conditions of closeness, the longing to dissolve the borders of the ego, the drive to an ever more total identity: a singular self-deception. The disillusionment, the necessary disappointment over failure teaches me to be realistic and to act. To what degree can I identify with a system of relations? It would be more realistic to see it from the point of view of transparency, taking the question of closeness and distance as my own scope.*

At first the action hero doesn't even notice the possibility of getting closer. He experiences it as an unexpected novelty, that closeness affects him as well. Experiencing it is a quite different state than remembering it, imagining it, depicting, communicating about it. Action and the representation of action are not the same thing. The representation is the action itself. The writer writes that he is writing. The reader reads that he is reading.

*In short: It is a pleasure to arrive. But it is good to leave.*

## Biographies

→ **Márton Gergely** (\*1976) studied history and media studies in Budapest and Hamburg. He wrote his thesis on the German student revolts of 1968. Since 2000 he has worked for various Hungarian online and print publications. Gergely's range of topics includes environmental protection, sports politics, and European peace movements. In particular, he works on developments in the Balkans and in the German-speaking world. In 2002 Gergely was employed in the Berlin office of the taz. As the Budapest correspondent, he continues to write for the taz and in 2011 took part in the taz media congress, speaking about the political background and emergence of the new government's restrictive media laws. Since 2008 he has been editor in chief of the online version of Hungary's most widely circulated national daily newspaper, Népszabadság.

→ **Adrienn Hód** (\*1975) is a choreographer and studied at the Budapest Dance School with Iván Angelus and others. In 2007 she founded Hodworks. The group regularly invites artists from various areas, but consists of a core group of people that have been collaborating on a long-term basis. With Hodworks, Hód has developed a method to work on new forms and dramaturgical principles. She focuses her attention on the deconstruction and reconstruction of movement and space. In addition, Hód is greatly interested in experimental music. In 2011 the company was in residence at the Tanzfabrik in Berlin and they showed their piece "Choice" at Radialsystem V. In 2012 Hodworks took their piece "Basse danse" to the Maison des Arts de Créteil in Paris. The same year saw "The way my father imagined it all", a HAU co-production. In addition, Hodworks was selected as Aerowaves Priority Company in 2012 and 2014, and in 2012 they won the Rudolf Laban Award for artistic quality. In May 2013, their most recent work "Dawn" was premiered at Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts. The performance at HAU Hebbel am Ufer is the German premiere.

→ **Péter Kárpáti** (\*1961) is a writer and director. He teaches dramatic writing at the University of Theatre and Film Arts in Budapest. His plays have been performed in Europe, the US and Canada. In 2010 his "Acts of the Pitbull" was premiered at Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts in Budapest. This performance is a collaboration with the group The Secret Company, of which Kárpáti is a founding member. The company attempts to get beyond the boundaries between theatre and everyday life, with a performance style that is heavily based on improvisation. Kárpáti's works are often performed in spatial arrangements that include the audience so as to arouse intensity and intimacy. "Acts of the Pitbull" was invited to the Contemporary Drama Festival in Budapest and the Festival Standard idéal of Bobigny MC93 in Paris. For the new staging of HOPPart, "Hungari", a cooperation of Trafó and Secret Company / Füge Productions, which premiered in February 2014, Kárpáti served as director.

→ **Krétakör** (Chalk Circle) is a centre for contemporary art forms in Budapest and was founded in 1995 by Árpád Schilling. As artistic director, he regularly develops pieces with his legendary ensemble, such as "W-Workers' Circus" after Georg Büchner's "Woyzeck" or "The Seagull" by Anton Chekhov, with which Krétakör became one of the most innovative voices in the European theatrical landscape. Since 2008 the platform no longer concentrates on dramatic works with actors, but on developing projects with young people and non-professionals, also out-



ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? 10. I feel well, I make efforts to be okay. Unfortunately I live alone, my husband died, and my children live abroad, but I manage.  
WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS? Here. I don't think there will be any big changes in my life. My children live in England. But it doesn't matter, I've settled in quite well.  
Retired teacher, somewhere over 70

side Budapest. With this work they seek to react to social and political conflicts. The Production "Krisis – triógia, III: A papnö" ("Crisis – Trilogy, III: The Priestess") with young people under the direction of Árpád Schilling was seen in 2012 at the Vienna Festwochen and in 2013 at the Augenblick mal! Festival in Berlin.

→ **Little Warsaw** is an artist collective. András Gálik (\*1970) and Bálint Havas (\*1971) met while studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest and have been working together under the name Little Warsaw since 1999. They first attracted international attention with their work "Body of Nefertili", which was shown at the Venice Biennale in 2003. Their first retrospective took place in Münster in 2010. András Galik and Bálint Havas have had a presence at the Berlin Biennale, the Prague Biennale, at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and at the October Salon in Belgrade as well as at the GFZK Leipzig and the Apex Art Gallery in New York. Sculptures and monuments in public spaces often form a basis for them to thematise social transformations and changing political spaces. Their works reflect the dissolution of existing systems, especially the transition of socialist structures into a post-industrial market economy.

→ **József Mélyi** (\*1967) is an art historian and critic. He has been teaching art history and theory at various Budapest universities since 2005. Since 2010 he has been a lecturer at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts. Between 1994 and 1999 Mélyi was employed at the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Berlin. In 2000 he founded the internet art journal Exindex, where he was editor in chief until 2003. At that point he worked for two years as an appointee of the cultural programme for the Goethe Institute in Budapest. In the period of 2005 to 2006, Mélyi curated the programme of the Year of Hungarian Culture in Germany. In 2007 he was also responsible for "Kempelen – Man in the Machine" at the Kunsthalle Budapest and at the ZKM in Karlsruhe (co-curator) and in 2009 for the exhibition "Amerigo Tot – Parallel Constructions" at the Ludwig Múzeum in Budapest. Mélyi regularly publishes critiques and studies in Hungarian art and cultural journals.

→ **Kornél Mundruczó** (\*1975) studied theatre and film directing at the University for Theatre and Film in Budapest. He has been invited many times to the Cannes International Film Festival, including with the film "Tender Son – The Frankenstein Project". In 2009 he founded the Proton Theatre together with Dóra Bükí. He has directed theatre both in Hungary and abroad, including at the Thalia Theater in Hamburg and at Schauspiel Hannover. Mundruczó continually works with his actors, developing his projects as a team. The works are marked by a realism that, in conjunction with the hyperrealist aesthetics of his long-term set designer Márton Ágh, has produced an unmistakable form. The quasi-documentary style makes it possible to see reality from a certain distance. Mundruczó has been represented at the Alcantara Festival in Lisbon, at the Kunstenfestivaldesarts in Brussels and at De Internationale Keuze in Rotterdam. The HAU co-production "Szégyen" ("Shame") was shown at the Viennese Festwochen in 2012 and at the re-opening of HAU Hebbel am Ufer in Berlin.

## Biographies

→ **Béla Pintér** (\*1970) is a writer, actor and director. In 1987 he began working as an actor with the group Arvisura. At the Szkéné Theatre at the TU in Budapest, Pintér founded his own company PBEST in 1998, which has won many Hungarian and international awards over the last 15 years. The company has produced 19 world premieres, which are particularly concerned with the history and cultural traditions of Hungary. He links this up with observations about the current political situation. In Germany, the group has already appeared several times with their plays: Heidelberger Stückemarkt; Theater der Welt Festival in Stuttgart; Euro-Scene, Festival of Contemporary European Theatre in Leipzig; Werkpreis spielzeiteuropa / Berliner Festspiele in Berlin; Theater Tri-bühne in Stuttgart; Theater der Welt in Mülheim an der Ruhr and in Essen; Laokoon Festival in Hamburg and also in Karlsruhe, in Mülheim and in Dortmund. His play "Szutyok" ("Scum") was performed at the Neue Stücke aus Europa-Festival in Mainz, at the international theatre festival THEATERFORMEN in Hannover and at Zurich's Theater Spektakel. Theater der Zeit even published Scum as an appendix. After the German-language premiere of "Unsere Geheimnisse" ("Our Secrets") at HAU Hebbel am Ufer, the play will be shown in May 2014 at the Viennese Festwochen.

→ **Csaba Polgár** (\*1982) studied acting at the University for Theatre and Film in Budapest. He is a founding member of the group HOPPart. This was founded in 2007 by students and is led by Tamás Ascher and Eszter Novák. In its works, which are created collectively, HOPPart seeks out new musical forms of theatre. The group meets the current political situation in Hungary not with resignation, but with black humour. Since 2007 Polgár has been working as an actor in the ensemble at the Örkény István Theatre. In 2008, he premiered his first staging, of Heinrich Kleist's "The Battle of the Teutoburg Forest", followed by Elfried Jelinek's "Rohonc" ("Rechnitz"). With "Korijolánusz" (based on Shakespeare's "Coriolanus") he was invited to the Festival Radikal Jung in 2012 at Munich's Volkstheater. In 2013 he staged another play in Munich, "Julius Caesar". In Hungary, his plays have received the award for the best independent performance (2011) and the Junior Prima Primiissima award for artists under 30 (also 2011).

→ **SpeakEasy Project** is a working platform for collectively developed art projects, founded by **László Józsa**. He studied at the Central European University in Budapest and has been working as a producer and production director in film and television since 2004. Józsa has made documentaries and short films for the station TV2-Hungary, Hungarian National Broadcasting and various online platforms. In 2011 he produced the independently financed work "Film Until the Ashes", in which he accompanied a cycle tour from Great Britain to Australia. **Loránd Balázs Imre** has been a member of SpeakEasy Project since 2008. As a director, he collaborates closely with László Józsa and has built up a large network of support for the working platform. Previously he worked in the US, above all for non-profit organisations, and in Hungary as a PR assistant, consultant and project manager for various communications agencies. Since 2008 he has been managing director for the Hungarian branch of the communications agency East Side Consulting.



ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? 6. I have a lot of problems and this city is not the best place for me. The people are often louts and that wears me down.  
WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS? In Holland, I hope.  
Alexandra, 16, student

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? I also think people are louts. Everybody is so anti-social that it carries over to others. There are very few people that are okay. Sometimes something can happen in a half a minute, and that doesn't cost anything, but it makes a person's day a lot more pleasant. But that's often impossible for most people.  
WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS? Also in Holland.  
Tamás, 17, student

**Csaba Gyula Hernáth** has been a member of SpeakEasy Project since 2012 and participated in "Menjek / Maradjak" as an editor. He graduated with a masters degree in visual communication and developed various videos, including those using the Anima Sound System.

→ **György Szabó** (\*1959) studied cultural management and in 1998 founded Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts, where he was director until 2013 and where he is currently acting as General Manager. Previously he was curator of the youth centre Petőfi Csarnok in Budapest, which presents cultural events attended by up to 60,000 visitors. Szabó transformed the current Trafó building from a transformer station into the first interdisciplinary production house in Hungary and to one of the most important cultural centres in Budapest. For almost three decades he has been working in a network, including within DÉPARTS, with many international partners, and is an acknowledged expert in the contemporary dance and theatre scene. Szabó was a member of the Association for Contemporary Dance in Hungary and of the dance committee for the national cultural fund. He is also greatly interested in the constantly shifting production conditions for artists.

→ **Andrea Tompa** (\*1971) was born in Cluj/Romania and is a theatre scholar and critic. In 1990 she moved to Hungary and studied Russian literature in Budapest. She teaches at the Babes-Bolyai University in Cluj. Her scholarly work focuses on Eastern European theatre, especially from Russia and Hungary. Tompa is the editor of the theatre journal Színház and publishes in numerous Hungarian and international publications, for instance in Theater der Zeit and Theater heute. Currently Tompa is president of the Association of Hungarian Theatre Critics. Together with Beata Barda and Tamás Jászay she curated the Hungarian Showcase in 2013. She is the author of the novels *The Hangman's House* and *Top to Tail*.

→ **Anna Wessely** (\*1951) studied art history and English in Budapest, Munich und Marburg, followed by sociology in Budapest, where today she works as professor of sociological theory. In addition, she has taught at the Academy of Fine Arts and at the Moholy-Nagy Arts University in Budapest. She has held numerous guest professorships in Berlin, Amsterdam, Cambridge, Berkeley and Rome. From 2005 to 2006 she was a member of the advisory board to the Hungarian Cultural Minister and from 2013 to 2014 director of the Robert Angelusz College at the Eötvös Loránd University. Wessely is the editor of the interdisciplinary criticism journal BUKSZ (Budapest Review of Books).

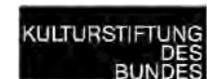


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ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW HAPPY ARE YOU? 3, because of the situation in Hungary.  
WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF IN FIVE YEARS? At home. I'll be retired.  
Péter, 60, salesman

# Leaving is not an option?

Current artistic positions from Hungary / Supported by the German Federal Cultural Foundation.



## Kornél Mundruczó / Proton Theatre Dementia, or the Day of My Great Happiness

*In Hungarian with German subtitles*

**9.-11.3. / HAU2**

The Lipot is a well-known psychiatric hospital in Budapest. When it was bought out by an investor, the patients landed on the street. Kornél Mundruczó and co-author Kata Webér provide a glimpse into the chasms of a society that disposes of people who are no longer marketable. Dementia is a dazzling musical farce which exposes a deteriorated system.

Production: Proton Theatre. Coproduction: HAU Hebbel am Ufer, Theatre National de Bordeaux Aquitaine, Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts (Budapest), HELLEAU – Europäisches Zentrum der Künste (Dresden), FestivalDe Keuze / Rotterdamse Schouwburg, Noorderzon Performing Arts Festival (Groningen), SPIELART Festival (München), Festival Automne en Normandie (Rouen), Maria Matos Teatro Municipal (Lissabon), Künstlerhaus Mousonturm (Frankfurt am Main), Kunstenfestivaldesarts (Brüssel). Eine Koproduktion von House on Fire und NXTSTP mit Unterstützung des Kulturprogramms der Europäischen Union.

## Csaba Polgár / HOPPart Company Korijolánusz

after William Shakespeare

*Hungarian with German subtitles*

**9.+10.3. / HAU1**

An adaptation of Shakespeare's "Coriolanus," set in Hungary after the fall of communism. How can democracy succeed in a post-socialistsociety? How cynical do the promises of the future from that time sound today? The HOPPart Company was one of the first classes for music and acting at the University of Theatre and Film in Budapest. Their Korijolánusz was awarded best independent production of the year by the Association of Theatre Critics in 2011.

Production: HOPPart Company. Supported by MU Theater, FÜGE Productions, Ministry of Human Resources of Hungary, MasterCard, Budapest Bank.

## Árpád Kákonyi / Péter Kárpáti / HOPPart Company Hungari

*In Hungarian with German simultaneous translation*

**13.-15.3. / HAU3 / German premiere**

Within the last few years, 500,000 Hungarians have left their native country. Those who have emigrated have the need to stay in electronic contact with old friends or other expats. Virtual space becomes a substitute for the homeland. Hungari is a concert performance. The music replaces not only the Internet but also the proximity to one another that has gone lost.

Production: HOPPart Company. Supported by Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts / Kontra Klub (Budapest) and Secret Company / FÜGE Productions (Budapest).

THEATRE

## Péter Kárpáti / Secret Company Acts of the Pitbull

*In Hungarian with German simultaneous translation*

**9.-11.3. / HAU3 / German premiere**

A raging prophet arrives in Budapest after wandering for a thousand years. Barely has he arrived at the train station before he starts roaming through the city, acting like a pitbull on a playground. Using black humour, author and director Péter Kárpáti paints a nightmarish portrait of Hungarian society.

Production: FÜGE Productions, Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts (Budapest). Mit Unterstützung des National Cultural Fund of Hungary..

THEATRE

## Béla Pintér and Company Our Secrets / Titkaink

*In Hungarian with German simultaneous translation*

**14.-16.3. / HAU2 / German premiere**

Back to the Budapest of the '80s. The story takes place in one of those dance halls where Hungary's rural folklore was being rediscovered and celebrated. In defiance of all contemporary reminiscing, Béla Pintér's play does not cast any nostalgic look back but talks about how our secrets have come into the political reality of our time. It's about former informants that became leaders; about villains and evildoers who managed to survive every political shift.

Production: Béla Pintér and Company. Supported by EMMI – Ministry of Human Resources of Hungary, National Cultural Fund of Hungary, Székéné Theatre and Goethe-Institut (Budapest).

THEATRE

## Hodworks Dawn

**14.-16.3. / HAU3 / German premiere**

Adrienn Hód is without a doubt one of the most important voices in the dance scene in Hungary. She is known for her radical approach to bodies, space, experimental music and the interrelation of these on stage. In the latest production Dawn of Hodworks, the human body takes the centre position. It opens up in front of us like a landscape, dressed in the outlines of the muscles and free from prejudices.

Coproduction: Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts (Budapest). Supported by EMMI – Ministry of Human Resources of Hungary, National Cultural Fund of Hungary, Off Foundation, New Performing Arts Foundation, SIN Culture Center, Workshop Foundation, Départs.

DANCE

## Little Warsaw text war pic

**9.-16.3. (not on 12.+13.3.) / HAU2**

Little Warsaw is one of the internationally best-known artist groups in Hungary. Their works are reflections on the dissolution of existing systems, particularly the transformation of socialist structures into a post-industrial market economy. For the duration of the festival, András Gálik and Bálint Havas, the two heads of the collective, will open up a studio in HAU2.

INSTALLATION

**Adresses:**  
HAU1 – Stresemannstr. 29, 10963 Berlin  
HAU2 – Hallesches Ufer 32, 10963 Berlin  
HAU3 – Tempelhofer Ufer 10, 10963 Berlin

**Tickets:**  
T. +49 (0)30 - 259 004 -27  
General box office HAU2: Mo-Sa 3-7 pm  
Box offices at the individual venues are open one hour before each performance  
Online booking: [www.hebbel-am-ufer.de](http://www.hebbel-am-ufer.de)

## Krétakör

**9.-16.3. (not on 12.+13.3.) / HAU2**

Video installation with works from 2008 to 2012.

INSTALLATION

## SpeakEasy Project Menjek/Maradjak (Leave/Stay)

Documenting The New Mobility

*Filmscreening with comments, Hungarian with English subtitles*

**13.3. / HAU1**

After New York and London, the documentary film project Menjek / Maradjak now collects stories in Berlin from Hungarians who have left their native land.

FILM DIALOGUE

## Leave or stay?

*Hungarian with German translation*

**13.3. / HAU1**

More and more Hungarians are considering going abroad, be it for economic or political reasons. Together with director Béla Pintér and theatre manager György Szabó (Trafó – House of Contemporary Arts), editor Márton Gergely (daily newspaper Népszabadság) discusses this current trend.

DIALOGUE

## It's a life without illusions

*Hungarian with German translation*

**16.3. / HAU1**

Journalist Patrick Wildermann speaks with art historian and curator Jozsef Mélyi and sociologist Anna Wessely about the paradoxes of artistic practice in relation to current political developments within the European borders.

DIALOGUE

## HOPPartklub Concert and party with DJ Raba

**9.3. / WAU**

Actors from HOPPart present a cappella versions of pop songs from the '80s and '90s.

MUSIC

## Party Anima Sound System DJ-Set

**15.3. / WAU**

Anima Sound System (musicians from the SpeakEasy film project) present a unique melding of Eastern European folk and electronic music.

MUSIC

**So 9.3.**

17:00 / HAU1

**Csaba Polgár / HOPPart Company**

Korijolánusz / after William Shakespeare

**Péter Kárpáti / Secret Company**

Acts of the Pitbull

German premiere

17:00 / HAU3

19:00 / HAU2

**Eröffnung: Little Warsaw**

text war pic

Opened 9.–16.3. (not on 12+13.3.), from 18:00 / Admission free

19:00 / HAU2

**Krétakör**

Videoinstallation

Opened 9.–16.3. (not on 12+13.3.), from 18:00 / Admission free

20:00 / HAU2

**Kornél Mundruczó / Proton Theatre**

Dementia, or the Day of My Great Happiness

**HOPPartklub**

Concert / Afterwards: Party with DJ Raba / Admission free

**Mo 10.3.**

18:00 / HAU1

**Csaba Polgár / HOPPart Company**

Korijolánusz / after William Shakespeare

**Kornél Mundruczó / Proton Theatre**

Dementia, or the Day of My Great Happiness

Afterwards: Artist talk / Moderation: Andrea Tompa

21:00 / HAU2

**Péter Kárpáti / Secret Company**

Acts of the Pitbull

21:00 / HAU3

**Di 11.3.**

20:00 / HAU2

**Kornél Mundruczó / Proton Theatre**

Dementia, or the Day of My Great Happiness

**Péter Kárpáti / Secret Company**

Acts of the Pitbull

Afterwards: Artist talk / Moderation: Andrea Tompa

20:00 / HAU3

**Do 13.3.**

19:00 / HAU1

**SpeakEasy Project**

Menjek/Maradjak (Gehen/Bleiben)

Documenting The New Mobility / Filmscreening with comments

**Árpád Kákonyi / Péter Kárpáti / HOPPart Company**

Hungari

German premiere

**Leave or stay?**

Panel with Béla Pintér, György Szabó

Moderation: Martón Gergely / Admission free

21:00 / HAU1

**Fr 14.3.**

19:00 / HAU3

**Hodworks**

Dawn

German premiere

**Béla Pintér and Company**

Our Secrets / Titkaink

German premiere

**Árpád Kákonyi / Péter Kárpáti / HOPPart Company**

Hungari

20:00 / HAU2

**Béla Pintér and Company**

Our Secrets / Titkaink

20:00 / HAU3

**Árpád Kákonyi / Péter Kárpáti / HOPPart Company**

Hungari

**Anima Sound System DJ-Set** / Party / Admission free

22:00 / WAU

**Sa 15.3.**

19:00 / HAU3

**Hodworks**

Dawn

**Béla Pintér and Company**

Our Secrets / Titkaink

20:00 / HAU2

**Béla Pintér and Company**

Our Secrets / Titkaink

20:00 / HAU2

**Imprint**

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Indulás  
Departures



**LEAVE?**