



SAY IT NOW!

An interdisciplinary project on the performance of language
February 17 – 25, 2006, Kunstencentrum Vooruit and other locations
in Ghent, Belgium

“Say it now!” brings our principal means of communication to center stage: language. The Siemens Arts Program together with the Kunstencentrum Vooruit in Ghent will be holding an interdisciplinary theme week from February 17 through 25, 2006 featuring theater pieces, interventions, performances, concerts, videos, and installations which all have to do with language, the various ways language is presented, and with our linguistic behavior towards others.

The wide array of networks and technologies that are currently available for communications have only been necessitated by language. Yet they also raise the question as to what actually joins people together. The event “Say it now!” is a response to this, for it focuses on speech and the ways in which language is presented. Speech is performed in settings, on social, personal, or political stages, where conversations are conducted, enacted, rehearsed, instigated and, time again, also avoided, declined or thwarted. Consequently the project directs our attention to speech in the moment “now”: It highlights language that wants not merely to be understood, but to be experienced. The project also examines, however, the other side of speech, which reveals what it not said. “Say it now!” talks about what actually happens when we speak.

Four threads will run through the program of “Say it now!”, reflecting the different ways artists approach speech. The first is about speaking itself, done in the first person. A number of works look at personal confessions that divulge the author’s own biography. This permits a space to be opened between autobiography and fiction in which complex relationships can be thought through.

French choreographer Jérôme Bel and his Thai colleague Pichet Klunchun will conduct a dialogue on what the two of them, despite coming from quite different traditions, both find interesting: dance, movement, and the meaning that is concealed within, will be made visible by the spoken word.

The second thread is no longer about speech per se, but about speaking for others – for a majority that often is not clearly named, about advocacy such as occurs in political speeches.

Among others, Boris Charmatz will take a piece he devised in France and develop it further for the Belgian audience: As a reaction to the presidential candidacy of extreme Rightist Jean-Marie Le Pen in France in 2002, Charmatz staged a stirring speech for Le Pen’s political adversary, Lionel Jospin, which to his mind should have been quite indispensable but sadly never came about. Similarly, Pieter De Buysser and the ensemble from NTGent will take political speeches and their reclamation as the material for a number of interventions.

Speech always involves an opposite number. Which is why the third thread swaps sides from the speaker to the listeners: it subjects the audience to experiences concerning the elision of speech, the physicality of an utterance, or gaps in perception.

Cooperating partners

Kunstencentrum Vooruit and Siemens Arts Program in collaboration with NTGent and S.M.A.K. (Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst)

Artists

AGF & Sue C (DE/US), Rosa Barba (DE), Jérôme Bel & Pichet Klunchun (FR/TH), Hans Bryssinck (BE), Boris Charmatz (FR), Pieter De Buysser (BE), Paul De Marinis (US), deufert & plischke (DE), Lisa DiLillo (US), Dora Garcia (ES), Caroline Hainaut & Palle Dyrvall (BE), Philip Jeck (UK), Eric Joris (BE), Valérie Lamontagne (CA), Jef Mercelis (BE), Tujiko Noriko (JP), NTGent-ensemble (BE), Bob Ostertag (US), Patricia Portela (PT), David Rokeby (CA), Janek Schaefer (UK), Tale of Tales (BE), Michelle Teran & Jeff Mann (CA), and Kris Verdonck (BE)

Venues

Kunstencentrum Vooruit
Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23
9000 Ghent, Belgium

NTGent
Sint Baafsplein 17
9000 Ghent, Belgium

Booking of tickets

www.vooruit.be
T: +32 / 9 / 2 67 – 28 28

p.t.o.

After a lengthy break, the U.S. musician Bob Ostertag will be contributing to the event by premiering a new, revised version of his most renowned work, "Sooner or later". A boy in El Salvador during the 1980s weeps and laments at the grave of his father, who was killed by the National Guard. At first his mournful words can still be heard and understood. But then Bob Ostertag slices up the boy's voice until the words are no longer there. And yet the lament never stops. Although the words have lost all meaning, the feeling of grief is expressed by their sound alone.

Finally a fourth thread with installations is dedicated to the mediatization of speech. Ultimately they deprive speech of its physical dimension in order to gain new, virtual dimensions that are presented on one of the many stages of our everyday dealings with one another.

For instance, media artist David Rokeby in his piece "n-Cha(n)t" allows computers to be his principle performers as they sing, speak, and react to one another. The result is an interactive, computer-based voice oratorio.

Like the works already mentioned, the majority of the other pieces during the nine-day event in Ghent operate at the borders between the arts: The trilogy "Flatland" by Portuguese performer Patricia Portela will whisk the spectators out of the auditorium to other parts of the city, and reflect in a kind of theatrical essay on our relationship to the worlds of language, texts, data, and concepts. Likewise on the borderlines between art and theater, dance and architecture, installation and performance, Kris Verdonck, to name one further example, explores the increasing influence of technology on our daily lives and stages the absence of language.

"Say it now!" tackles a theme that concerns language as a whole, but above all brings the "performative" side to light. Speech cannot merely be speech about something, there must be a background of experiences and perceptions for it. There is not a word on these stages that is not ready to call for another word, another scene, another rhetoric.

Program and time schedule

Please find attached an overview of the events.

Curators

Tom Bonte, Eva De Groote,
Barbara Raes, Wim Wabbes
(Vooruit), Jeroen Versteete
(NTGent), Joachim Gerstmeier
(Siemens Arts Program)

Information for journalists

Siemens Arts Program
Imke Annika List
Wittelsbacherplatz 2
80333 Munich, Germany
T: +49 / 89 / 6 36 – 3 35 87
F: +49 / 89 / 6 36 – 3 36 15
imke.list@siemens.com
www.siemensartsprogram.com

Kunstencentrum Vooruit
Katrien Darras
Sint-Pietersnieuwstraat 23
9000 Ghent, Belgium
T: +32 / 9 / 2 67 – 28 88
M: +32 / 4 97 / 52 88 20
F: +32 / 9 / 2 67 – 28 99
katriend@vooruit.be
www.vooruit.be