

## STATE OF THE ARTS

This is a bold and wide-ranging account of the unique German public theatre system through the prism of a migrant artistic institution in the western post-industrial Ruhr region. *State of the Arts* analyses how artistic traditions have responded to social change, racism, and cosmopolitan anxieties and recounts how critical contemporary cultural production positions itself in relation to the tumultuous history of German state patronage, difficult heritage, and self-cultivation through the arts. Jonas Tinius' fieldwork with professional actors, directors, cultural policy makers, and activists unravels how they constitute theatre as a site for extraordinary ethical conduct and how they grapple with the pervasive German cultural tradition of *Bildung*, or self-cultivation through the arts. Tinius shows how anthropological methods provide a way to understand the entanglement of cultural policy, institution-building, and subject-formation. An ambitious and interdisciplinary study, the work demonstrates the crucial role of artistic intellectuals in society.

JONAS TINIUS is a sociocultural anthropologist, and currently scientific coordinator and post-doctoral researcher in cultural anthropology in the European Research Council project *Minor Universality. Narrative World Productions After Western Universalism* based at Saarland University. He studied Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Cambridge (2009–2012), before completing a PhD in the Department of Social Anthropology (2016). Subsequently, he was a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre for Anthropological Research on Museums and Heritage (CARMAH) of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, funded by Sharon Macdonald's Alexander von Humboldt Professorship. He is an associate member of CARMAH and teaches at the Institute of European Ethnology of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. He was founding co-convenor of the Mellon-Newton Interdisciplinary Performance Network at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities (CRASSH) of the University of Cambridge and co-founded the Network for Anthropology and the Arts of the European Association of Social Anthropologists (EASA) with Roger Sansi. His publications include *Across Anthropology. Troubling Colonial Legacies, Museums, and the Curatorial* (with Margareta von Oswald, 2020), *Der fremde Blick. Roberto Ciulli und das Theater an der Ruhr* (two volumes, with Alexander Wewerka, 2020), and *Minor Universality. Rethinking Humanity After Western Universalism* (with Markus Messling, 2023).

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# STATE OF THE ARTS

*An Ethnography of German Theatre and Migration*

JONAS TINIUS

*Saarland University*



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*For my father Kurt Paul Tinius (1941–2020),  
a teacher and my compass*

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## *Note on the Text*

The overall book manuscript adheres to rules of anonymisation that respect the social dynamics of the field. For the most part, I have attempted to preserve the anonymity of vulnerable interlocutors. When I referred to individuals who were acting as spokespersons or in other official capacities, however, I have not done so. This also concerns actors, with whom I spoke and who consented to appear – in some cases even asked to do so – with their real names.

Most translations from the German are my own, and I have marked where this is not the case. Where it seemed necessary for reasons of intelligibility or ethnographic analysis, I have provided a brief translation in the text or in footnotes.

In general, this manuscript adheres to the British English spelling of theatre. Where I use the capitalised word ‘Theater’, this is not a deviation from this standard, but stands in as a shorthand for ‘Theater an der Ruhr’ to distinguish my frequent mention of it from discussions of theatre in general or of other theatres.

Federalism in Germany means that the country is governed by complementary but partially competing scales of political organisation: a federal government (*Bundesregierung*) with federal states (*Länder*) – including several city-states – and municipalities (*Städte* and *Kommunen*). For the sake of clarity, and to avoid confusion for international readers, I use the terms ‘state theatres’ (*National-*, *Staatstheater*) and ‘state funding’ to refer to theatres and funding deriving from the national government. I use the terms ‘regional theatres’ (*Landestheater*) and ‘regional funding’ instead of ‘federal theatres’ or ‘federal funding’ but may occasionally discuss the ‘federal logic’ of the country to speak of the divested, ‘federated’ system of political and cultural governance across its regions. I refer to *Stadttheater* as city or municipal theatres.

Where possible, I have employed an author/date/page referencing system in the text. However, due to the nature of theatre and artistic

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publications, as well as other ethnographic sources, such as letters, digital correspondence, and websites, it has not always been possible to name an author or find a date. In such instances, I have labelled the sources accordingly and tried to provide as much information as possible.

Material from Chapter 3 has previously appeared in the journal article ‘Capacity for Character: Fiction, Ethics, and the Anthropology of Conduct’ (*Social Anthropology/Anthropologie Sociale*, 2018, 26 (3): 345–360) and is here used with permission. An earlier version of Chapter 4 has previously appeared as the book chapter ‘Artistic Diplomacy: On Civic Engagement and Transnational Theatre’ in Ananda Breed and Tim Prentki’s edited volume *Performance and Civic Engagement* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018, pp. 269–300) and is here used with permission. Material from Chapter 5 has previously appeared in the book chapter ‘Interstitial Agents: Negotiating Migration and Diversity in German Theatre’ in Sharon Macdonald and Jan-Jonathan Bock’s *Refugees Welcome? Differences and Diversity in a Changing Germany* (Berghahn, 2019, pp. 241–264) and is here used with permission.