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ISA RESEARCH FORUM

THE GLOBAL OPERA

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

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In what ways is opera global? Mayer will discuss a possible approach to an anthropology of global opera, taking into view the “world of opera” and the opera in the world. With research in and of several opera houses, her presentation centers around opera in Vienna, with the State Opera as a main unit of observation, and as a paradigm for a musical genre, which has spanned the last 400 years and the globe. Opera as an institution, as an organisation, a building, or a certain work is well under scrutiny by various disciplines. What can anthropology contribute, and how can we bring forward new aspects to a phenomenon so well described? There are the approaches of an anthropology of globalization, an intense research into processes in which opera has taken part in for centuries. There are the singers and other musicians, the composers and librettists, who have been mobile, traveling globally, and become agents of culture exchange. There is the music, which as a medium enables emulation and mixture. There are issues of politics, of post/coloniality and migration, of “race” and gender, of elites, identity, and performance. And also, who is the public, how is opera represented in the media, and how do we understand the Vienna Opera Ball, when opera comes to play the state?



Danila Mayer (MA and PhD, University of Vienna) has contributed to the ethnography of Vienna with studies on migration, urbanization processes, and kinship relations in transnational contexts. Her monography *Park Youth in Vienna* (2011) is a long-term study based on work with young people in public space. Her research interests include global art worlds (especially biennials), and Mayer has a sound background in European classical music, pop music, and DJ and club cultures. She was a guest-curator for the *Weltmuseum Wien* about “Welt in Bewegung”, and has held preparatory workshops for the planned *Haus der Geschichte Österreich*. She teaches Empirical Social Research at the University of Applied Sciences at St. Pölten, and has a research project about gender in cultural institutions at Graz University.

