

The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant – Τα Πικρά Δακρυα της Πετρα φον Καντ Recension/Articoli di Francesco Chiaro Thirty years after its first appearance on Greek stages, The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant by Rainer Werner Fassbinder returns in the country with a double direction that struggles to breathe new life into this iconic play about gender, power and the inevitability of pain in a world based on possession. ... 5,00

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Francesco Chiaro

January 28, 2018

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Leggi la **Recensione The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant** – Τα Πικρά Δακρυα της Πετρα φον Καντ

Thirty years after its first appearance on Greek stages, **The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant** by Rainer Werner Fassbinder returns in the country with a double direction that struggles to breathe new life into this iconic play about gender, power and the inevitability of pain in a world based on possession.



## Abstract: Italiano

Trent'anni dopo la prima apparizione sulle scene greche, **Le lacrime amare di Petra von Kant** di Rainer Werner Fassbinder fa il suo ritorno nel paese con una doppia regia che fatica a portare una ventata di aria fresca in quest'opera iconica incentrata sul genere, sul poter e sull'inevitabilità del dolore in un mondo basato sul possesso.

## Abstract: Greek

Τριάντα χρόνια μετά από το πρώτο ανέβασμά του στην Ελλάδα, το έργο του Φασμπίντερ **Τα Πικρά Δάκρυα της Πέτρα φον Κάντ** επανέρχεται στην χώρα με μια διπλή σκηνοθεσία η οποία δυσκολεύεται να δώσει νέα πνοή στην εμβληματική παράσταση αυτή που αφορά το φύλο, την εξουσία και τους αναπόφευκτους πόνους ενός κόσμου βασισμένου στην κυριαρχία.

«I guess people are made to need each other but have not learned how to be with each other», claims Rainer Werner Fassbinder, arguably one of the most influential German directors of the 70s and 80s and author of the renowned play (and later on translated into film) **The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant**, an angry and extremely personal analysis of sadomasochistic power games masquerading as loving relationships. Indeed, as Greek director (one of the two) Korina Vassiliadou points out, «we watch a world of women who have internalized the dominant power models and who now reproduce them in all of their possible relationships», women who are consumed by their «lust for conquest» and who would rather lie than show their «frightened smallness» (as formulated by Charis Pechlivanidis, the other director).

The story begins its downward spiral when a new model, Karin, enters the house of famous fashion designer Petra von Kant, thus rocketing her world and career to unprecedented heights. Flinty, self-made Petra will bask in her subversive lesbian euphoria, leaving all the worrying and the foreboding to her submissive and silent assistant, Marlene. However, when the inevitable crack will shake the foundations of this flimsy castle built on desire, control and power roles (all driven by consumption), and Karin, now a superstar, will leave everything behind, it will be Marlene the one responsible for picking up the broken pieces.

Featuring an all-female cast, **The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant** by Vassiliadou and Pehlivanidis moves on a very trodden path, starting from the stage directing which closely resemble that of Fassbinder himself (his cinematographic self, at least), with its static poses and its choreographed movements that are made to fit the Foyer of the Theatre of the Society for Macedonian Studies. By the same token, the stereotyped role-play reverberated into the actors' proxemics and appearances is functional to the portrayal of gender inequalities and assimilationist heteronormativity, but also rather simplistic and at some points flat-out hilarious, thus losing a good chance to communicate more directly and honestly with the audience by setting aside all exaggerated and contrived mannerism.

Another dubious point in this production is the apparent forgetfulness of the only truly revolutionary character, Marlene, who misses her final and most important moment of glory in part because of the extremely deleterious open space of the Foyer, which hides her in plain sight, and in part because of a direction that indulges on details (the mannequin chocked by its own clothes) rather than presence. Indeed, the meaning behind the failure of Petra's request to finally come together for a domestic, monogamous harmony is hardly deciphered by the audience, who's been focusing too hard on the fashion designer to

notice that the offer of equality is not turned out because of pride on behalf of the assistant, but because of it being von Kant's attempt to salvage her ideal of a liberated relationship, and thus not an offer in the first place.

**The show is still playing**

**Foyer of the Theatre of the Society for Macedonian Studies (ΕΜΣ)**

Ethnikis Amynis str. 2 – Thessaloniki

from 20 January to 1 April 2018

Wednesdays at 18.00

Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 21.00

Sundays at 19.00

The National Theatre of Northern Greece presents

**The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant – Τα Πικρά Δάκρυα της Πέτρα φον Κάντ**

by Rainer Werner Fassbinder

translation George Depastas

direction Korina Vassiliadou, Charis Pechlivanidis

sets, costumes, sets objects Dido Gogou, Eleni Kanakidou and Sonia Samartzidou

music Minos Matsas

movement Sofia Papanikandros

lighting Nikos Vlassopoulos

assistant director Ioanna Datsi, Maria Menteridou

photographer Tasos Thomoglou

production organization Eva Koumandraki

cast Iphigenia Deligiannidi, Stephania Zora, Irene Kiriakou, Marianthi Pantelopoulou,

Rebecca Tsiligaridou and Angeliki Papathemeli

5,00