

Theater

# An Experimental Play About Our Health Care System

By [Bill Raden](#) Wed., Sep. 25 2013 at 12:25 PM



Steve Gunther

Wunderbaum/LAPD perform *Hospital* as part of Radar L.A.

In the new theater production *Hospital*, Wunderbaum, the irreverently incisive Rotterdam theater collective, whose work has wittily examined the abrasive interstices between culture and the lives of ordinary people, teams up with Los Angeles Poverty Department (LAPD), the veteran skid row performance troupe, whose angry activist aesthetic zeroes in on society's most downcast and dispossessed.

The mix in this show, which [runs through Sept. 29 at the Radar L.A. festival](#), turns out to be not so much oil-and-water as it does gin-and-tonic, a bit too heavy on the tonic.

*Hospital's* subject is the history of healthcare -- or the lack of it -- in America and, to a lesser extent, the Netherlands. The combined ensembles draw from their individual medical histories for raw material, though it is the cradle-to-grave enactment of LAPD Artistic Director John Malpede's lifetime brushes with hospitalization that ultimately forms the evening's tongue-in-cheek spine.

That includes a wryly explosive opening scene of disciplined anarchy in which Maartje Remmers gives birth to a rubber-baby stand-in for Malpede while simultaneously videoing the chaos onto a projection screen that looms above Maarten van Otterdijk's hospital-green surgical-theater set.

Filled with politically pointed anachronisms and playful metatheatrical asides, *Hospital* succeeds in personalizing the despairing intractability of universal healthcare, but in a sermon preached to a Radar L.A. choir of the presumably already converted.

[Hospital](#) runs through Sunday, September 29 at the Tower Theater.

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