

WUK performing arts

nine

nine

March – June 2020

nine

WUK performing arts

performing | WUK
arts

***„How do you relax?
That’s something I find
particularly difficult
as an artist.“***

Pipilotti Rist, 2017

Content

Where I come from.

Masha Qrella - 5

***A short History of the
Wagner-Feigl Research
Programme
and Festivals.***

Otmar Wagner & Florian Feigl - 8

Noise, Capitalism, Gender.

Nina Powers - 16

It is 25 years.

DANS.KIAS.

Simon Hajós - 20

Positive/Negativ.

DARUM - 23

***Back when George Michael
wasn't gay yet.***

Josef Jöchl - 27

Choros, Chora, Aeon.

Moritz Majce / Sandra Man - 29

***Late Night Group Therapy.
The show for
society, politics, and the
unconscious.***

Susanne Schuda - 35

***Let's see...
where are we?***

The Loose Collective - 41

سباق / نرق

Azadeh Sharifi - 45

Calendar

49

Where I come from.

Masha Qrella

I was born in East Berlin. I was 14 when the Wall came down. By the age of 14 we were revolutionaries, and by the time we were 16 we had already fallen silent.

Sure, we squatted in flats in the Mitte district of Berlin but not out of political conviction, but because they were standing empty and property meant nothing to us; we were from the GDR after all. We played in bands with no political vision – our own having just been reduced *ad absurdum*.

Our music got away with no words, and it was our ticket to the West.

We had no use for feminist events or discussions. We didn't understand the problem. In our bands there were both boys and girls: it was all the same to us. We had other problems for which we lacked words. We had no identity but a future in a country where we didn't know the rules of the game, rules which we had to learn first. We avoided all the words which might out us as "Ossis".

We tried to make out the codes of pop, and then very tentatively – with very few witnesses – we started to question them. But our respect for the things we didn't know was greater than our doubts. We were cocooned in an aura of authenticity and naivety. Whose origins were of no interest to anyone.

The years went by. The codes have been deciphered. My reverence for West German pop culture has vanished, my doubts about the system have grown larger ...

We long for Utopias, for spaces of freedom and in-betweenness. But the answers that come back are monetisation and sales strategies. Pop culture which began as an “experimental field for democracy” is faring as badly as the system of which, without consultation, we became a part.

In the meantime I now understand discussions about gender and feminist debates. I know and recognize references and connections to the history of pop music, as written by the West. Our knowledge gaps are like a faint accent that betrays our origin. But we are all familiar with the problems that West Germans of our age have with their own past: the horror at the petit bourgeois narrow-mindedness of their parents, the reek of the West German small town, the longing for differentiation, the inner fight between safety and risk, the fear of failure or of loneliness. But these aren't the questions which preoccupy us. We are suffocating in the absence of Utopias from our generation ...

I first stumbled on Thomas Brasch in Marion Brasch`s novel “Ab jetzt ist Ruhe” (“From now on there will be silence”). The personal perspective of the author seemed so familiar to me: A family saga set among GDR nomenklatura, told from the perspective of the younger sister. I felt as if I was waking up from amnesia. That was my story, too, my perspective and the past which I had blocked out for years. I had even my name changed, to avoid being reduced to my Eastern identity and my family history.

I started to read texts by Thomas Brasch. My gateway to poetry has always been music and song. Mostly texts written in English which later also coloured my own song-writing. But here were texts written in German which took hold of me and wouldn't let go, and I began - without any clear compositional goal - to sing the lines which I couldn't get out of my head ...

Thomas Brasch has found a way, especially in his poems, to predict the essence of what our society is suffering from today: the loss and collapse of our own personalities. His texts touch on what we believe we have lost and at the same time offer an answer about a possible response. He was an Utopian, a visionary, an artist, and a human being. Thomas Brasch is dead. We are short of people like him. Just as we are short of Utopias. But his texts prevail. I want them to go on living and to inspire us.

A production by the artist **Masha Qrella** will for the first time be part of the programme of WUK performing arts, as a part of our "#Fernbeziehungen" focus. Her work "WOANDERS" ("ELSEWHERE"), a co-production between WUK performing arts and HAU Berlin, where it also had its premiere, will be hosted by WUK in March 2020. In a musical dialogue with her fellow musicians and with the help of the poems of Thomas Brasch Masha Qrella embarks on a search for lost Utopias and a possible response to the contradictions of our time.

A short History of the Wagner-Feigl Research Programme and Festivals.

Otmar Wagner & Florian Feigl

It is in the Robert-Wilson-Strasse¹ in the early 1990s that Wagner and Feigl first cross paths, at the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies in the provincial German town of Gießen – a corridor of rehearsal spaces, seminar rooms, self-awareness, secretariats and student dreams. It must have been 1992: Wagner had just returned from a exhilarating 1-year intermezzo in Amsterdam², and Feigl had just lit his blue touch-paper, and was experimenting with his body; also with some rather unusual fellow-thinkers³.

Which precise synergies led to these first encounters at an artistic level can no longer be reconstructed. We know only that in late 1994 Wagner and Feigl make an appearance as performers in

1 Bob Wilson was a Guest Professor in Gießen a number of times in the course of the 1980s. As his Research Assistant, Wagner was permitted to open the current account for Wilson's salary at the Giessen savings bank. History does not relate whether he was also permitted to polish the Professor's glasses.

2 Opleiding Objekttheater at the Academy of the Arts, a short but intensive dream. This splendidly designed course, set up in 1989, had barely delineated itself before it was closed down again in 1995 for reasons of political economy.

3 From which arose the Boy Group 'Showcase Beat le Mot' (in competition, though never formally confirmed, with the virtually exactly contemporaneously formed Girl Group 'She She Pop.') Feigl then subsequently left the performance collective in 2003.

'Poems from a City,' a Nils Tabert⁴ project based on texts by Kathy Acker and staged in the Theater am Turm, in Frankfurt/Main. We know too that during this period, instead of learning their lines, Wagner and Feigl while away their hours playing darts in a comfortably equipped basement flat, a circumstance that meets with widespread lack of understanding in the Performance Scene as a whole. Many years later, in an interview⁵, Wagner elucidates as follows:

"The business with the darts-playing was not just some joke. We needed to get fit as performers. Naturally, on the one hand, you had the texts by Kathy Acker: quite important really, a sort of literary Bach, or, if you prefer, a Beethoven. But on the other hand there was also me: with my body and my brain, and that can't just be automated: it has to be trained – the attitude, the concentration, the focus. "Playing darts is absolutely no fun because it is so eternally laborious; but that is precisely why it is so important. Not only for performance art, but indeed also for each and every form of performative art – for actors, for dancers, and above all for ballet dancers. Young ballet dancers should not take up smoking in order to stay thin, but play darts to get fitter."⁶

In 1996, acting on the basis of repeatedly expressed mutual sympathy. Otmar Wagner invites Florian Feigl to take part in a joint

4 These days Nils is the head of Rowohlt Theater Verlag. As a result he is no longer obliged to contend with performers – only with performing rights.

5 This interview, under the headline "Do I make myself clear? Nothing is clear" was given to the Austrian daily newspaper "The Standard" in autumn 2018. Following a series of profoundly offensive observations on the subject of the Austrian media landscape, and in particular on the left-leaning media ("You arseholes are just servants of fascism because in reality, fat and lazy as you are, you are unwilling to entertain any kind of cultural-political counter-concept to the Vienna Opera Ball, the Burgtheater, and the Freedom Party of Austria"), an editorial decision was taken not to publish the interview.

6 The latter remark, apparently plucked at random from the air, was overtaken by reality in April 2019, in the context of a scandal at the Ballet Academy of the Wiener Staatsoper. Shenanigans, ill-treatment, and the provision of advice such as taking up smoking in order to maintain one's shape, were routine, as a special investigatory commission confirmed in December 2019.

performance entitled “wet ‘n’ wild.” Nothing is known of the content or course of this performance. The title, according to the performers, was borrowed from the description of a garishly red discount lipstick brand stocked by the German drug-store chain Rossmann, which was used to excess during the performance. Statements by Wagner and Feigl indicate that the performance might have taken an altogether different course back then had they opted for a product from the dm chain. This would admittedly have been the better ideological choice, although no one could have known at the time that the owner of dm, Götz Werner, would ten years later become a supporter of the concept of an unconditional basic income.

In 1998/89 Wagner-Feigl present the seminal show entitled “Why our performances are so fucking good” alongside the publication in the periodical “ballett International/tanz aktuell⁷” of an article in which, under the headline “Hi(t The)Story”, they present extracts from their performance archive “The Blue Drawer.” To accompany this Feigl writes to the magazine’s editors⁸:

“Wagner and Feigl form the accompaniment to a story as it might happen, should happen, and actually happened. They have seen everything, were present for everything. So what if the only source of advice is a cookery book? Always both in the thick of it and on the sidelines: it is the very rise and fall of an assortment of high culture that we accompany. Wrong Time – Wrong Place is not a valid excuse.

Otherwise expressed, what is important is to make sure the gnomes are tastefully arranged. At what point it is then a matter of pineapple rings, or of doing the Right Thing, will be what decides who is interested – no small matter in any case ...

7 ballett international / tanz aktuell I/99, pp.28-33

8 Letter to editor Arnd Wesemann, December 17, 1998

“What we actually wanted to do was write a novel. Then we had an idea for a comic book. In the end, it wound up as an album cover. The back of the cover, to be precise. We have so many album credits to hand out that ultimately it seems unnecessary to get into what is involved in our own work. Yes indeed, the flowers are in bloom, or at least they were. We shall remember them as being so in any case. The reality is of course hardly the party where everyone want to hang out. And so long as the key to the biscuit box is still mislaid, there are only a couple of dried-out crackers left over for the whole pack of scroungers. Nevertheless, these should be carefully examined before they are divided and eaten. For years, corrosion has been replacing consecration, and that is how it should be. Welcome therefore to the party we call ScrapYard: hench Guardians of the Grail clad in sweat-soaked vests are here to welcome you, with all the charm of greasy second-hand-car salesmen, on a journey through the crusher. A bloody breeze distributes so much wit that you can barely contain your laughter. And then the Beings of Light come from outer space and rearrange what’s left into another cryptic pattern with the dimensions of a small town in Spessart.”

In their ensuing works, Wagner Feigl expand the spectrum of their performances: “Quo Vadis?”⁹ (2001) turns out to be is a mixture between Old School performance, body art, and the aesthetics of the jackass; with “Astroport Teglbj – Intervention E6”¹⁰ (2002) we experience an installatory work which references both Land Art and monumental sculpture. In 2003 Wagner and Feigl

9 The press pack for “Quo Vadis?” explains: “We launch ourselves into the wide world. From where we look back at ourselves, watching ourselves as we pass through the supermarket, acquiring essentials – including of course minor thefts and the odd superfluity. “Quo Vadis” fills us; it could be the name of the unbounded whiteness at the door. But we haven’t paid for anything yet. And so we while away the hours to the next work of art. It is almost unbearable. Such a feverish, goal-oriented state of expectation conceals one or two surprises as well. We work on ourselves conscientiously with wire brushes and nail files until the moment finally comes. We become data and can then really travel.”

10 The installation comprising 666 straw bales in fields along the side of the E6 motorway in Goteborg drew zero attention in Sweden, and likewise internationally.

take part in a wrestling championship as the “Pig Boys” and suffer such traumatic defeats that it is not until 2005 – once the wounds have healed – that they are able to realise the monumental cycle “I Am Transitory, Parts 1-3.”

The latter embraces a range of formats, including Lecture/Demonstration (“Ich habe fertig” – “I am done”), Installation and Exhibition (“Theme Park Sink-Hole”), and Performance (“Sink-hology”). In “Through the Eyes of Angels” (2006) they pull off a dream-nightmare object interplay, and in “What is Theatre?” (2007) a pedagogically rewarding theatre performance.¹¹

Above all, however, the Wagner-Feigl Research Programme and Festivals down through the years developed the “Encyclopaedia of Performance Art,” a work which both as lecture-performance and in published form attracted the most attention of all their works. Unveiled in 2002 at the FU Berlin in a first draft presentation, the Encyclopaedia was further evolved on a continuous basis in the following years to 2009, extended to performance art monographs dealing among other things with the role of the motorcar in performance art, and presented at a variety of scientific conferences, theatre and festivals around Europe¹², published in international academic journals¹³ and awarded first prize in the “Performing Science” competition at the Centre for Media and Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Gießen in 2007.

11 This project, at the Theater an der Parkaue in Berlin was extremely successful and a favourite both among young people and at Theatre Studies seminars at the Freie Universität, Berlin. In spite of this the theatre performance was cancelled after only 12 shows. According to a reliable source this was the result of the artists failing to go out on the piss with the then senior Theatrical Director.

12 among others: Freie Universität, Berlin / Internationaler Theaterkongress ‚Hildesheim / Symposium ‚Performativity‘, Universität Kopenhagen / ‚Mustermesse 2‘, Theaterdiscounter Berlin / ‚Unfriendly Takeover‘, Frankfurt/Main / - ‚into the city‘, Wiener Festwochen / FFT Düsseldorf / Festival ‚bone 11‘, Schlachthaus Bern

13 Eg in: ‚Performance Research‘ - Vol. 11, No 2 ‚Indexes‘, 2006 and in: Barbara Büscher, Franz Anton Cramer (Hg.): ‚Fluid Access: Archiving Performance-Based Arts‘. Hildesheim: Olms, 2017

In 2009 Wagner-Feigl decide on a temporary basis that their artistic collaboration should enter a period of quiescence. The reasons for this decision appear manifold: shifts in the tectonics of love, demoralisation resulting from invariably precarious living conditions, apparently more lucrative, newer, better offers from third parties, you name it. Resulting rumours speak of unbridgeable aesthetic differences, mutual recrimination, unforgivable insults, and acts of violence. The truth, probably, lies somewhere between the two. And on the basis that in the years that followed numerous notable invitations to theatre conferences, festivals and a meeting of the German Dramaturgical Society were turned down, it has become commonplace for protest-nostalgics to value the radical quality of this non-compliance¹⁴. The more pragmatic sneer that the reality involves a failure to agree on dates, the rubbish fees on offer, and a lack of any desire to travel.

On the other hand, those in the know insist that there are in fact project photos from these years in which Wagner and Feigl can clearly be made out together: for instance showing Wagner at a Feigl event in the Red Salon at the Volksbühne Berlin, his face half-obscured with a baseball cap bearing the inscription "I Love Corleone"; or Feigl at one of Wagner's projects at WUK Wien, recognisable only sketchily seated at a piano at the back of the stage. Above and beyond that, eye-witnesses report sightings of Wagner and Feigl on the streets of Helsinki, disguised as panda bears. Commented Wagner-Feigl laconically:

"Were we to represent our lives so far cartographically, the Wagner-Feigl Research Programme and Festivals would show up as a region of swampland, one so sprawling and deep that any attempt to drain it would fail."¹⁵

14 It is suggested that Wagner and Feigl's non-compliance was above all contrived in opposition to the regimes of a new type of curator who positions him or herself as an artist centre-stage and increasingly dictates subject matter to artists, whose role is then to realise the curator's idea, and to be mis-used as "filler" at all his or her meetings, events, symposia and festivals. Comment Wagner-Feigl: "Pure speculation!"

14 From "Wagner and Feigl are Working On It", WUK magazine, January 2020. Online: www.wuk.at/magazin/wagner-und-feigl-arbeiten-daran/

Indeed, in the years since 2009, multiple new concepts have been evolved, for example relating to Accidents at Work and Unfitness for Work, to the History of Re-Enactment in Performance Art, and to the Aesthetics of Time (a 24-hour time laboratory/durational performance).

In 2018, exactly 20 years after “Why Our Performances are so Fucking Good,” the Wagner-Feigl Research Programme and Festival Performances commence initial planning for “Hyper-Objects? Wagner and Feigl are Working On It... Tin and Tissue I-VII.”

The atmosphere in the swampland has changed, assert Wagner-Feigl in an interview about their work¹⁶; boundary-challenging actionism has been transformed into enthusiastic melancholy coupled with the “pre-feminist patriarchal pathos¹⁷ of ageing performance artists (laughter).

16 The conversation was held on March 12th 2020 with Esther Holland-Merten during the project preparations in the WUK Projektraum.

17 The term was borrowed from a novel by Paulus Hochgatterer.

The artist **Omar Wagner** has for years been repeatedly represented in the WUK performing arts programme through his works, most recently with his "Wounded World" cycle. He can now be experienced alongside his colleague **Florian Feigl** in the „#Fernbeziehungen focus", with a project which premieres at the sophiensaele in Berlin, and will appear in the project space on March 2020.

Noise, Capitalism, Gender.

Nina Powers

Encountered capitalism, then, or ‘ambient capitalism’. The sound and noise of capitalism. In the collection from 2009 entitled ‘Noise & Capitalism’, Anthony Iles points out that ‘Since we cannot accept that noise or improvisation is by default anticapitalist music, then we need to look more closely at those resistances and tensions this music carries within itself – where it provides potential tools for capitalism and where it supplies means for getting out of it.’

I want to extend this argument to think about how this plays out in incidental noise, the noise of the city, and particularly in relation to the many voices, human and otherwise, we hear as we move between transport hubs, supermarkets, overhear car radios and the voices of real people.

So I want to ask, Who speaks? Who listens? In a 2012 article entitled ‘Why We Prefer Masculine Voices (Even in Women)’, the author, Megan Garber, reported that ‘[s]tudy after study has suggested that low voices, “masculine” voices, are an asset to those seeking be more attractive, more competent and most trustworthy. Women who speak in lower tones are also positively read according to this bias, though past a certain depth, lower-voiced women are deemed to be less physically attractive.

What is it about 'masculine' voices that makes us listen more, regardless of what our own voice might sound like? Are we inculcated to associate depth of pitch with authority? But why should we accept this association of authority with depth and competency? Why should we listen to those with 'masculine' voices and ignore those who speak in higher registers? Behind these strange images of chairs and wine and the association of business with domination, as if we are talking about chimpanzees and banana hoarding, rather than Gary from accounts, lies another image, of the one least listened to – the young girl with a high voice, the polar opposite of 'authority', of 'business', of 'competency'. Supremacy depends upon the hierarchical pitching of men against women, low voices against high, age against youth – and here the frame of the sonic clashes with the realm of the visual, where the image of the 'young girl' is dominant, yet the actual young girl is without any actual power. But could the voice of the young girl become a site of resistance?

In a recent article entitled 'Fear of the Female Voice', Sarah Gailey, points out that 'For millennia, Western society has insisted that female voices – just that, our voices – are a threat. We're afraid of wolves, and we're afraid of bears, and we're afraid of women'. One of the difficult things about this claim is that women and girls are hardly ever taught that their voices could be a 'threat'. Rather, we are taught to be afraid, often with good reason. But, precisely because of this paradoxical fear, we are also taught to use our voices to soften life for others, particularly men. Women should not dominate conversation (and people are apt to wildly overestimate the percentage of time women speak for, with research showing that men speak 70% of time in mixed gendered groups, and people recently taking up Dale Spender's work that demonstrates that men think women 'dominate' conversation when they speak on 30% of the time, and that conversation is 'equal' when they speak only 15% of the time). Women shouldn't shout, criticize, scream, demand, laugh too much (and never at men). Stereotypes abound – the overly-loud working class woman, the 'angry black woman', the mad woman, the hysterical woman, the whiney woman, the nag, the shrew, the witch

who can control men with her voice, the seductress, and so on. Michelle Obama was criticized for both 'talking like a white girl' and for being 'too loud, too angry, or too emasculating'.

Cliffor Nass, author of *Wired for Speech*, suggests that people tend to perceive female voices as helping us solve our problems by ourselves, while they view male voices as authority figures who tell us the answers to our problems – the lady vanishes! This might help to explain the upsetting and everyday experience of 'Bropropriating' – taking a woman's idea and taking credit for it. Why are so many personal assistance and public voices female? Earlier this year, Ikea asked 12,000 people whether they wanted their AI to have a gender in the first place. 44% said they would prefer it to be neutral, though this broke down into 36% of men and 62% of women. Are women sick of Siri et al's sexist continuum with ideas of the female secretary and female subservience?

(Excerpt from a lecture at kampnagel Hamburg 2018, with taxes from Nina Powers and kampnagel Hamburg)

This text was inspiration for the choreographer **Christoph Winkler** and his new work „HER NOISE“, which the Company Christoph Winkler will show in the „#Fernbeziehungen“ focus in March 2020 in the WUK performing arts program. As part of the Doppelpass Plus program of the Kulturstiftung des Bundes Deutschland, the first work of this two-year cooperation with the Christoph Winkler company, „The voice that you are“, took place in June 2019.

It is 25 years since Saskia Hölbling began choreographing contemporary dance with her company DANS.KIAS.

Simon Hajós

Saskia Hölbling investigates representational forms for bodies that elude linear interpretations, both in group formations and in solo performances. Causing a critic to observe as follows: *“This anti-BarbieDoll postulates a re-invention of perspective (...), challenges all conventions with a cold and beautiful power filled with silent intelligence and combative physicality.”*

Saskia Hölbling founded her company DANS.KIAS in 1995. 25 years on, she has created more than 40 pieces. Alongside her own work she frequently collaborated with other artists, including Bob Wilson, Willi Dorner, Laurent Pichaud, Benoît Lachambre or most recently for example with the French choreographer Anne Collod, among others.

She also takes a great interest in contemporary music. As a result Saskia Hölbling has brought works by Luciano Berio or by Wolfgang Mitterer to the stage at Wien Modern; and during the Wiener Festwochen she did the choreography for Iannis Xenaki's Oresteia, under the direction of Carlus Padrissa.

Here's what she says about her own work:

I start from the utopian idea that there is a possibility that our bodies can change according to how we think them; from body concepts that understand the body as some sort of mass of thoughts which can take on any kind of appearance, or rather any kind of being. Where an elbow can make decisions, just as a

calf or a head might. No adherence, no insistence on a single thought. Always in the flow of associations or the articulation of the body.

What I'd like to achieve with all this? An opening up of stereotypical worlds of imagination, a sensitisation to the in-between or to the foreign in which everyone is able to diffuse themselves. And I want to encourage the use of this freedom of representation.

I am interested in a physicality beyond common classifications. That kind of physical, sensual state that emerges from a body's "inner thinking" and not from tangible exterior images with which we are already familiar. A state that assumes an autonomous form, that makes us understand space and consciousness in a different way. That eludes swift or linear interpretations. Herein lies that which fascinates, herein lies the poetic. It is an intrusion into a barely-discovered universe, tender and fragile in its untamed state, neither loud nor provocative, difficult to put into words, but strangely close. It's about daring to follow a different conception of self, to give permission to other worlds of imagination, to trust a different reality.

In April 2020, choreographer **Saskia Hölbling** will present her new work "Through Touches" as part of the programme of WUK performing arts. Therewith she will celebrate the 25th anniversary of her company and her many years of collaboration. Simon Hajós is a long-term accompanist of her works and an insightful expert on the artist's career and that of her artistic partners.

Positiv/Negativ.

DARUM

??
??
??
??
??
??
????????????????????????? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
????????????????? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
????????????????? ·??
????????????????? ..??
????????????? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
????????????? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
????????????? ?..????? ?·????? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
????????????? ? ???? ? ???? ? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
?????????????. ????. ? ????. ? ????. ???? ???? ???? ????
????????????? ??? ? ? ?????. ·???.??????????
?????????????· ???? ? ? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
??????????????. .???. ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
????????????????? ·? ? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
????????????????????? ?? ·?????????????????.????.??????????????
????????????????????? ?? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
?????????????????????· ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
?????????????????????. . ??. ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
????????????????????? · ··??????????????????????????????????????
?????????????????????????. ·??????????????????????????????????????
????????????????????????????? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
?????????????????????????????.. ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ???? ????
??
??

The Viennese based performance collective **DARUM**, founded in 2018, will show its new project "Ausgang: Offen" ("Exit: Open"), a performative installation on the subject of death, in April 2020 in the WUK performing arts program, at Kempelenpark. For their previous work "Ungebetene Gäste" ("Uninvited Guests"), they received a nomination for the Nestroy Theater Prize 2019 in the "Special Prize" category.

Back when George Michael wasn't gay yet.

Josef Jüchl

There's this joke I like to tell about role models. It goes like this: "When I was a kid, I had no role models. Ellen wasn't lesbian yet, George Michael wasn't gay yet, and even Elton John thought he was just going through a phase." At which point everyone always laughs. But the joke contains more than a grain of truth. Back in those days, we only had Richard Chamberlain, and some gossip about him in the tabloids. But no one knew any more than that, least of all some primary school kid, as I was at the time.

In the meantime we've acquired some more gay role models, even in Austria. Visibility is on the up. Not so long ago I even got invited on the telly. And since that's not something that happens every day, I thought long and hard about what I was going to say. I loaded up my role model joke, plus a few other jokes about being gay, and a handful of friends who were supposed to make me feel comfortable.

The show featured a series of comics in turn. The first comic explained that he lived in Cologne. "That doesn't mean what you think it does!" he adds. Laughter. Next up was a female cabaret artist reminiscing about her time at musical theatre school, and how Viktor Gernot had been able to go out with a different girl every night because none of the other guys were fit for purpose. Laughter. Another comic did an impersonation of his gay friend

who could smoke a whole cigarette in a single drag, mind you his throat had had a lot of practice. Laughter. The last comic built his entire act on the premise that he turned gay after three drinks. "Nothing to worry about!" he told a spectator in the front row. More uproarious laughter. After that they had an intermission.

My friends came down to by the stage. "What's going on today?" asks Martin. "Is it gay jokes only night?" Over the course of three-quarters of an hour, we'd had multiple laughs over gays with nothing but musicals and dicks on their minds, all of them obsessed with getting into straight guys' pants. Same old, same old, really. The most successful German film of all time is still "The Shoe of Manitou," whose funniest bit involves a gay, feminine Native American, basically because he is a gay, feminine Native American. Gay visibility has maybe not come all that far if gays must still be endowed with a soft spot for musicals and willies. Gay and feminine is just funny – it's a slam dunk.

Shortly before I went on stage, my friends wished me luck. First off, I introduce myself: Hi, I am Josef, and I am gay. Then I told my role model joke, and after that a few other jokes about being gay. Although the jokes sounded different coming from me, the audience laughed just the same as with the previous comics. But maybe somewhere there's a primary school kid who's listening, and who winds up asking their mother: Mum, who was this Elton John guy anyway?

Every three months, **Josef Jöchl** is together with **Denice Bourbon** host of Vienna's First Queer Comedy Club PCCC*, part of the programme of WUK performing arts. This is the first Political Correct Comedy Club and is enthusiastically received by hundreds of spectators every time it appears.

Choros, Chora, Aeon. *Trilogy of Space* *Myths, 2016–2020.*

Moritz Majce/Sandra Man

Where do we live?

Our art explores this question and is set in motion by it.

Landscapes peer out of images, they are unreal without being alienated. Voices give accounts of characters that are ourselves, but different. They set out for deserted places, places that simultaneously move towards them. The exhibition space becomes mobile: walls tip and floors drift. In the performance dancers open themselves to intuitive powers of attraction. They follow their own senses, allow themselves to drift, but with the sharpest of clarity. Spectators become participants without doing anything. They melt into the event.

Every work is an expedition into a present which is alien to itself.

In 2016, a trilogy began to form around that alien Here: the space choreographies *Choros, Chora, Aeon*. In the beginning, these pieces were not designed to hang together or to function as sequels. Now, however, four years after beginning the first, somewhere in the middle of the second and shortly before we embark on the last, the same motifs keep reappearing but in different versions: The earth seems to be an alien planet. A techno-natural outdoor world that moves us but which isn't ours. Within it arises a movement of living bodies informed neither by

progress nor by stagnation. A dynamic which originates from inside itself and which knows neither reason nor goals. In which bodies simultaneously separate and conjoin. Disgorge into space and assemble themselves into places.

We are here. But in what kind of Here, as what kind of We and in what way seems wide open nowadays. Our art is drawn towards that openness. Space, movement, and multitude in their contemporary incertitude are the material of our works.

Space Myths

Choros, Chora, Aeon are the names of unknown places we discover in the Here and Now of our work. Just as bodies are named after mythological Greek figures, so we give mythical names to the landscapes that appear in our works.

Choros is a reference to the chorus of antiquity but it also designates the circle dance, the dancers and the place of dance. *Choros* is filled with the togetherness of movement,

body, and space: Through dance, the chorus brings forth stage-like places. The oldest of these are the circular spots in sandy or grassy soil created by the steps of a circle dance. *Chora* is the mythical name for a space in motion. A space which is never in balance and never stationary. Out of this permanent instability the world arises. Plato calls *Chora* "the wetnurse of becoming." *Aeon* is – alongside *Chronos* – antiquity's other god of Time. Unlike its course, chronology itself, *Aeon* is the infinite moment, eternity. Geology today measures eras in aeons, spans of time that are beyond our perception of transience, in their virtually eternal extent at the frontiers of stillness, that is of space.

All three names evoke images of space in motion, of movements of space. These are movements of a Where? That is never simply there – but that constantly creates itself and constantly withdraws again. A space that is only created through us – through our actions, as in *Choros*; that is always within us – as a moving space of all creation, as in *Chora*; and which always

operates beyond us – an eternal period, as in *Aeon*.

Choros, Chora, Aeon are mythical names from another time. They are alien, they resonate from a distant place. We hear them as echoes in our works. We enhance their echoes.

We don't tell stories under these names. The archaic within them explains nothing to us, neither antiquity nor the present. The mythical names in our works are like fossils from the primordial ocean, like fragments of meteorite from a far-distant impact, or the cosmic background radiation from the Big Bang. Something that is past but without history. Fallen out of time and yet still there. Something alien that is present. That is alien in its presence and which is able, for that reason – like the astronomical names for newly discovered planets, moons, solar systems – to describe something unknown, something distant and in the future.

When we hear these names – *Choros, Chora, Aeon* – they open up something unreal in the heart of reality, both lost in reverie and yet still con-

nected to us. In an indeterminate, open way they resonate from a time before and after all forms of history we are familiar with. From an expanded Here without access or detours: from an Outer Space.

As mythical concepts they have always described something that is there but which defies explanation and order. In our works, they continuously give a name to the sense that the present is alien to itself.

Space Choreographies

Choros, Chora, Aeon are unfamiliar areas, an alien Here and Now, a Where? in movement. They are not the titles of plays with plot or development. In *Choros, Chora, Aeon* there is no process that envelops everything which happens. There is no story combining all the elements. There is no presentation/presenting.

As in a landscape, multiple things occur together and everywhere: here images are emerging, there bodies are dancing, moving through space, and over there is a voice

which speaks; here a piece of the floor is rolling about, there a woman sits in the audience. Everything that happens happens in a single location: here, there, over there. It merges, is mixed with something else, stays by itself, vanishes, reappears again.

We call our works Space Choreographies.

A Space Choreography is no dramaturgical-chronological unit, it is an open whole. It arises repeatedly, simultaneously in different locations, it has several sources: videos, texts, movements, objects, audience members. Each element exists on its own, in its own present and temporality; they meet in their spatial openness towards each other: They pass each other by, cross over each other, bump into each other, operate in parallel, separate. Far from the dancing subject, their shaped forms of expression and body language offered to an audience, our Space Choreographies contain pluralistic elements which continuously display themselves and move together.

We are crafting a work that appears in different locations and in different media at the same time. All forms are independent and equal. There are always multiple sources, nothing derives from anything else: the videos don't originate from the texts. The performance doesn't originate from the images. The objects don't originate from the presentation/presenting. The viewing doesn't originate from a presentation. Every element has its own source, its own temporality. The references between them, the particular way in which they hang together or are separate is the essence of each work: In *Choros* the elements and their traces are combined in Space in a different way than in *Chora*, and in *Aeon* it will be different yet again. Not as static arrangements but as dynamics which each work produces from within itself. Every work moves differently as a whole. Each is a specific organism, just as a desert is formed in a different way from a mountain.

Landscapes are formed, they move, they are moved and influenced with no specific

goal in mind. They change continuously. They drift beneath and fold over utopias and dystopias.

Our works are neither accretions of loose fragments and single strands, nor a “Gesamtkunstwerk” that we assemble, because they are ultimately not ruled by a single final shape – neither as a unity, nor as the destruction of one.

In *Chora*, *Choros*, *Aeon*, Space Choreographies driven by a Where without destination, a life without intention, a We without identity, it is the origins which matter. Plural origins, synchronous in different movements, temporalities, spaces, over and over the appearance and disappearance of images, voices, bodies, objects, and their connections. Nothing is predicted, nothing is projected towards an ending, everything originates from the indefinite.

Not the result of something: how it looks, what it means, to what it is linked, but the fact that it arises, at multiple times and each time in a different way, that something starts, at the same time, that

it arises in multiple places, vanishes again and reappears somewhere else as new – that is the infinite present at play in *Choros*, *Chora*, *Aeon*. – We work in the open spaces of an alien Here.

- 2016: **Choros I** | Uferstudios Berlin
- 2017: **Choros II** | 3 AM Festival | Kunstfabrik am Flutgraben | Berlin
- 2018: **Choros III (Koroška)** | Kunstraum Lakeside | Klagenfurt/Celovec
- 2018: **Choros IV** | Montag Modus Festival | Collegium Hungaricum Berlin
- 2018: **Choros V** | WUK performing arts Wien
- 2018: **Choros VI** | District Berlin
- 2019: **Chora (Growing Time)** | Open Spaces Festival | Tanzfabrik Berlin
- 2019: **Chora (Echo)** | Flutgraben Performances #3 | Kunstfabrik am Flutgraben | Berlin
- 2020: **Chora (Outer Space)** | WUK performing arts Wien
- 2020: **Aeon** | Tanznacht Berlin

The artists **Sandra Man** and **Moritz Majce** have worked together on projects for years. They have a unique artistic stance, in which they actually assign a specific task to every aesthetic element, be it text, space, body, video or sound, and pull them together into a joint rhythm which offers an overall experience without levelling the elements. In March 2020, they will perform "CHORA" — already their second work as part of the programme of WUK performing arts.

Late Night Group Therapy.

The show for society, politics, and the unconscious with Schudini The Sensitive

Susanne Schuda

In *Late Night Group Therapy (LNGT)* the Collective Unconscious features directly in a political talk show for the very first time. *Schudini The Sensitive* invites along real-life experts on such issues as the distribution of power, digitalisation, climate, the media, and the economy. Alongside representatives of the Collective Unconscious they contribute to the creation of a brand new, outcome-agnostic political talk show.

WHY?

The Collective Unconscious is the absolute conspiracy in which we all take part and from which we will never escape. The Collective Unconscious operates in the ultimate background and governs to a great extent our rather complex world. There have already been a number of attempts to approach the Unconscious consciously. At a personal level, such a thing might even work up to a point. But for the collective the Collective Unconscious remains unattainable.

In conventional political talk shows the Unconscious, emotions and feelings are treated as disturbance factors. True, they are ever-present and indulged, but they are not supposed to be relevant. They boil down to “Eeuw.. gross” and those capable of thought place themselves beyond their reach. Everyone else is



common, unwitting, guided by emotion, and constitute – with their naïve instincts – a homogeneous entity which requires representation by those who think and lead.

HOW?

Schudini The Sensitive considers this to be the great misconception in the organisational structures of the human race. She embraces both the contradictory, the ambivalent, the unwitting, the emotional, and the thinking and the analytical as equally valid communicating vessels. And combines it all in the multi-layered process of Late Night Group Therapies.

In *LNGT* the Collective Unconscious is represented by representatives. What they represent is defined by the guests, the real-life experts and the scientists. These articulate an open question of relevance to society. In conversation with *Schudini* they excavate the structure that lies beneath, and establish its relevant elements. Thereafter they choose, through intuition, the representatives of these elements.

Question: “Would you like to represent growth?”

Answer: “Yes, please.”

And then they position them, in accordance with their inner image, in the space. For example, (economic) growth in opposition to (human-compatible) climate etc.

The relationship structure/system becomes visible, and the representatives become aware of themselves in it, in relation to each other.

LNGT builds on an adaptation of systemic constellation. It might also be described as transverbal language. *Schudini* would like it translated as follows: “In Late Night Group Therapy the Collective Unconscious can express itself. By means of the representatives’ physical, emotional, and psychological perceptions, a dialogue is established on multiple levels which I moderate as a host.”

Schudini leads the process based on the representatives' impulses. She tries to bring the relationships in "the system" into balance. The relational image created by a guest begins to change and *Schudini* asks them: "What does that make you think of?" The guest's analysis and associations put the dynamics of the relationships into context. And in this way the political talk show between the Unconscious and the Conscious unfolds, entirely outcome-agnostic ...

WHO?

Schudini The Sensitive aka Susanne Schuda, please call me Franz, is the therapist of the Collective Unconscious, founder of the international *Party for the Sensitive*, and departmental head at the *Office Of Nothing Personal*. Having grown up in Vienna in the 1970s and 1980s, she became acquainted with the advantages and disadvantages of ambivalence at an early age. Contradictions and false bottoms caused "the space" to appear confusing, but also, definitively, larger. The first time she felt the call of politics was during the late 90s, but made up her mind to resist the urge anyway. In the mid-2010s, however, she no longer felt able to keep away and founded the *International Party for the Sensitive – enabling the perception of ambivalence, dilemma, and paradox without jumping out of one's skin*. She accepted no party members and the manifesto (see annex) remained uncompleted. The party's logo was based on a dandelion which can also be found on badges and multi-lingual flags. Following the foundation of the *Office of Nothing Personal* in 2018, she developed in *Late Night Group Therapy* the media format to accompany the party's mission statement.

Carrie as Carry, already well-known as a member of staff at the *Office of Nothing Personal* assists *Schudini* as a mutable medium. The two of them communicate via telepathy, eye-contact, and a mixture of Viennese German and Californian English. Carrie McIlwain lives in Berlin and is exceedingly familiar with the overlap between the Collective and the Individual Unconscious.

From her text “For the Love of Dream Boards” (in „Kultur und Politik im prekären Leben. Solidarität unter Schneeflocken“, Neofelis, 2020):

“The mantras of the American dream buzzed in the background of my family life, like the static of a television break, evolving to a neo-liberal rhythm, in which the television would never have down-time again. A lifestyle in which the pursuit of money was as present as the lack of money, and the work never stopped.”

Szely – the band: as the rhythm section of the Unconscious is also already known to many as the deputy to the head of department at the *Office of Nothing Personal*. As a musician he is generally suspected of entertaining a certain sensitivity. Szely integrates contradictions like a pro. If in doubt also by means of a large sponge.

The uncompleted manifesto of the International Party for the Sensitive:

1. Paddle in your anxiety as you would in a child's paddling-pool and splash around like crazy. Should the anxieties of others seize hold of you, let them take effect, and do not react immediately!
2. Question the logical consistency of “your culture” on a regular basis. Question the questioning and don't try to justify anything – let it take effect.
3. Articulate your conception of a just world. Much of this will render your habitual survival mechanisms inoperable. And let that take effect too.
4. What you say and what you think are very often in contradiction to what you do and don't do. Let that take effect.
5. Try to circumvent your usual blind spots and black holes. Take a deep breath and allow the advice of Others take effect.

6. Have mercy on the unconscious and conscious psychological structures anchored in you by your family background and / or World History. You are merely a chance variation among many – let that take effect!

Multi-media artist **Susanne Schuda** will be part of the programme of WUK performing arts for the first time, offering the four parts of her Late Night Group Therapy project. The first part will take place in April, the second in May 2020, followed by the third and fourth parts in Autumn / Winter 2020.

Let's see ... where are we?

The Loose Collective

*To be or not to be
Let's see
Where are we?
We are somewhere where we are
Not in a jar
But far far far
We are in a bar
In the future
Not very far in the future
Is where we are
In a bar
The bar is called Heaven
And nothing ever happens in Heaven
So we entertain ourselves
And with permission
By extension
You
Who
Yodelayheehoo
Are here with us*

*It's cold outside and we melancholise
We fantasise
About melting ice
Frozen yoghurt
Lies
Flies
French fries
Buttercups and roses
Smiling dolphins
Lonely penguins
Mustachioed walruses
Which are all extinct but vivid
Vividly vivid in our dreams
Is where they can
Be
Come
Real
Because we
Dream
Professionally
About what life could be
Worth
In the last warm place
In a cold habitat
Just before the end of the world
On this lonely planet Earth*

"I think it's important to look at human beings in their natural context and in the context of evolution. And it would seem that life on Earth has existed for four billion years and there have been animals for maybe 600 million years and mammals for maybe 16 million years. [...] Meanwhile we – Homo sapiens sapiens – have only been around for 200.000 years at most [...] It's really next to nothing, [...] We're like in kindergarten, so we have these amazing brains that allow us to come up with all kinds of schemes and now were the world's dominant predators you know we've replaced the dinosaurs and we have this power over all these other species but we've only had 10.000 biological generations to work on getting a handle on it and actually this explosion of human power has only really occurred in the last 55.000 years and been industrialised for the last 300 years, so we're a really really young species in comparison. [...] we're just getting started and we're bumping around and we are like young kids you know we break things and we're not too good and we don't know our own limits maybe we're in our adolescence now and we're just starting to realise that we've got to get our act together and get serious and you know get a job and so on. And actually I think one of the things that is spectacular is that humanity has only become aware of itself as the human race in the last couple of hundred years [...] that we all have the same kind of blood and despite our different skin colors – actually we're very nearly identical genetically precisely because we are such a young species. We haven't had time to have all that much genetic variation it seems there's less genetic variation in the whole human race than in a band of chimpanzees in Africa simply because chimpanzees have been around 10 million years and they've been able to accumulate these differences. So we're in the in the first hour, but I think the concept of the 11th hour is still ok, because we've gotten so powerful we could blow ourselves out tomorrow morning."

*Jeremy Narby**

*www.youtube.com/watch?v=oWpbNTfgjXY, time code 31:22-36:18

The **Loose Collective** ist eine österreichische Gruppe zeitgenössischer Tänzer_innen, Musiker_innen und Choreograf_innen. Sie entstand aus dem Wunsch heraus, Tanz- und Musikperformances in einer nicht hierarchischen Struktur zu schaffen. Sie zeigten bereits 2018 den zweiten Teil ihrer „On Earth“-Trilogie im Programm von WUK performing arts und kreieren nun im April / Mai 2020 einen Abend, an dem alle drei Teile zusammengeführt werden.

գորգ / ىلاق

Azadeh Sharifi

The (hi)story of գորգ / ىلاق can be traced back to people of Iranian and/or Armenian origin. The oldest preserved carpet, the pazyryk carpet, dates from the 4th/5th century B.C.

We commemorate our ancestors, especially our mothers and grandmothers. We commemorate our ancestors who died in the genocide and in the fight for our freedom.

Our history is intertwined with գորգ / ىلاق which was woven and knotted by our ancestors with their own hands, their own sweat, blood and tears, with their joy and with their sadness. There are stories of former times and tomorrows yet to come woven into this carpet. They speak to us, they tell us stories of the origins of our bodies and souls, of the roots of all the trauma and the pain.

We commemorate our ancestors, especially our mothers and grandmothers. We commemorate our ancestors who died in the genocide and in the fight for our freedom.

In Germany our stories have been swept under the carpet. They have been made invisible, turned into the ornaments of an orientalist fantasy. Or at best into décor, into tokens for hedonistic freedom of the Western living room . And yet we never be-

come more than the objects of discourse, led and controlled by others. We become otherised people, othered people, foreign-ers, migrants, and asylum seekers. We are the people with the migrant background, the non-native speakers, or simply "trash."

We commemorate our ancestors, especially our mothers and grandmothers. We commemorate our ancestors who died in the genocide and in the fight for our freedom.

1 Let's not sweep under the carpet the fact that Iran played a major role in the genocide and the killing of Armenians, too.

2 Orientalism is here defined, per Edward Said, as a Western/European construct for the Other the Orient, one which is part of Europe's colonial heritage. See also Said, Edward: *Orientalism*. New York: Random House 1978.

3 Token and tokenism are to be understood here, per Rosabeth Moss Kanter, as theoretical concepts relating to the alibi function of less marginalized positions which are allowed into the centre of discourse or power, thereby acquiring alibi status. Moss Kanter: *Men and Women of the Corporation*. Basic Books: New York 1977.

4 These days you can even buy hand-woven carpets at IKEA. Next to the pile of carpets they have an exhibition dealing with the personal histories of individual women.

5 The AfD politician Nicolaus Fest used posters in his 2019 election campaign in which piece-rate workers are described as "trash".

6 Dieser Satz ist als Erinnerung und in Anerkennung an May Ayims poetischen Widerstand gewidmet. May Ayim: *Grenzenlos und unverschämt. Ein Gedicht zur deutschen Sch-Einheit*. In: *Grenzenlos und Unverschämt*. Berlin: Orlanda Verlag 1997, S 92.

This text was created as part of the "Unter dem Teppich" ("Under the Carpet") project by **God's Entertainment**, which had already been experienced at the Spielart Festival in Munich in autumn 2019 and then at the Zoom Festival in Rijeka. The performance collective God's Entertainment is a regular guest with its productions in the WUK performing arts program, e. g. „Convakatory Konak" and „NET III".