

CALL FOR PARTICIPATION - Dealing with normative gaze in performance art -

Working group

20th November 2013 – May 2014 - ∞

in the venue *Westgermany*, Berlin-Kreuzberg

Concept

An art project aiming to build a self-organized group of female identified performance artists. Being a performance artist consists of using your body as your main tool for making your own aesthetic happen. Together we want to provide a space to respond artistically to normative gaze directed at women in the performance art scene. In doing so questioning the objectification of our female performing bodies.

Female identified artists are commonly judged on their appearance in accordance with the social norm. Normative gaze in performance art consists of what an audience expects to see in us or from us as female identified performers as dictated by the traditional role of women in society. This inevitably effects how we perceive and develop our own art work and our relationship with art institutions.

This project has evolved from experiences of artists in the performance art scene that have been confronted with disrespect and have been disadvantaged as female identified artist. This call is for performers that feel limited by the normative gaze and want to attract attention to the issue. Often these oppressive strategies work by isolating the individual. We want to create a collective space.

Objective

We aim to work together to provide an equal platform and to create tools needed to confront the binary hierarchical system that is present in the performance art world. We want to create a space of collective reflection for a group of performers that want to deal with the issues stated in the concept.

Our guidelines are that we meet once a month to reflect on our work and experiences as performers and artists. Using our performative skills, this reflective dialogue will inevitably feed back into our own art practice. This collective space will hopefully become a space of empowerment and inspiration.

In the long term, we aim to create original performances brought to a wider audience. We have the possibility to show our work during the Month of Performance Art in May 2014, in the same space where our meetings will take place. The vision of this collective is to continue meeting after May 2014.

We will be dealing with questions such as:

- How to confront the binary hierarchical system within the performance art structures?
- What is the historical context of what it is to be a woman in art?
- How does the power of the normative gaze influences the perception of our performance art work?

INVITE

We want to invite people who identify or have identified as female performers to join and develop work that challenges and reflects on these topics and meet once a month. This will be an on-going project and could very well be extended past May 2014.

Our meetings will take place in *Westgermany*, a concert and cultural venue close to Kottbusser Tor, Berlin. We see ourselves as facilitators of this work group and we imagine our research to be site specific. As a group we will find a way to document our work process. The performances that come out of this collective will be shown at *Westgermany*.

If you're not based in Berlin, make sure that you can attend to the meetings once a month. Specific dates will be set as a collective.

Schedule

13th November 18h00: Deadline for answering the call

20th November, 10h00-18h00: 1st work session in *Westgermany*

If you are interested in this long term project please send to this address: **nginpa@gmail.com**

- Your motivations to join such a group
- What would be the questions or thoughts you'd like to discuss in the group
- Examples of your work

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to ask.

Wir freuen uns!

Anaïs Héraud and Katie Dunbar

Initiators and organisers of the work group:

Anaïs Héraud is a performer and visual artist. She studied painting and performance art in ENSAV Lacambre Brussels and is based in Berlin since 2011.

She has participated in Berlin's feministic and queer projects such as *Eier haben* with Diane Torr in *Transmediale 2013*, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; *Quear! Das 2. trans*tonale Ohrenfest* or *Madalenas International* - Theater of the Oppressed laboratory in Kuringa Berlin-Wedding. She is also a member of the curatorial team of Month of Performance Art 2014 and of APAB e.V.

More info about her work: <http://anaisheraud.com>

Katie Lee Dunbar is from Birmingham in the UK. She studied at the University of Falmouth, has travelled extensively and for the past four years has resided in Berlin. Katie is a professional artist and educator who is currently working in Berlin on a wide range of performance and visual art projects. She has a wealth of experience running international summer camps and various work shops all run through consensus. Katie has, and continues to question and study the social structures that form our identities and refuses to live by conventional doctrine. Most recently, she has been running workshops for young people in creative and dance expression, as well as leadership and community team-building sessions. Katie is a experienced project co-ordinator who specialises in community-building with people of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities.

For more information on past and upcoming projects: <http://katiedunbar.carbonmade.com/>

More info about the Month of Performance Art Berlin: <http://www.mpa-b.org/>