

**NORA
JACOBS
PORTFOLIO**

In my work I deal with the topic of boundary. However, I do not understand boundary as a separating line but as a three-dimensional space, an in-between space, where everything is possible. It is less about the geographical situated boundary but rather about the in-between: Gender, curtains, differences, places that unite a beginning and an end simultaneously, the foreign and the known and constant reoccurring interdependencies. It is a game with the fake, with a role: something pretends to be something else, imitation and deception play with the expectations of the audience.

Certain terms often reoccur in my work. Those words weave like a thread through all the projects and hence connect them to each other. On the next two pages a map shows those terms and how they are related to each other. With regards to content they hold the framework of my work.

skin|shell|wrap
(Hülle)

Hamletfish
Banana|ug
Comb|jelly
DOG

ANIMAL

roles
layers|dress|up|encase (verkleiden)

SEX

gender constructions
D I V E R S I T Y

identity

body|physical transformation spatial
chronological
transition

S T A R (d o m)

E N T R A N C E

G R E N Z E / B O R D E R
BEFORE | IN-BETWEEN | AFTER

C B E I S E \ B O B D E B

E I L B V I C E

F A N (d o m)

absence EXPECTATIONS

wait

glitter
elegance
glamour

attention

passion (Leiden-schaft)
longing | desire (Sehnsucht)
love

F A K E
FAILURE

surprise
irritation

absence

respect
bravery

INTERDEPENDENCY

beauty
you
appearing person
shooting star
good
man
up
before
inside
departure
black
STAR
DIVA
boooo

ugliness
me
observing person
falling star
bad
woman
down
after
outside
arrival
white
FAN
STAR
bravo

Relation
CONNECTION

projection screen
Projektionsfläche

foreign
other

superficiality
loneliness

curtain
theater curtain
cinema curtain
shower curtain
drapage (Gardine)
separating curtain in a hospital

travelling
in the forest
in the river
on top of the mountain
in space
horizon
airport
grey

border

BUNT

CHARACTERS

Throughout the years I have created several fictitious characters. They are constantly developing and appear either in performances or in front of the camera. As different as they may seem they are all connected by playing with gender identities and the attempt to break the still very present binary gender categories open. By doing so the characters are drawn very over the top and in case of ALEX very abstract. Humour and irony play a very important part, however the characters take themselves very seriously.



Name: Cowdy
Description: Cowboy
Line: Loner
Species: Westerner
Calling: Border-Expansion
Environment: Steppe
Family: My Friend (by John Miller), Marlboro Man, Buffalo Bill, Ennis Del Mar
Year of origin: 2015
Favourite dish: Spaghetti
External characteristics: Cowboy boots, blonde wig

Short description:

Cowdy is a loner, who doesn't want to be a loner and who is not very successful in being a stereotypical Cowboy or man. The cowboy or westerner is part of a border if not the border par excellence. "the Westerner tells about the life at the border, (...)"¹ in this case it is a territorial border with a nascent society "in which not all positions are taken and therefore allows for men who want to test and invent themselves."² The westerner is very much bound to its surroundings and its genre. I want to get him out of there, unmask his superficiality and offer him a new room for action.

¹⁺² Hans-Otto Hügel (Hg.), Handbuch Populäre Kultur: Begriffe, Theorien und Diskussionen, Stuttgart, 2003



Name: ALEX
Description: Human
Line: Multi-sectioned
Species: Diversified Calling:
Touch-Advocate
Environment: The Counterpart
Family: triadic ballet
Year of origin: 2015
Favourite dish: Fondat fancies
External characteristics: light red, light blue, round, square

Short description:

ALEX has no sex or two sexes or all sexes at the same time. Alex is the extreme ends of a binary gender system that is very limiting because it only allows for female or male beings, visualised through the colours “light red” and “light blue” as well as the shape “round” and “square. ALEX independently moves in space. People can interact with ALEX. However the reactions often turn out to differ a great deal; people hug ALEX, shove ALEX around or park their drinks to name a few.



Name: Mr. Y
Description: Artist
Line: Fathers
Species: Sole ruler
Calling: Indifferent egomania
Environment: Public events
Family: male artists
Year of origin: 2016
Favourite dish: A Drink
External characteristics: brown suit, brown trainers

Short description:

The character of Mr. Y is a reference to My Friend by John Miller and deals with the clichés and privileges of male artists; for example “untitled”, the privilege of not having to name your art piece. Mr. Y claims foreign art pieces for himself by becoming one with them. By that the meaning of the piece might change or certain aspects might be highlighted.



Name: STARLET
Description: Limelight hog
Line: Star
Species: Starlet
Calling: Expanding failure
Environment: Stage
Family: Andy, Britney
Year of origin: 2009
Favourite dish: Fries
External characteristics: for now long eyelashes

Short description:

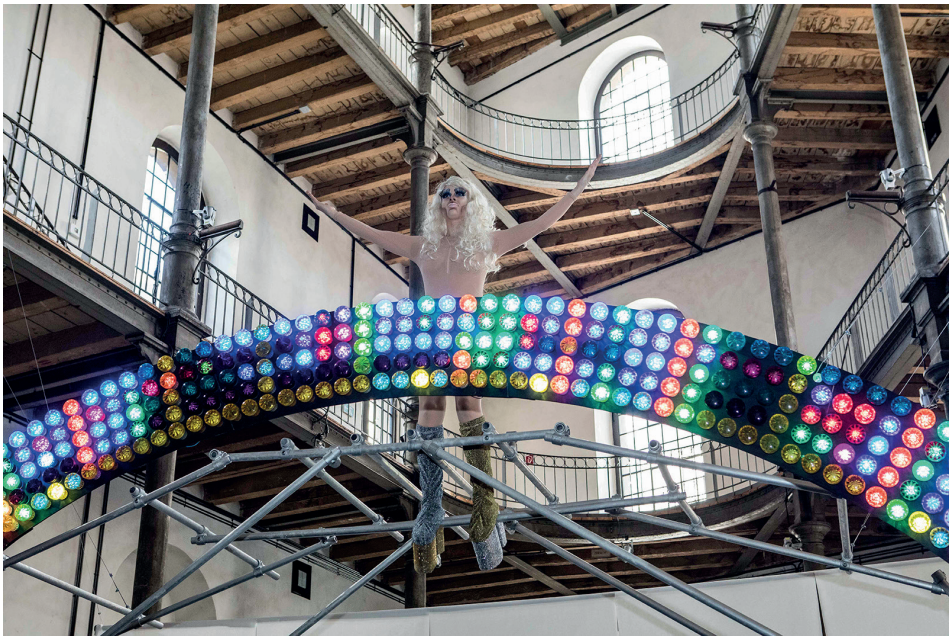
STARLET is the constantly evolving artist. She is played by a woman, who plays a man who is dressed up as a Drag Queen. The Drag Scene is strongly represented by men in the media and rarely offers space for Drag Kings or people without male organs to make themselves heard. STARLET is about the overlapping and questioning of alleged gender boundaries. Something big seems to begin but the show is missing. STARLETs entries often create a theatrical situation where she plays with the expectations of the audience. She dabbles in herself and tries out to be famous but fails miserably. Just recently she uploaded a new video on YouTube called: "How to put a nail into a piece of wood with... a hammer!" followed by another video called: "How to take a nail out of a piece of wood with... a hammer!"

**PERFORMANCE/INSTALLA-
TION/VIDEO**

BÖGEN

“BÖGEN” (arches) investigates the moment of entering a stage and the expectations of the audience towards that entry. This particular moment is a very fragile interstage between success and failure and the subsequent judgement of the audience. The performance deals with the alleged private moment of entry and the question of staging.

The fictitious character STARLET who normally only appears on stage is shown back stage. It is the moment after make-up and just before entry. As if she is at a rehearsal where it is all about trying things out but at the same time you pretend to perform in front of an imaginary audience. The idea is to combine Performance and Installation: ephemeral performance meets allegedly constant Installation. The Installation is an eligible piece on its own however opening up a performative space where performance infuses a change that will leave the Installation altered. I work with what is there. During the production process I keep my approach open and flexible. Materials and execution are not fixed in the first place but dependent on the readjustment process. The arch is the beginning and the end at the same time. It is what is left over even if the last entrance is long over.





STARLET_TV

“STARLET_TV” is STARLETs TV-Show where she explains to you the “how”. Her first two episodes were called “How to put a nail into a piece of wood with... a hammer!” and “How to take a nail out of a piece of wood with... a hammer!”¹.

At the art space Kunstraum B in 2017 STARLET cooperated with the artist Marlies Kuhn who painted a mural and drew a small aquarelle painting that STARLET used in her opening and finishing performance. At the opening she claimed the drawing to be made by herself and hang it onto one of the nails she had just put into the wall. At the closing event STARLET took the drawing down and took the nails out with a hammer. The two live performances were called “How to to put a nail into a wall with... a hammer!” and “How to take a nail out of a wall with... a hammer!”

Humour plays an important part in STARLETs performances like in “dysfunctional comedy”, a terminology coined by Olav Westphalen and best described in short with the following quote: “How do you know it’s an artist doing stand-up and not a comedian? Because nobody laughs but everybody applauds anyway.“

¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Siz8_8fMQqo&t=3s
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Ki_Fd48vOrI





DAS ABC DES SCHEITERNS

In “The ABC of Failure in 26 + 3 experiments for one Actress, one Actor and a hand puppet” performance meets theatre meets performance. A cheap red satin curtain covers only half of the stage and a worn out red carpet suggests a catwalk. One actress and one actor tell about their personal failures in life. During the performance they change into 12 different costumes each most of them animal costumes. A comment on bad children theatre. Almost every costume is combined with another costume giving each a look of misplacement and failure in itself. The costumes are taken from the costume department of the theatre and were not altered in the least to underline the non conformity of bodies and their natural differences. The performance plays with the audience expectations; A spot wandering around aimlessly suggesting a big entrance, theme songs of well-known movie companies asking for someone to enter the stage are being played in a row, the audience being asked to leave the auditorium again only to come back in shortly after, an Easter bunny playing the piano badly making any efforts to finish, and so on.

STARLET also had her entrance.

“Hello, I am STARLET the constantly emerging artist. I am the no. two of society. I am the substitute goalkeeper, the substitute on the substitute bench, I am the second best, the one that almost won the prize and the one that almost got famous. I almost landed in politics and almost saved the world. Because of that next year I am going to do more sport, lose weight, stop being unemployed, stop drinking, stop smoking. I AM going to go into politic, become famous and I AM going to safe the world! :-)”





So schön kann Scheitern sein

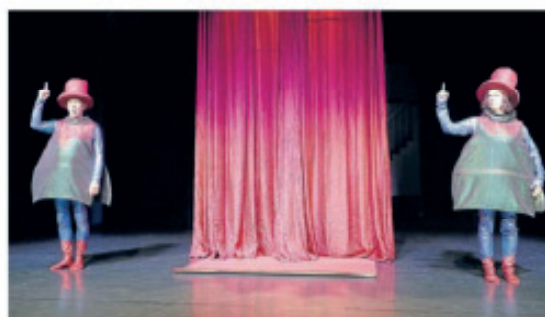
Nora Jacobs bringt im Wertparktheater mit ihrem Vater Siegfried ein buntes ABC persönlicher und anderer Pleiten auf die Bühne

VON SABINE THOLUND

KIEL. Scheitern kann so schön sein. Zumindest wenn Nora Jacobs es in Bühnentaugliche Bilder umsetzt. „Das ABC des Scheiterns“ nennt sie ihr überaus charmant geratenes Experiment zwischen Performance und Theaterstück, das vom Premierenpublikum im Wertparktheater mit anhaltendem Applaus gebührend gefeiert wurde. In über 20 kurzen Szenen lotet die Performance-Künstlerin und Regisseurin mit Wohnsitz in Wien die Möglichkeiten des Scheiterns aus. Und die sind wahrlich vielfältig. Wunderbar unterstützt wird sie dabei von ihrem Vater Siegfried, seit 1989 Mitglied des Kieler Schauspielensembles,

der wie sie jede Szene in einem anderen, meist mit tierischen Versatzstücken kombinierten Kostüm bestreitet. Derartig absurd gewandt geben beide Einblicke in persönliche und andere Pleiten von missratenen ersten Auftritten (Siegfried) oder unglücklich verlaufenen Affären (Nora), von Selbstüberschätzung oder leidvoll erfahrener Ablehnung. All diese kleinen privaten Desaster haben großen Wiedererkennungswert – und lassen sich im Bärenkostüm mit Hirschgeweih leichter erzählen als im seriösen Outfit.

Die Dramaturgie des Abends spielt mit Theatereffekten und schürt große Erwartungen, die allesamt grandios versanden. So verhalten spannungsstrei-



Nora und Siegfried Jacobs agieren zwischen Performance und Theaterstück.

FOTO: OLAF STRUCK

gernde Trommelwirbel, ohne dass etwas geschieht, ein irriternder Suchscheinwerfer findet kein Ziel. Dem Publikum wird dabei eine gewisse Ein-

satzfreude abverlangt, unter anderem wenn Siegfried zwecks persönlicher Traumaverarbeitung zu lauten Missfallensäußerungen ermuntert.

Er kann weniger gut Klavierspielen (und tut es ausdauernd), glänzt dafür aber mit zierlichen Trippelschritten als summendes, kreiselndes Insekt. Nora stellt neben pantomimischem Talent eine beneidenswerte Beweglichkeit unter Beweis. Kein Wunder, denn wie ihr Vater ist sie im Grunde Super(wo)man, wie das Grundkostüm unter den in langen, mit vernehmbaren Ächzen aus dem Off untermalten Umziehpausen signalisiert.

Unglaublich ist die Bühnenpräsenz der 32-Jährigen, egal ob sie als Darth Vader mit Hasekopf gegen den Kunstbetrieb wettet oder verkleidet als Erdbeere minutenlang täuschend echte Sturmgeräusche fabriziert, während ihr Vater

die Erinnerung an einen abenteuerlichen Segeltörn heraufbeschwört. Bisweilen blitzen hinter der vordergründigen Lustigkeit kleine Tragödien auf, etwa wenn sie im Prinzessinnenkleid mit kindlichem Trotz und rosa Schweinerüssel im Gesicht stockend einen altertümlich gefassten Text vorliest, der vom Kampf des Teenagers mit überflüssigen Pfunden und der Angst erzählt, nicht zu genügen. Mit einem optischen Knalleffekt, der natürlich sang- und klanglos verpufft, endet das Spektakel. Scheitern kann so schön sein.

➔ Theater im Wertpark, Weitere Vorstellungen: 3., 4., 10., 11. Juni. Kartentel. 0431/901901, www.theater-kiel.de

NO TITLE

The performance “No title” took place 2016 and 2017 at the Austrian Sculpture Park in Graz as part of a residency by the class of Heimo Zobernig. In spring 2016 Heimo Zobernig was invited to reproduce a public work in collaboration with Eric Kläring. The result was a concrete platform “Untitled (Project space/Platform)”, one foot high, on top of which a ‘super structure’ has been imposed that connects and links the eclectic range of works contributed by his students. No title refers to the structure itself and the privilege a lot of male artist have by giving their art pieces the name untitled. At the opening Mr. Y. was lascivious sitting on a chair another artist had build. For an hour, every time a person would pass the sculpture he would address the then audience with sentences like: “Do we know each other”, “Do I know you?!” “I’m carrying no title, is it funny to you?”, “I need a drink”. Only to go back into his initial pose. During the closing event he would sit in the chair again, covered in pine-needles, but this time pretending to sleep for an hour.





HEU WESTERNER

“Heu Westerner” is a photo series of nine images developed during a residency at a farm in Burgenland in 2016. A landscape with hay and right in the centre a lonesome westerner, sometimes gazing into an infinite distance, sometimes thoughtful, sometimes feisty and sometimes just lost in space. The video stills convey the look of a classical western movie and play with certain clichés of a cowboy life in the wild west only that the cowboy in this movie is played by a woman. It is about questioning stereotypical ideas that are being generated by society and consequently by oneself. In the end there is no actual movie only pictures that somehow try to convey the opposite.





