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North Melbourne
Town Hall

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Mira Fuchs
Melanie Jame Wolf/
Savage Amusement

Image: Damian Stephens

Arts House



Season 1

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Thu 2 – Sun 12 June 2016, 70min, no interval
Post Show Q&A: Thursday 9 June

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Artist's Notes

Excerpts from an interview with Lorena Juan Gutierrez for *Berlin Open Studio Magazine*

So tell me about *Mira Fuchs*...

Mira Fuchs is the title of a work, the first work in a trilogy of pieces that are all about economies of affect and how particular systems or economies of affect create space for different manifestations of being a woman – I am very specifically using the term ‘woman’, not ‘female’ – ‘woman’. So *Mira Fuchs* is a work for 30 or so people at a time seated in a circle. It’s structured as an essay and presented in fragments with titles like ‘On Time’, ‘On Fiction and Non-Fiction’, ‘On Desire’. It draws on my experience of working as a stripper for eight years, and offers that experience as a lens for the audience to sit in community with one another, observing one another’s choices and actions while they consider their position on stripping, but also on ideas of intimacy as commerce, and on performance as work or labour, among other things. Most importantly, I wanted to demonstrate the remarkable and unique skill set that women who work in strip clubs possess, particularly in terms of gracefully maintaining their safety while operating in a very thick energetic exchange with multiple people with multiple agendas.

You usually work with these topics of gender and the body. What do you mean when you talk about a gendered economy of desire?

Within a heteronormative structure and way of viewing the world, there are very different permissions around desire: permission to desire things, to name your desires, and to take unashamed pleasure in your desires – these permissions differ depending on gender and to what extent your desires are serving certain markets. I think that’s what I mean by a gendered economy of desire – trying to deconstruct and pull apart the machinery of what those particular permissions are, and to create moments where people start to investigate the idea that things can be blurred or opened or closed. I am deeply interested in the currencies of affect and performance that we live our lives through.

How is this analysis of gender in your work political or feminist?

I think I’m constantly assessing what feminism is, and that this constant assessment is part of being engaged with ‘THE Feminist Project’. I’ve started to think about ‘my feminism’, because these ideas around speaking from experience and attempting intersectionality... you can only speak from your own position, and also the permission for multiplicity is for me central to a queer feminist position... so I talk about MY feminism, ‘my feminism is this’, ‘my feminism doesn’t have time for that’. My really simple answer to ‘Why is my work feminist?’ would be ‘Because I am’. I identify as a feminist – as someone who is actively seeking alternative structures for how we can achieve a fair system of arranging ourselves in exchange and relation to one another. I identify as a feminist, and then I put my feminist body in space as a practice of my ambition to locate something other to how we currently arrange ourselves.

My interests are largely around gender, and affect, and desire. The reason why my work is political next to those things is that I always try to provoke or propose questions to an audience in a way that makes them feel they have permission to change their minds more than once. If I do have a political intention, it is to enable people to not feel ashamed about not knowing things. And to enable people to not feel shame or pressure to choose a position and have to stick with it. That is also what feminism is for me. It’s about things that aren’t rigid. It’s not about a fixed point that we all colonise in order to be like one another. It’s about multiplicity and the permission to become, and if, via feminism, we are attempting to shift the way we relate to each other, to other possibilities, then of course that has to be mutable and fluid. I think that’s what makes my work political: I am trying to assist people into a process of thinking. And also, I don’t like to come to conclusions. I am really wary of the moral of the story. I want it to be kind of confusing... to deal with the complicated, sticky premise that feelings are facts, because it is so important to me that confusion be permissible, that it can be named, and that the ‘whys’ of that confusion can be worked through without the brutal competitive conditions of shaming that I so often see and experience being produced everyday for all kinds of agendas of control... particularly around desire and agency. I am so much more interested in presenting provocations, or invitations to situations in which it is okay to not know, and where it’s okay to change your mind, and admit to what you are working through, however uncool... keep it real, keep it fluid.

Creative Team

Choreography,
Performance, Video & Text:
Melanie Jame Wolf
Sound Design:
Carl Anderson
Dramaturgy:
**Sharon Smith &
Ruairi Donovan**
Producer:
Alison Halit

Biographies

Melanie Jame Wolf
Choreography, Performance, Video & Text

Melanie Jame Wolf is an Australian-born artist who makes work about love, gender, bodies, economies, and ghosts of many forms – sometimes solo, sometimes with friends. This work is always performance-based and increasingly incorporates video and the screen as performance objects or spaces. Often working under the name Savage Amusement, she has presented work in various contexts including: Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki; HAU – Hebbel Am Ufer, Berlin; Sophiensaele, Berlin; Hitparaden Festival of Performance Art & New Theater, Copenhagen; nGbK, Berlin; & Festival of Live Art, Melbourne. In January 2015 she premiered the solo performance work *MIRA FUCHS* at Tanztage Berlin. This piece has since been presented in festivals in Europe and Australia including: My Body is My Business, Berlin; Antistatic International Festival for Contemporary Dance and Performance, Sofia; and BUZZCUT, Glasgow. Working with Triage in 2012, she presented the Green Room Award-nominated one-to-one performance work, *An Appointment with J Dark* at Arts House. Melanie Jame holds a Master of International Performance Research from University of Helsinki and lives and works between Melbourne and Berlin. She is a feminist.

... all for your Savage Amusement.

Image: Alexander Coggin



Thank You

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Melanie Jame Wolf

savage-amusement.com

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Warning: 18+, nudity, adult concepts & strobe effects

Arts House

Arts House is a program of the City of Melbourne and our home is North Melbourne Town Hall. We support new and diverse ways to make and experience art providing a nexus for cultural expression and social connection in a city environment. Arts House develops work that is contemporary, experimental and participatory.

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