

DORTMUNDFR

Lina Hermsdorf: *Being A Vertebrate*
September 4 – October 11, 2020

Performance & Opening:

Thursday, September 3, 7 pm

AND

Saturday, September 5, 2 pm

Press preview: Wednesday, September 2, 11 am

Breaks are either necessary, intentional or forced interruptions, whether that of human activities or of operational functions of machines or other organisms. They foster regeneration and healing, while often also serving as an economical survival strategy. Beyond hibernation as a seasonal mechanism for reducing energy demands, certain animals can enter a dormant state of diapause, a period of arrested activity that enables an organism to overcome periods of unfavorable climate. In periods of extreme drought, the turquoise killifish (lat. *Nathobranchius furzeri*) native to East Africa can reduce their energy requirements in the embryonic state to such a degree that their development is halted and the aging process is suspended — a standstill that can last for several months or years until the onset of redemptive rainfall that allows them to continue in their development.

The dialectical relationship between growth and stagnation is reflected by the artist and choreographer Lina Hermsdorf in her performance and exhibition *Being A Vertebrate*, which she specifically conceived for Dortmunder Kunstverein. In addition to an engagement with the idea of the pause, another point of departure for the work is a consideration of the Kunstverein's glass façade — a connecting membrane as well as a visualization of the impossibility of physical exchange between inside and outside. As an extension of Hermsdorf's performance, the installation subsequently becomes part of a spatio-temporal process. Alongside minimal interventions into

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VORSTAND:
DIPL.-KFFR. MARION EDELHOFF (VORSITZENDE)
PROF. DR. H. H. HOLZMÜLLER
RAUN DR. MATTHIAS WIESE
STB. DIPL.-FW. STEFAN ZÖLLER
ROLAND BAEGE, M.A.

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the Kunstverein's lighting system, killifish will be on view in the exhibition space — in their diapause as well as their various stages of development.

For the performance, Lina Hermsdorf collaborates with the Malaysian-Chinese dancer Jessie Jing, whose biography is incorporated into the text and movement sequences of this new work. The appearance of the trained body of a dancer is here contrasted by injuries sustained within Jing's practice of dance, as well as by other specific individual circumstances — a viral infection has left Jing with severely limited hearing in one ear. While the body, despite its resilience, is as the mercy of its own temporality, the exhibition space traditionally plays a role of conservation. In Hermsdorf's arrangement however, the standard fluorescent-tubing exhibition lighting has been replaced with greenhouse grow lights, albeit illuminating an empty space devoid of plants. Growth-stimulating light beams into emptiness — a paradoxical state that Paul Virilio would refer to as dromological, a kind of frenetic standstill.

Being A Vertebrate blurs the boundaries between natural and artificial, reflecting on a performative, personal, and economic level the dichotomies of movement and standstill, life and its suspension. The spatial arrangement and the way in which the performer's body moves through space problematize natural and economic processes of optimization. They prompt questions around what connects us – as growing and decomposing organisms, as vertebrates, as human beings and as individuals – as well as what separates and distinguishes us.

Lina Hermsdorf works with performance, installation and film. In her process- and time-based works she creates situations which focus on the body in its presence and absence. Her narrative works examine how technology can alter our perception of life and are contextualized against a range of connotations surrounding ideas of the organic versus manufactured materials, life cycles, and processes of optimization.. Her scripts are often based on biographical elements that are collectively developed alongside her performers in the working process. Her engagement with cybernetics and biological phenomena creates a space for a non-anthropocentric way of thinking where established humanistic dichotomies such as that between nature and culture or human and animal can potentially dissolve.

Lina Hermsdorf (*1985 in Hamburg, lives and works in London) graduated from the University of Gießen in Applied Theater Studies (Prof. Heiner Goebbels) followed by a Dance lab Residency at Mousonturm Frankfurt (2014) and collaborations with Tino Sehgal (Tate Modern) and Xavier le Roy (TANZ LAB). After studying Fine Arts with Peter Fischli at Städelschule Frankfurt, her conceptual spatial works and

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performances have been shown internationally, among others at the Block Universe Festival London (2016), Flat Time House London (2017) or Kunstverein Braunschweig (2018).

Jessie Jing (*1991 in Malaysia, lives in London) is a malaysian-chinese performer, dancer and writer. She participated in projects internationally, mainly in Hong Kong, the UK and France, and currently finishes a post graduate Master in choreography at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London.

PROGRAM

WED, 2 SEPTEMBER, 6.30 pm:

WORK IN PROGRESS

During the installation of the show, Lina Hermsdorf and Jessie Jing will give an insight into the making of this exhibition, and are happy to answer your questions and get into conversation. For members and supporters of Dortmunder Kunstverein.

THURS, 3 SEPTEMBER, 7 pm:

OPENING & PERFORMANCE

Reception: Marion Edelhoff (Chair)

Introduction: Rebekka Seubert (Artistic Director)

Performance: Lina Hermsdorf and Jessie Jing

SAT, 5 SEPTEMBER, 2 pm:

OPENING & PERFORMANCE

SUN, 19 SEPTEMBER, 4 – 9 pm:

PUBLIC GUIDED TOURS. Museumnight

https://www.dortmund.de/de/freizeit_und_kultur/museen/museumsnacht/start_museumsnacht/index.html

SAT, 27 SEPTEMBER, 3pm:

PUBLIC GUIDED TOUR

Exhibition tour with curator Rebekka Seubert

Please sign up on info@dortmunder-kunstverein.de

THURS, 8 OCTOBER, 7 pm:

LA DERNIÈRE SÉANCE #14

→ english language event

7 pm: Guided tour in dialogue: Rebekka Seubert and Biologist Dario Riccardo Valenzano (Max-Planck-Institut, Cologne)

8 pm: FILM at Kino im Dortmunder U: Donna Harraway: *Story Telling For Earthly Survival* (OV, 81 Min) ein Film von Fabrizio Terranova

Please sign up on kleinerfreitag@stadtdo.de.

SUN, 11 OCTOBER, 4 pm:

FINISSAGE + EXHIBITION TALK

Janina Loh (Institut für Philosophie, Universität Wien) in conversation with Lina Hermsdorf (artist), moderated by Rebekka Seubert

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Opening hours

Tuesday to Friday 1 – 6 pm

Weekends 11 am – 4 pm

as well as upon appointment

Free admission