

Press Release

Alexandra Bachzetsis: *Rehearsal (Ongoing)*

17 September – 30 October 2021

Opening Friday 17 September 2021

Every day is an ongoing rehearsal. Alexandra Bachzetsis presents *Rehearsal (Ongoing)*, the artist's first individual exhibition at Karma International. An ensemble of works in diverse formats and techniques, it includes live solo performance *Perfect* (2001, Bachzetsis's first choreographic work) staged in the setting of the exhibition on two consecutive evenings (September 18 and 19, 6pm) following the opening night.

This Side Up (2007) is a video and free print installation (realized together with graphic designer Julia Born), an attempt to overcome gravity and defy directionality: down is up, left is right and the wall becomes the performer's floor. The eponymous *Rehearsal (Ongoing)* (2010) is a two-channel video work: a table becomes a stage for reversible manipulation of everyday objects that sometimes turns out to be irreversible, while the artist methodically documents all stages of the entire process with a Polaroid camera. An expansive *Wall Piece* (2021) has been conceived during the making of Bachzetsis's upcoming performance *2020: Obscene*. It includes a 25-meter-long and 2-meter-wide roll of dance floor descending from the wall and landing on the floor of the gallery – an enlarged film strip of silkscreened photographs representing the protagonists captured in critical moments of the performance. In *Pin-up Corner* (2021), a tiny room in the rear of the gallery space is covered all-over with posters that accompanied the performance *Soirée* (realized in 2008 by Company, a collective Bachzetsis co-founded with light and costume designer Tina Bleuler and DJ Lies Vanborm) – representing a cast of manipulated portraits of female performers who bear electrifying, culturally charged names, such as “Electra” or “Daphne.” Another new work is *Floor Piece I – IV* (2021), a series of cardboard sheets perforated by the dancer's high-heels during a rehearsal for performance *Manual for Desire*: “action paintings” that emerged without any manual work involved in the process, executed in a disciplined and irreverent manner.

An Ideal for Living (2018) is a reconfiguration of a body of work created for a show at the Centre Culturel Suisse in Paris in 2018. The eponymous two-channel video work features young teenagers (Mia Born and Oleg Houbrechts) wearing headphones and singing songs (while we don't hear the music they are listening to) and expertly playing football in a room (while we don't see the ball they are kicking). A single-channel video work *A Manual for Desire* uses Paul B. Preciado's poem “Love Is a Drone” (performed as rap song) as instruction material for a sequence of performance acts. A part of the same ensemble, *Catapult* is made of AirTrack components (airtight training inflatables): a sculpture working against gravity—or humorless weight—of that medium. Ready to be launched from *Catapult*, a publication *An Ideal for Living/A Manual for Desire* completes the show. Manuals and ideals are our scores of everyday. They rule over our freedom.

Alexandra Bachzetsis is a choreographer and visual artist based in Zurich (CH). Her practice unfolds at the intersection of dance, performance, the visual arts and theater, generating a conflation of the spaces in which the body, as an artistic and critical apparatus, can manifest. This fundamentally interdisciplinary approach is reflected in her educational background. She studied and graduated at the Zürcher Kunstgymnasium (CH), the Dimitrischule in Verscio (CH), the Performance Education Program at the STUK arts centre in Leuven (BE), and then continued to post-graduate level at Das Arts, the Advanced Research in Theatre and Dance Studies centre in Amsterdam (NL). During these years of training, Bachzetsis began to work as a dancer in the contemporary dance and performance context, collaborating with Sasha Waltz & Guests (Berlin) and Les Ballets C. de la B. (Gent), among others. Collaboration, transference and a plurality of voices and bodies have informed Bachzetsis' work ever since and is often thematized as a method of developing new work in her practice.

Much of Bachzetsis's work involves choreographies of the body and, in particular, the way that popular culture provides source material for gesture, expression, identification, and fantasy as we continually create and re-create our bodies and the way we identify. Within this, she scrutinizes the mutual influence between the use of gesture and movement in the 'popular' or 'commercial' genres on the one hand (online media, video-clip and television as a resource) and in the 'arts' on the other hand (ballet, modern and contemporary dance and performance). For Bachzetsis, the artificial and often precarious relationship between such genres produce an inquiry into the human body and its potential for transformation, however conceptual or actual. Ultimately, the way we all perform and stage our bodies and ourselves – through stereotypes and archetypes, through choice and cliché, through labor and spectacle – is a question that continues to shape the work of Bachzetsis.

Since Bachzetsis started working independently in 2001, she has created over 30 pieces, often working collaboratively, which have been shown in theaters, festivals and public space venues worldwide. In addition to this, her work has been exhibited in a variety of contemporary art spaces and museums, including Kunsthalle Basel (Basel, 2008), the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam, 2013 and 2015), Tate Modern (London, 2014) and the Jumex Museum (Mexico City, 2014), as well as a number of international biennials, such as the 5th Berlin Biennial (Berlin, 2008), (d)OCUMENTA 13 (Kassel, 2012) and the Biennial of Moving Images (Geneva, 2014). Bachzetsis was nominated for the DESTA Prize (2011) and is a laureate of the Migros Kulturprozent Jubilee Award (2007), the Swiss Art Award (2011 and 2016) and Swiss Performance Prize (2012). In 2016, Bachzetsis participated in "The Parliament of Bodies" and "Continuum", Public Programmes at documenta 14. In January 2017, she presented *Massacre: Variations on a Theme* at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City. Later that year her work was included in documenta 14 exhibitions at Athens and Kassel, as well as "The Parliament of Bodies" and "Continuum" public programmes. In June 2018 Alexandra Bachzetsis presented her performances *Private: Wear a mask when you talk to me* and *Private Song* at the High Line New York. In 2018, the exhibition *An Ideal for Living* (2018) opened at the Centre Culturel Suisse in Paris and the performance *Escape Act* premiered at Pact Zollverein in Essen. Her latest work *Chasing a Ghost* (2019) was commissioned by the Art Institute of Chicago and toured in Europe since.

Her upcoming project *2020: Obscene* is commissioned by Kunsthaus Zurich. The theater version will premiere at Theaterhaus Gessnerallee Zurich in 2021 and the museum version will be presented at the Kunsthaus Zurich in 2022.