

Discoteca Flaming Star answers questions by Britta Scholze

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WM: I love the aspect of emotional staging and the relationship with the audience generated by it. I like to share a fictitious memory space with the audience, a space generated through the performance, a space that is strange and confusing without being intimidating. I like to make myself up, to carry an image of myself on my face. And I really like to sing, to feel the meaning of songs that are crucial for the formation of my identity. I indulge in celebrations of non-perfection, of failure and vulnerability. Klaus Kinski is my father, Bonnie Tyler my mother.

CGB: Discoteca Flaming Star is a dream come true: the dream of sharing a space of artistic encounter without the need for a physical space. Without this kind of performative collaboration, it would be very hard for me to pursue my individual art practice and make it public. I don't believe in the image of the lonely artist working by himself. To be together means to be able to see things not only through your own eyes. I find a lot of energy in the directness of the performances, because there is space to deal with failure and fragility. I very much enjoy the process of developing the framing of the songs. I feel, work and see myself more and more as a performer, even when I use different artistic means. I love to work with songs because it involves working with text and with memories, while also thinking about voice and intonation.

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DFS: The smallest unit of our performance is the song, its meaning, the memories it contains. In our working process often we first consider a song and its spatial aspect, the relationship between the performer and the song. This relationship links up with our desires and our strategies as artists. By intervening in the intentions or in the body of the song we try to shift its memories, or to add something. This can happen in a conceptual or musical way; Robbie Williams' "Supreme," for example, is a fairly optimistic pop song. By way of musical intervention it turns into a torch song that rather reminds one of a middle-aged woman broken by life. For "Aladlona" non-musical aspects play a far bigger role. The cultural misunderstanding that links us to Arab belly dancing interprets the song as much as the guitar or the literal and cultural meaning of the lyrics. Generally, in addition to the fact that we love and respect all of these songs, moments of absurdity and the humor of "displacing" are always very important to us. All participants in Discoteca Flaming Star are involved in the formation of the space that describes the relationship to the songs. Everybody has an impact on the outcome, through their specific way of thinking, interpreting, dancing, singing, playing, etc.

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DFS: The banners are pieces of fabric glued together and subsequently painted with texts. We use them as backdrops for many of our performances, as spatial transformations that capture chaos in words. The texts are references, cryptic thoughts that we've been pregnant with for many months. Thoughts about art practice: for example, "innocence & mystery" relates to Buñuel's filters for his films. The banners are also conceptual; they reflect the relationship of our art to various levels of the everyday experience of artists and viewers. They are fabrics for thought. Right now we're working on a new banner: "and doubts and exaggeration and amnesia."

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Sanja Ivekovic, Wiener Gruppe, Alvaro, Anita Berber, El Arroyo los Cagaos, Mahalchick, Mary Shelley, PFFR, Jack Smith, Patti Smith, Cheap Club, Kenneth Anger, Joey Arias, La Pachanga, Félix González-Torres, Karl Valentin...

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Ten years from now DFS will be a theatre on the outskirts of Marrakesh, where Spaghetti Westerns are performed as three-day-long Greek dramas.

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DFS at "Public Affairs". A great freedom of art probably lies in its exemplary functioning as a model. Art as a model, how we propose it, is politically relevant for us. Our proposal is mainly for failure, vulnerability and betrayal. The betrayal of language, genes, provenance and all given necessities.

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Current art as political intervention. We often doubt whether art can intervene in a political way, but our doubts shrink whenever we encounter art that we suspect to have this ability. The works of Félix González-Torres (artist, 1957-1996) are informed by politics and poetry. His works just want to be there; they don't need to be pushy and they don't impose themselves. Ines Schaber (artist, b. 1969) work consistently on aesthetical visual essays that contain politics without excluding poetry and ghosts from the production of new meaning. Alex Arteaga (artist, b. 1969) likes to talk about how aesthetic work is the only relevant basis for real and radical sustainability. There are many artists and collectives who strongly interweave their work with public concerns.

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Tatsumi Hijikata (dancer, 1928-1986) says that the performer is connected to the audience through provocation, and that the performer does not have to connect with the audience at all. We try to establish a relationship with the audience through openness and pleasure. Fiction seems increasingly provocative.

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That is what "Public Affairs" was about... for three days we thought about how performance can be a special place for the articulation of socially relevant statements by artists. Over these three days different encounters took place, and that perhaps is the force of performance in this sense: to come together in order to make an artwork possible for a limited time, to choreograph the desire of its production together in order to see something through the eyes of the others along the way. Poetry, emotions, bridges to fiction, to humor... But of course performance is not an exclusive space for social protest. To stand on a subway platform all day long, singing against the noise of arriving and departing trains, even though nobody came to listen to you: this can be an excellent protest for somebody—considering that he or she is like this, and not different, and not supposed to be different, and uses the means of performance. That is very subversive.

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We wish to bring people to a space they haven't been to before (maybe we succeeded once so far). We wish to shift the memories of people, to confuse them, to supply them with spirits and lovers. DFS is meant to be a mental space open to all kinds of artists for experimentation and pleasure. We ask and are asked to collaborate, to make soundtracks, to fight with glamorous intelligence and to go through anger and melancholia. We work with monsters and we want to perform miracles. DFS is a space to challenge the world armed with the weapons of innocence and mystery. We play to heal amnesia, indulging in appropriated songs, hoping to plant roses and to enter your paradise...

At, in, and with this space DFS have been so far: Guiomar Arjona López (Munich), Edith Mirwald (Munich), Philipp Imdahl (Cologne), David Galbraith (New York), Asana (Berlin), Bene Abel (Berlin), Marita Barnett (Berlin), Ines Gerdes (Berlin), Cristina Gómez Barrio (Berlin), Wolfgang Mayer (Berlin), Imadi (Berlin), Birgit Kramer (Berlin), El Arroyo los Cagaos (Cáceres), Marianne Kirch (Munich), Tom Fruechtel (Munich), Stephan Schessl (Munich), Ignaz Schick (Berlin), Rita McBride (New York), Michael Mahalchick (New York), Jim Galbraith (New York), Michael Schultze (Berlin), Dorothy Vallens (Berlin), Circo

Interior Bruto (Madrid), Bernd Sevens (Berlin), Helge Slaatto (Kopenhagen), Franz Reinecke (Munich), Ursula Rogg (Berlin), Kerstin Rautenberg (Berlin), Laurie Young (Berlin), François Boué (New York), Susan Oetgen (New York), Xenia Riemann (Düsseldorf), Elyce Semenec (New York)