

Media release
Zurich, 24 March 2022

Kunsthhaus Zürich presents 'Alexandra Bachzetsis. 2020: Obscene'

From 25 March to 1 May 2022, the Kunsthhaus Zürich presents 'Alexandra Bachzetsis. 2020: Obscene' – a combined exhibition and live performance that explores the relationship between the staging of the excessive body and its consumption by the coveting gaze.

Alexandra Bachzetsis (b. 1974) is a choreographer and visual artist who lives and works in Zurich. Her artistic practice is located at the interface between dance, performance, visual art and theatre. Many of her works are concerned with choreographies of the body and in particular with the ways in which we appropriate gestures, modes of expression, patterns of identification and fantasies from popular culture as we constantly reinvent and define our bodies. Bachzetsis is interested in the reciprocal influence of 'popular commercial' media (social media, video clips and television) and 'art' (ballet, modern and contemporary dance, performance and visual art).

STAGING THE EXCESSIVE BODY

Alexandra Bachzetsis's works have been shown around the world in major museums and theatres as well as biennials and festivals. The Kunsthhaus Zürich already has a lengthy association with the artist, who was awarded the City of Zurich Art Prize in 2018. An early work by her was shown here back in 2008, and other performances followed in the ensuing years. Now, the museum version of her latest work, '2020: Obscene', is premiering at the Kunsthhaus. In it, she uses performance to explore the interdependencies between the 'scene' – acting and staging – and the 'obscene'. That relationship has a long and inspiring history in the philosophy of language, sociology, and cultural and aesthetic theory. Jean Baudrillard employs the obscene as a cultural-critical term to describe our global society, which has become entirely subject to mediatization and in which mediality has become reality. In a 1988 essay, he argues that we are living in an 'ecstasy of communication' which he regards as 'obscene': 'Obscenity is not confined to sexuality, because today there is a pornography of information and communication (...). It is no longer the obscenity of the hidden, the repressed, the obscure, but that of the visible, all-too-visible.'

'2020: OBSCENE'

The idea for Alexandra Bachzetsis's new piece came during the first lockdown; hence the reference to the year in its title. In it, she tackles extreme physical and emotional experiences, but also isolation and death. '2020: Obscene' further investigates the possibilities of theatre with regard to seduction, attraction and games of sexual identity; and the performing body itself as a place manifesting the alienation and limitations of human existence. The performers are confronted with their own corporealities – with the contradictions between intuition and gesture, light and dark, score and script, as well as norm and form.

EXHIBITION AND LIVE PERFORMANCE

'2020: Obscene' by Alexandra Bachzetsis is both an exhibition and a live performance. In exhibition mode, the stage elements become surfaces onto which a three-part video is projected, while on 1 and 2 April at 8.30 p.m. the work will be performed live in the auditorium. Information and tickets are available at www.kunsthhaus.ch/agenda.

PUBLICATION, GUIDED TOURS

A publication containing elements of text from the performance forms part of the presentation. Copies are available free of charge in the exhibition.

Public guided tours in German take place on 9 and 23 April at 11 a.m. Information and tickets are available at www.kunsthhaus.ch/agenda.

Supported by the Dr Georg and Josi Guggenheim Foundation

GENERAL INFORMATION

Kunsthhaus Zürich, Heimplatz, CH-8001 Zurich

Tel. +41 (0)44 253 84 84, www.kunsthhaus.ch

Fri-Sun/Tue 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Wed, Thu 10 a.m.–8 p.m. For public holiday opening see www.kunsthhaus.ch.

Admission including entrance to the collection: CHF 23 / CHF 18 (concessions and groups). Admission free to visitors under the age of 17.

Advance ticket sales: www.kunsthhaus.ch

Zurich Tourism, tourist information office in Zurich main railway station, tel. +41 44 215 40 00, info@zuerich.com, www.zuerich.com.

CONTACT FOR THE MEDIA

Media releases and images to download as well as an overview of dates for media briefings can be found at www.kunsthhaus.ch/en/medien-bereich/media-corner/.

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