



Body Abstracts The Performance

Iri Berkleid & Jodie Williams

Introduction



Body Abstracts is a performance of 20 minutes imagined by Iri Berkleid in collaboration with Jodie Williams and with the intervention of the musicians Santiago Aldunate and Tamaz Juhasz. The performance was staged at SOMA Marseille in October 2022 in front of a public of 60 people.

The piece is a continuity of Iri's visual work with organic matter (see *Body Abstracts* sculptures) and of her perception of our contemporaneity through a new materiality. It took place within Iri's evolutive in situ installation around the matter's growth process.

Teaser



Synopsis

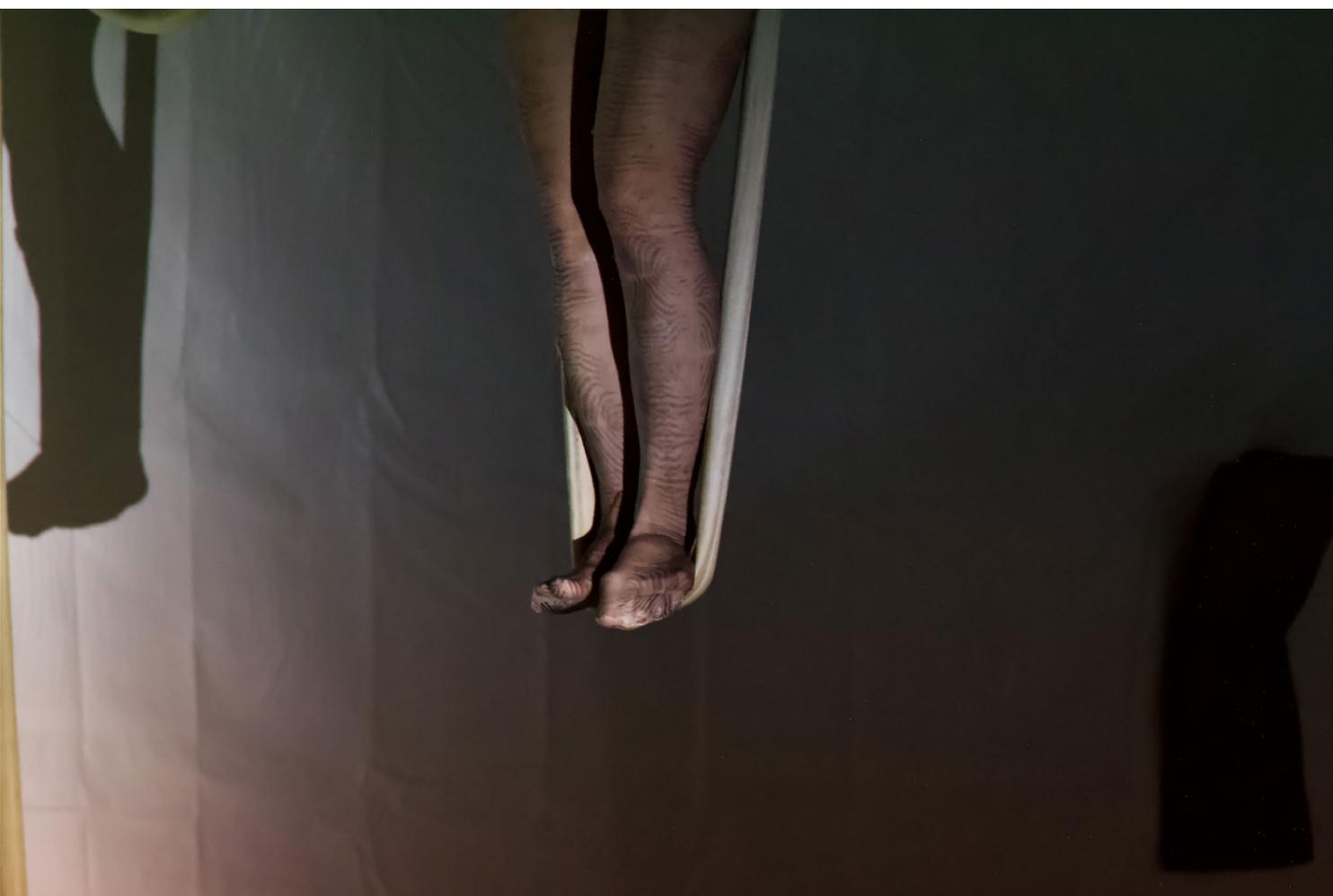
Body Abstracts II, an immersive performance by the artist Iri Berkleid, tells the story of a symbiosis and a separation in 5 “tableaux”. At the intersection of music, theatre and visual arts shows, Iri stages the circus artist Jodie Williams, the poet and musician Santiago Aldunate and the music composer Tamas Juhasz. A first public version of 18 minutes took place at SOMA Marseille in October 2022 in front of an audience of sixty people.

The action takes place in an evolving installation in which a cellulose membrane, resembling human skin, grows during the month running up to the performance. Jodie’s body is transformed by the fusion with the membrane and emerges in enigmatic forms in the bathtub before spilling out, body to body, into the performance space. The separation of the two bodies marks the second part of the performance, where Jodie becomes the conscious master of the material. She now handles the material practically, yet still sacredly, under the improvised sounds of Tamas who sets the tempo for her ascension to the final scene, her projection, the creation of a mural from the remaining pieces of material.



Her actions are abstractions of Iri Berkleid's real process and experience of working with this matter, highlighting the labour and physical effort, the intimacy and fusion, the constraints and conflicts of working with a new materiality. The audience is invited to a complete sensory experience, in proximity with odours, sounds and textures; a new environment, displacing them to reconsider their notion of abjection and awe.

In each performance Iri invites a different musician to frame the work, giving a sensitive impulse to start the action. Their voice leaves a gentle trace carried through the duration of the piece until the audience are reunited with the music in the form of a concert at the end. Jodie, exiting the performance space after the final act, leads a hypnotized audience into the concert of the guest musician, a familiarity that now relieves the trance of the performance environment.





Live music & sound by Tamaz Juhasz



Musical performance by Santiago Aldunate
Concert at the end by Santiago Aldunate & his band Hanta Yo

Documentary Film



A longer version is accessible on demand

Evolutionary Installation



Bio & CV



Iri Berkleid started her career in 2017 with *Flesh and Stones*, during her residency in Madrid. This immersive, collaborative and multidisciplinary artwork bears the mark of her past, as a producer in contemporary opera in London. With dancers and performers, she created a scenography on the themes that would later drive her artistic exploration: the link between psyche and matter.

Iri then trained in different practices, among which sculpture, video & installation. It was during her MFA at the School of Visual Arts in New York in 2018 that she met with organic materials in the school's biolab.

Before starting her artistic career, Iri graduated in law and studied diplomatic conflict resolution – she researched the impact of collective emotions in inter-ethnic conflicts on politics - in Israël and Palestine. She then trained as a mediator in international organizations. This work experience made her aware of power relations, social structures, and conflict dynamics. Her art depicts these themes by creating experiences of communion, which transcend cultural, psychological and physical barriers.

Iri Berkleid is interested in investigating disruptive psychological mechanisms on the individual and sociological levels.

Influenced by surrealists and akin to artists exploring our contemporaneity through the prism of biology and molecular activity, Iri uses materiality – the physical properties of materials – as a starting point of investigation.

For her sculptural installation and video works, she fashions a wide range of materials, from the synthetic to the mineral, the organic to the vegetal, and both dead and living bodies.

Education

DIPLOMA

2018-20	Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Art Practice, School of Visual Arts, New York
2015-16	Master's Degree (MA) in Arts and Cultural Management, King's College London
2013-14	Master's degree (MA) in diplomacy, Conflict Resolution & Mediation, IDC, Herzliya
2007-2011	Law and Political Science (Bachelor's Degree), Université Paris Panthéon-Assas, Paris II

CERTIFICATES

2022	Scenography & Stage Design, Studio Té, Rennes
2016	Contemporary Art (short course), Sotheby's Institute of Art, London
2015	Advanced Photography class (short course), Central Saint Martins, London
2014	Social Anthropology (MOOC), Oxford University, London

Exhibitions & Residencies

SHOWS

2022	Microdosage Poétique, SOMA Marseille (solo) Eros Hypnotica, Artwork in Promess , Paris Symbiocène, L'Été des Serpents (OFF Les Rencontres d'Arles), Arles Body Abstracts, 23 rue de Saint Petersburg , Paris (solo)
2020	<i>Four Seasons and a Half</i> , Van der Plas Gallery, New York (solo) (cancelled for COVID)
2020	Queer Appropriation, Cité Internationale des Arts , Paris
2019	Non-location Specific, Flatiron Gallery , New York
2018	Te Llevo Para Que Me Llevés, Centro Munar , Buenos Aires
2017	Flesh & Stones – Renacimiento, Espacio Nigredo , Madrid (solo)

RESIDENCIES & ARTISTS COLLECTIVES

2022	Resident at SOMA , Marseille, FRANCE Member of the collective Le Cercle de l'Art , Paris, FRANCE
2021	Resident at AYATANA Research Program for Science & Art , Ontario, CANADA
2020	Member of the Queer Appropriation Workshop, Cité Internationale des Arts , Paris, FRANCE
2019	Temporary Member at the Houloc , Aubervilliers, FRANCE
2017	Resident at R.A.R.O. , Madrid, SPAIN Resident at ACART Intercambiador , Madrid, SPAIN

Prizes & Awards

2020	Los Angeles Cinematography Awards (LACA) Finalist in the category "Experimental short" for <i>It's Supposed To be A Loop</i>
2018-20	School of Visual Arts (SVA) Departmental Awards Excellence Award & scholarship for the years 2018, 2019 et 2020

Previously (Cultural Entrepreneurship & Diplomacy)

CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

2016 -2017	Program Coordinator, .ART Domains (United Kingdom Creative Ideas -UKCI), London
2016	Short-term Project Coordinator for the art social media platform, The Artstack , London
2015-2016	Executive Producer for the Opera Puck, Synart & The Royal College of Music (RCM), London

DIPLOMACY & MEDIATION

2014	Assistant to the director of Mediation, OMBUDSMAN OFFICE, United Nations , New York
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Jodie Williams is a multidisciplinary artist, borrowing her language from contemporary circus, physical theatre, and the visual arts. Her body is a tool for expressing one's inner worlds through encounters with objects. The confrontation of the two materialities, between interior and exterior, forms this exploration of social behaviors and of our humanity that she often tints with a layer of humour and absurdity.

Jodie trained in London at the National Centre for Circus Arts and Circomedia in Bristol where she received her degree in Contemporary Circus and Physical Theatre in 2018.

In 2019, she moved to France and joined Company Balance Dehors, with whom she has created three projects; a clownesque duo with Océane Peillet 'Les Diktatrix', 'Trait d'Union' with Floria da Silva, and her solo 'Une Harmonie des Vides'.

In 2018 Jodie was an original member of the circus-theatre show 'Disconnection' directed by Meri-Maij Näykki.

She has presented circus acts in cabarets, arts festivals, and events since the beginning of her career in 2013.

Performing + Visual Arts

Languages: English, French (Fluent)

Performing Arts

2022 - Performer - *Body Abstract II* - A 20 minute performance written by visual artist, Iri Berkleid, succeeding a 30 day evolving installation.

2021 - 2022 - *Outside Eye - WIRE WALKER - Orchestrated Failures* by Fiona Salisbury - Outside eye and development of the dramaturgy for a solo show, comprising of tightwire, dance and physical theatre.

2021 - *Outside Eye - Love Trap* by Margo Wyon - Outside eye for a solo rap and puppet show.

2020 - 2022 - Artist, Author & Scenographer - *Les Dictatrix* - An explosive, clownesque, duo co-written with Océane Peillet exploring the concept of our internal dictators.

2019 - 2022 - Artist - A duo with Foria da Silva, mixing visual arts, circus and bodies in movement, presented in a series of sketches with interactive elements.

2018 - 2022 - Artist - *Une Harmonie des Vides* - A body of original work including two circus acts and the development of a solo show mixing aerial loop, physical theatre and play with a giant lampshade.

2018 - *Disconnection - Circus Performer (Role of Head of the Horse)* - Aerial loop, acrobatics, and mask work, for the original creation and performance of a show directed by Meri-Maija Naykki.

Since 2013 - Various performances in cabarets and arts festivals.

Visual Arts

2022 until present - Illustrator and Author - *Le Quatorzième Jour (à peu près)* Conception and illustration of a graphic novel.

2022 until present - Animation - *Le Diable au C(h)oeur* - The drawing and animation of a short animated film, in collaboration with Marlène Rabinel as screenwriter and director.

2022 - Illustrations - *Tableau d'une Exécution* - directed by Marlène Rabinel - Artistic impressions of scenes of a play for the artistic dossier.

2018 - Illustration - *Voices & Ghosts* - The EP cover for musician, Luca Macchi (Hallelugenia)

Training + Education

2022 - *The Practice of Scenography*
Olivier Borne - Théâtre Dromesko

2017 - 2018 *Contemporary Circus + Physical Theatre* - Circomedia, Bristol
FDA passed with distinction.

2014 - 2016 *Contemporary Circus*
National Centre of Circus Arts, London
Incomplete due to illness.

2008 - 2009 *Level 4 Diploma in Foundation Art & Design* - New College Nottingham
Distinction

Other Activities - Life model for individual and groups of artists - TV Extra - Aerial circus teacher and facilitator of creative aerial workshops for dancers.

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