



Anna Witt, *Body in Progress*, 2018
Courtesy Anna Witt, Vienna and Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin

Vienna, 27 February 2018

Belvedere 21

Arsenalstrasse 1
1030 Vienna

Opening hours:
Wed to Sun, and public holidays:
11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Wed and Fri to 9 p.m.

Press downloads:
belvedere21.at/presse

Press contact:
Irene Jäger
+43 664 800 141 185
i.jaeger@belvedere.at

ANNA WITT HUMAN FLAG

February 28 to May 27, 2018

Anna Witt's artistic practice is performative, participatory, and political. She creates situations that reflect interpersonal relationships and power structures as well as conventions of speaking and acting. The Belvedere 21 is showing her first solo exhibition at a Viennese institution. It consists of three video installations along with photographs and texts that shine a light on various aspects of our ideas around "work."

"The art of Anna Witt stands out for presenting thematic focal points regarding how we live together; it is a practice in which social, political, and economic parameters are reflected in ways that enable them to be experienced and debated. In the context of "Spirit of 68," this year's program motto at the Belvedere 21, which is dedicated to the relevance of the social struggles and achievements of the sixties movement in the present day, these observations on the relationship of subject, work, and society appear to have a special importance," says Stella Rollig, General Director of the Belvedere and Belvedere 21.

Anna Witt involves passersby in public spaces, or specifically selected people and groups, into her performative experimental arrangements, usually in a directly physical way. This forms the basis for her video installations. The tasks range from repeated imitation of specifically coded gestures to the development of complex choreographies, and give the participants opportunities for individual articulation and authorship. With curiosity and empathy for her counterpart, Anna Witt explores the borders between the self and the other and tries to activate the individual's capacity for action, which she understands as a prerequisite for community and society.

The artist describes her basic method as follows: *"I make a space of action available to people, which they can organize themselves. Verbal and non-verbal articulations then open up spaces where our way of living together can be thought through and redefined."*

In recent years, Anna Witt has realized a whole series of artistic projects on the relationship between the individual, work, and society. These projects enable us to experience current forms of subjectivization that are part of daily life and therefore often invisible. How do we become who we are? What do we do, what do we believe in, what do we fight for? And how is this social self connected to visible and invisible mechanisms, norms and rules of our society? Anna Witt's first solo exhibition at a Viennese institution consists of three video installations along with photographs and text. In addition to the 3-channel video installation *Flexitime* (2010), the work *Beat Body* (2016-18) is being shown for the first time in a version composed of four video sculptures. These are supplemented and contextualized by the photo/text work *Under the Pavement* (2016). On the occasion of this exhibition, Anna Witt produced the 5-channel video essay *Body in Progress* (2018) in the adjacent urban-development area around the new Vienna Central Station.

"In the exhibition at Belvedere 21 Anna Witt both illuminates the mechanisms of ascribing value and social position to certain professions, as well as the meaning of historical gestures and symbols of collective organized labor in times of radical individualization. And she explores possible utopias where the concept of work and life differs from our cycle of constant commitment and self-optimization," explains Curator Luisa Ziaja. *"Her approach to given conditions is neither naive nor cynical. Instead, she tries to elicit small adjustments to our perception and our actions that open up perspectives for community beyond the dominant social patterns."*

Detailed information on the works shown at the exhibition

***Flexitime*, 2010**

Video installation

3-channel HD video, color, audio, 20 min.

Anna Witt invited passersby in industrial and office zones in Vienna to take part in her video for a token fee. Their task was to pose in front of the camera with a raised fist, a gesture which historically belongs to the workers' movement. The protagonists were allowed to decide for themselves how long they held the pose, thus determining the length of the individual shots. By deciding on the time themselves, the participants were led into a certain responsibility as well as the moral dilemma of assessing how much time was appropriate to do justice to the demands of the task – a dilemma that is also found in modern, deregulated models of working time.

***Beat Body*, 2016-18**

Video installation

Multichannel HD video, color, audio, c. 5 Min each.

With *Beat Body*, Anna Witt has created a performative monument for the sex workers on Kurfürstenstraße in Berlin. She spent some time in the women's environment and asked for permission to record their heartbeats. Everyone has their own individual heartbeat, which creates a portrait that is both very intimate and anonymous at the same time. The personal soundtrack of

each woman's heartbeat was transformed into individual choreographies by professional pole dancers from a nearby nightclub. Through the strong self-determined physicality of the dancers, the video sculpture *Beat Body* becomes a tribute to the women of the street and emphasizes the value of each individual human being. *Beat Body* is being shown as an installation of four video sculptures for the first time in this exhibition.

Under the Pavement, 2016

12-part photo-text series

Fine-Art Inkjet print, Dimension varies

The photo-text series *Under the Pavement* documents the encounters and collaboration with the sex workers while the video installation *Beat Body* was being created.

Body in Progress, 2018

Video installation

5-channel 4K video, color, audio

The video installation *Body in Progress*, produced for this exhibition, was made in the urban-development area around Vienna Central Station and the Quartier Belvedere. Anna Witt engages with ways of imagining an optimized world of work and life. Here they are conceptualized through an analogy between *work* and *work-out*. In a 5-channel video, panoramas and details of the work environment in the area's hotels, construction sites, and Erste Campus offices, are interwoven with shots of athletic interventions into a fragmentary whole. Anna Witt asked a group of calisthenics athletes to use the buildings and work areas for their bodyweight exercises. The relatively new extreme-lifestyle sport of calisthenics is about free body training, which largely eschews fitness machines and can be performed anywhere, at any time. One of the most popular and challenging Calisthenics moves is the "human flag," in which the extended body is stretched out horizontally from a pole. Characteristics such as commitment, individuality, freedom from rules, and self-optimization – attributes of our contemporary working world – are symbolically transferred to the body. There is also textual content, based on the artist's conversations with working people on site, which explores their experiences with work as a power factor and what they understand that to mean, as well as utopias and reflections on the network of relationships between the individual, work, and society.

ARTIST'S BIOGRAPHY

Anna Witt, born in Wasserburg am Inn, Germany in 1981. She lives and works in Vienna.

Solo exhibitions: 2016: Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen; Kunstraum München; Simultanhalle Köln; Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin / 2015: Kunstraum Lakeside, Klagenfurt; 8. Salon, Hamburg; GfzK – Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst, Leipzig / 2014: Center for Contemporary Art, Pristina / 2013: Marabouparken Museum, Stockholm / 2012: Janco Dada Museum, Ein Hod / 2011: Magazin 4; Bregenzer Kunstverein; Salzburger Kunstverein/Kabinett, o. T. Raum für aktuelle Kunst, Lucerne 2010: Galerie Michael Wiesehöfer, Cologne; Lothringer13 – Städtische Kunsthalle München; Grazer Kunstverein

Selected group exhibitions: 2017: 5th International Photography Festival Israel; *Künstliche Herzen* – Josephinum Wien; *Performing Knowledge* – Dienstgebäude, Zurich; *Fear of the Unknown II* – NTK Gallery, Prague; *Specular Windows. Reflections on the Self and the Wider World and Instructions for Happiness* – 21er Haus, Vienna / 2016: *ASYLUM* – Kunstverein Bielefeld; *Peoples Cinema* – Kunstverein Salzburg; *Alle Achtung* – ACC Galerie Weimar; *Von den Strömen der Stadt* – Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach; *Fear of the Unknown* – Kunsthalle Bratislava / 2015: *Creating Common Good* – Kunst Haus Wien; Vienna Art Week; *Rabenmütter* – Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz; *Factory Fetish* – West Space, Melbourne; *24/7 the human condition* – Vienna Biennale; *Blind Spots* – Off Biennale Budapest; *Motherhood* – Visual Culture Research Center, Kiev / 2014: *Ökonomie der Aufmerksamkeit* – Kunsthalle Wien; *Re-former le monde visible* – Le 116 Centre d'Art Contemporain de Montreuil, Paris; *I Can't Control Myself* – Kunstverein Wolfsburg / 2013: *An I for an Eye* – Austrian Cultural Forum, New York; *Risk Society* – MOCA Museum of Contemporary Art Taipei; *Emscherkunst 13* – Ruhr Triennale, Duisburg; *ReCoCo* – MoBY, Bat Yam; *Domestic Utopias* – NGBK, Berlin / 2012: *Over the Rainbow* – Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; *We only dream of places and resistance, for now* – Lux/ICA Biennial of Moving Images, London; *False Calculations Presidium* – Museum of Financial History/V-C-A Foundation, Moscow 2011: *politics, ich, ich's, wir* – Kunsthalle Ravensburg; *Act/Out* – Onomatopee, Eindhoven; *The Event* – 29th Biennial of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana / 2010: Triennale Linz 1.0 – Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz; *Bilder in Bewegung. Künstler & Video/Film* – Museum Ludwig, Cologne; *Lust und Laster. Die sieben Todsünden von Dürer bis Nauman* – Kunstmuseum Bern; *Where do we go from here?* – Secession, Vienna; *Was draußen wartet* – 6. Berlin Biennale für zeitgenössische Kunst / 2008: Manifesta 7 – Rovereto

Anna Witt was awarded the Kunstpreis Europas Zukunft in 2015, and the BC21 Art Award from the Boston Consulting Group and the Belvedere, Vienna in 2013. She has also been honored with the Bayerischen Staatsförderpreis für Performance (2012), the Staatsstipendium für Video- und Medienkunst Österreich (2010), and the Columbus Art Award (2008). After completing her degree with Monica Bonvicini at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, she has gone on to do many residencies and projects abroad, including Japan, Kosovo, Albania, Bulgaria, Sweden, Taiwan, Israel, and India.

CATALOGUE

Anna Witt
Beat Body
Unter dem Pflaster
Care
Arbeitermonumente
Sixty Minutes Smiling
Gleitzeit
Körper in Arbeit
Human Flag
Beat Body
Under the Pavement
Care
Workers Monuments
Sixty Minutes Smiling
Flexitime
Body in Progress

An exhibition catalogue is available; in addition to the works presented in the show, it documents other projects that explore the theme of "work." Art-theoretical essays by Joshua Simon and Luisa Ziaja provide context.

Anna Witt. Human Flag

Editors: Stella Rollig, Luisa Ziaja

Authors: Joshua Simon, Stella Rollig, Anna Witt, Luisa Ziaja

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Exhibition title	<i>Anna Witt. Human Flag</i>
Curator	Luisa Ziaja
Dates	February 28 to May 27, 2018
Exhibits	<p>Anna Witt, <i>Flexitime</i>, 2010 Video installation, 3-channel HD video, color, audio, 20 min. Courtesy Anna Witt, Vienna and Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin</p> <p>Anna Witt, <i>Beat Body</i>, 2016/18 Video installation, Multichannel HD video, color, audio, c. 5 min. each Courtesy Anna Witt, Vienna and Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin</p> <p>Anna Witt, <i>Under the Pavement</i>, 2016 12-part photo/text series, Fine-Art Inkjet print, dimensions variable Courtesy Anna Witt, Vienna and Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin</p> <p>Anna Witt, <i>Body in Progress</i>, 2018 Video installation, 5-channel 4K video, color, audio, 19:05:04 min. Courtesy Anna Witt, Vienna and Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin</p>
Location	Belvedere 21 Arsenalstraße 1, 1030 Vienna
Opening times	Wednesday through Sunday 11am to 6pm Late opening evenings: Wednesday and Friday until 9pm (also on holidays)
Tickets	Regular 8 Euros Annual pass for Belvedere 21 21 Euros Discount 6 Euros Children and young people 18 and under free
Web	belvedere21.at

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The press release and high-resolution pictures can be downloaded at the following link:
https://bit.ly/belvedere21_Witt_Press