



MAJA KAROLINA FRANKE

DANCE – CIRCUS – PERFORMANCE ARTIST

Portfolio

The Artist

Maja Karolina Franke

Maja (she/her) is a dance and circus artist, performer, choreographer and advisor based in Vienna.

Her practice is informed by contemporary dance, contemporary circus, improvisation, partnering, meditation, use of objects and conscious kink techniques. One of her main focuses is on how to relate the body to either other bodies or other objects, structures and floors.

She likes to create physically challenging situations to see how the body deals with it. A special interest is the encounter and communication between two or more bodies, which manifests in Maja's work with a wide variety of techniques, perspectives, and approaches like contemporary partnering, couple dance or partner acrobatics.

In her work, Maja questions (traditional) gender roles in which we are socialized and investigates this influence on our bodies. In 2021, she received the BMKÖS Startstipendium for her research on gender roles and gender clichés in partnering and partner acrobatics. Moreover she is working with the topics of responsibility, trust and the role of the audience in a performance context. For her research "Stand.Punkte" together with Nina Dafert about the relation between physicality in communication and communication in physicality, she received the Arbeitsstipendium from BMKÖS for the year 2024.





Bio

Maja Karolina Franke

Maja (born 1988) studied classical and contemporary dance at Konservatorium Wien Privatuniversität and Dance pedagogy/Movement Studies at Institute of Dance Arts – Anton Bruckner University Linz. Since 2012 she has been working as a freelance artist in the dance and performance art and and since 2017 within the realm of contemporary circus as well.

In the course of her career Maja has worked among others with *KreativKultur*, *Theater Ansicht*, *Tanztheater Homunculus*, *Töchter der Kunst*, *tanz.coop*, *tauschfühlung* and *Momomento*, as well as with *Spielraum Ensemble*, *Follow the Rabbit*, *Planetenparty Prinzip*, *Theater Feuerblau*, *theater t'eig*, *Salzburger Festspiele* and *Burgtheater Wien* and *Wiener Festwochen*.

Her creations were performed at various festivals and venues, such as *Winterfest Salzburg*, *Codarts Research Festival Rotterdam*, *Muziekgebouw aan 't IJ Amsterdam*, *ON THE EDGE Festival Vienna*, *Tanzhafen Festival Linz*, *Codarts Theatre Rotterdam*, *Tadaa! Festival Estonia and Latvia*, *Kaskade Festival for Contemporary Circus Austria*, *Krapoldi im Park Innsbruck*, *Toihaus Salzburg*, *Imaginarium Portugal*.

For 2024/2025 Maja is a member of the artistic jury for curating residencies and performances at *Red Sapata, Linz*.



current work in development

contours of constraint

"contours of constraint" is an artistic research that revolves around the question of space. Utilizing her background in dance, circus and performance art the aim is to examine how her body as well as social habits are trained to claim space or prefer to withdraw themselves and leave it to others. She is investigating how her body responds to different kinds of extrinsic and intrinsic limitations. With the use of a variety of props that either restrict her body or help to claim more space she seeks to challenge the prevailing norms and status quo regarding the socialization and perception of a female-presenting body, exploring potential alternatives to being and claiming space.

Creation and Performance:
Maja Karolina Franke



Photo: Marcandrea



Photo: Marcandrea

" ..The plays become less like a story,
more and more like a court of
investigation."

Berthold Brecht



Research Showing FULL VIDEO

2024

PARL, Ljubljana

residency program and showing

backpulver feedback training, Vienna
sharings, artistic practice, feedback
talks

Kunstuni Linz

invited artist for filming Workshop
(time-based media class)





Photo: Marcandrea



current work in development

Stand.Punkte

a performance
about words and body

between self-determination
and speechlessness

Creation and Performance: Maja Karolina Franke, Nina Dafert
Dramaturgical Support: Cäcilia Färber

Short description

A relationship between two individuals, two bodies, two voices. The audience gains insight into the depths of human communication and acts as a witness, a confidant, an ally.

What is needed to speak at all, to be heard, to be understood? How much pressure can be endured? Who can speak up when someone else is standing on top of them? Do words get stuck in one's throat when suddenly seeing the whole picture from above? At what point are words not enough – or not even possible? When the world is turning 'round and 'round and upside down, how can we put it into words?



Photo: Maria Viola Kaufmann

Video

Teaser

FULL Work in Progress

2024

On the edge Festival Vienna: Residency and Showing

Kultursommer Vienna: Work in Progress Showing

Bears in the Park Vienna research and rehearsals

Arbeitsstipendium (grant for research)

for Contemporary Circus of BMKÖS

2023

Residency at ZirkusZeit, TRAP Vienna



Photos: Maria Viola Kaufmann



previous work 2020 -2023

RE/ACT!

Creation and Performance:
Maja Karolina Franke & Ralph Öllinger
Music: Christof Ressi
Advisor: Arne Mannott



Photo: Max Schorsch



Photo: Claude Hofer

Short description

Contemporary circus meets dance, meets performance art. Two performers create their own game: They play with falling, with being caught, with unexpected risk and blind trust. Again and again, the game threatens to tip, pushing trust to its limits.

This negotiation takes place not only between the two performers but also between them and the audience.

The performance deals in a nuanced way with the themes of responsibility and civil courage.

Who ultimately takes responsibility in the end?



Photo: Imaginarius

Video
Material

Teaser

short full version

long full version

Performances 2021-2023

Imaginarius Festival, Portugal
Krapoldi Festival, Innsbruck
Kultursommer Vienna
Zirkustheater Festival, Dresden
Craft Choreography, Vienna
Raw Matters, Vienna

supported by

bmkoes – Bundesministerium Kunst, Kultur,
öffentlicher Dienst und Sport
Red Sapata, Linz
Raw Matters, Vienna
Klisope, Linz



Photo: Imaginarius



Hold me, Baby!

a research project, 2021

Maja Karolina Franke questions traditional gender roles and their reproduction in partner acrobatics practice: "It is time to scrutinize my tools through a feminist lens. Which aspects of the technique adhere to gender stereotypes, which perhaps do not, and how can I use them choreographically? I am interested in various perspectives: both physical and social. Specifically, I want to explore different theses, structures and power relations with bodies."

supported by
Startstipendium for performing arts (grant for research) of BMKÖS 2021
Residency and Performance:
on the edge-Festival / WuK performing arts Vienna

Creation and Performance: Maja Karolina Franke
Performance: Ralph Öllinger

Hold me, Baby! - [FULL VIDEO](#)



OUT-SIDE-IN

2018-2020

Creation and Performance:
Maja Karolina Franke & Ralph Öllinger
Music: Christof Ressi



Performances

Winterfest, Salzburg
Codarts Research Festival,
Rotterdam
Tanzhafen Festival, Linz
Codarts Theatre, Rotterdam
Toihaus, Salzburg
Vollmond Variété, Hohenems

Photo: Lisa Horvath



The performance is not a show in a conventional way, it is understood as a performance process. All participants - the performers and the audience - can give information from their inside out, as well as take the outside information in.

The aim is to create an honest dialogue. Therefore the term and meaning of responsibility is an important part of the research.

They are looking for an honest physicality, individually and in connection with each other. Giving and receiving weight of the other, taking and overtaking responsibility, sharing it or leaving it to someone else and having trust are essential parts of the process.



Photos: Lisa Horvath

Photo Credits

Title: Ayni

Artist + Bio: Claude Hofer

contours of constraint: Pino Sereno and Marcandrea

Stand.Punkte: Maria Viola Kaufmann

RE/ACT! title page: Max Schorch

RE/ACT! content page: Imaginarius

Hold me, Baby!: Igor Ripak

OUT-SIDE-IN: Lisa Horvath



www.majakarolinafranke.com