



Adalbertstr. 96
next to Café Kotti
10999 Berlin

figures

A collaborative production in three acts

Heinz Peter Knes, DISTANT CASUALS, Ricardo Domeneck

Saturday, 22.6.2024, 4.30 pm

Sunday, 23.6.2024, 4.30 pm

figures is a collaborative durational piece, a performative reflection on different typologies or characters and the energies they transact in society, be it outside or within its norms. These chosen figures exist, but are in equal measure figments of (our) imagination, psychoanalytical tools, the stuff of mythology. They are: *the golden boy*, *woman with weapon*, *the doppelganger*, and *the forgotten*. They are enforcers of law, agents of chaos, victim and oppressor. They're part of a cultural history whose monolithic, solid quality is being called into question. The piece starts from text, becomes film, becomes dance, and ends as spoken word (but it is not a final word):

ACT I

Heinz Peter Knes

Figuren, 2024

Video, color, sound

15:42 min

With Adam Lusena Ash, Emil Benedict, Mihaela Chiriac (voice-over)

The figures are introduced in Heinz Peter Knes' filmic collage. An off-screen female voice delivers textual tableaux which young actors embody (see text below).

ACT II

The tableaux are transported into the present moment in a live choreography conceived and performed by the dance company DISTANT CASUALS. In it, the figures are enacted in transformation – morphing into one another, transitioning from vague to concrete, reflecting their ambiguity and complexity before vanishing.

ACT III

Text turned into images turned into movement which turns back into words – Ricardo Domeneck's poetic epilogue, spoken by Adam Lusena Ash, spotlights the mythology of the „Golden Boy“, the expectations, the promise, the destruction, and failure. The violence that lives in this narrative. The hidden figures, such as mothers and daughters. How toxic can a promise of glory be?

Heinz Peter Knes, lens-based artist, studying photography 1993-99 at FH Dortmund. Since then numerous exhibition and publication on an international scale. Extended practice through writing, curating. www.heinzpeterknes.de

DISTANT CASUALS is an emerging dance company co-founded by Emma Lusena Ash (Germany/Italy/England), Hubert Mielke (Poland/Germany), Lísandra Týra Jóns (Iceland) and Miquel Amengual Gual (Spain) in 2022. Their work explores the intersection of dance, performance art, theatre, and music, utilizing the body as a physical instrument. Movement and body remain at the core of their work which then falls deeper into the synergy of disciplines. DISTANT CASUALS embraces collectivity and hybrid hierarchical roles as a structure for the company and creations. www.distantcasuals.com

Ricardo Domeneck is a contemporary Brazilian poet, essayist and performer. He has published 10 collections of poetry and two collections of prose in Brazil and Portugal. His work has been translated and published in the United States, Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands. He lives and works in Berlin, Germany.

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Figures

Figures are not something concrete, but commonplaces that can be interpreted - so they are never wrong. A few characteristics are usually enough to make a figure recognizable. As we use figures and as they circulate, their respective image changes over time.

When several characters come together, we are, in fact, already onstage. Intentionally or not, the characters relate to each other - even when it doesn't make sense.

If we only refer to one figure, it is more a question of taking it apart (deconstruction); this already brings us into the field of science. This aspect, however, has increasingly become part of the stage, one reason for the decline of the portrait.

Theater, literature, singing. You create characters to talk about yourself, or rather the experiences of that self.

No is my name

No No the name

No No the No

*

figures

the masked person (satyr, satyr play).

The actress shows imitation, repetition, succession, deviation. She becomes a sign that at one time means similarity and at another time difference. The same thing, in a different way. Extracting something different from myself: a play. From the moment of attraction to the other, allowing that which is foreign in me to emerge and affirming it - the foreign that I am to myself.

Mask - to protect oneself from others, from a look, an approach, an illness (or danger). The mask pushes itself in front of and in between. Wearing it conveys security, encountering it tends to cause anxiety. The mask allows the before and behind to proliferate.

The Golden Boy - He is the starting point of our history of ideas. What kind of figure is he? The expected one? (masculine) It's made easy for him, things fall into his lap, he only has to say: Yes, it's me. And yet, he fails! Failure is an essential part of the character, otherwise it's not modern. The failed golden boy! Golden boys always fail. We came to talk about it because I was reminded of a school friend who was the prettiest, the most athletic. Maybe not the most hard-working, but everything was easy for him. And yet later everything slipped away from him and he became an alcoholic and broke down. I was shocked when I found out, it didn't fit in with the image I had of him.

The Golden Boy, a character with two sides, two poles. Winner and loser, or even more fundamentally: good and evil. We can look at this using the example of two brothers in „East of Eden“. Versions of the biblical Cain and Abel. Cain kills Abel because he pleases God.

Gold is a material that is embedded in an imperial history. Golden blond is Siegfried, who has a vulnerable spot > „l'Homme blessé“: the attraction of the weak spot became a matter of aesthetics. The film „Golden Boy“, Columbia Pictures 1939, makes one point clear: it is society that instigates the boy.

A counter-figure (or is it a variant?) would be the story of „Billy Budd“ by Herman Melville (the author of „Moby Dick“). It is about the unjustly accused handsome sailor Billy Budd, who unintentionally kills an accuser operating

with lies. Hannah Arendt interpreted the character as follows: „The Good is violent! Obviously, Melville has reversed the original crime in the character of Billy Budd, which is decisive for the tradition of our thinking. Here it is Abel who slays Cain. The Good is strong. Like everything strong, it is violent.“

The Uniformed Woman or „Woman with a Gun“. „Ulrike Maria Stuart“ a play by Elfriede Jelinek. „Brides of Nothingness - The Female Terror - Magda Goebbels and Ulrike Meinhof“ a play by Jutta Brückner. A line can be drawn from those mentioned here to the numerous goddesses of revenge from the fin de siècle: „Salome“, „Elektra“, „Medea“. Stories about violent women, written down by men who have been telling them to us since antiquity. The oppressed woman rebels and takes action against the oppressor. The *sisters* see through the principle and evade the oppressor. It is a two-sided technique of oppression.

The uniformed woman is the policewoman, the public order officer, the protector. The patron saint is a Catholic figure of worship. She is the one who has made a decision. She rests within herself. I can come to her.

Simone de Beauvoir „Le deuxième sexe“: the second, two!, tending towards ritual, ceremony - a commemoration: rigidity of formalism, regime, battle of words: conflict within the figure. Two bodies, two faces, two places, two, two, no! Find a place where the contrast dissolves. From there, leave the first strand behind you. Lot's wife! Something is always left behind, there's no other way, says the bouncer, guarding the border crossing.

Border, border protection, crossing the border?

Border crossers - that is the figure on the line of conflict.

Border crossers who live in confrontation. We don't know which side they are on, but they cross over and are involved in fights.

Shot - counter-shot, question - answer, TV interview. What kind of dialog? Yes, a dialog would be good here!

Question: What is the weapon?

Answer: Intelligence, breaking expectations, feeling, no feelings!

The messengers, the runners - the bearers. Two different figures. Neutrality, also in terms of gender. They are secondary characters - not protagonists! Yet they are decisive for the course of the story and yet they are not involved. They are functionaries who are not endowed with individuality or an agenda. We know nothing about their background. The messengers do not speak, the message speaks („Hello pizza“).

The runner is initially an athlete - an ancient figure. The marathon runner who collapses after reaching the finish line; physical exhaustion. Endlessly being sent off again. Arriving to be sent off again. Replaceable: if you don't go, someone else will. Fluctuation. Also gait. The runners are not flâneurs, no walking in the city, no roaming, no, they are purposeful and efficient.

The messenger: the envoy, the legation, the embassy (diplomatic service).

Messenger: divine figure (Mercury, Hermes). Enraptured. Winged being. Embassy rooms are also safe spaces. Kafka's messengers are the only ones who are not entangled in guilt. Figures without a home.

In contrast to messengers, influencers are protagonists as the bearers of a message. But be careful, because this is not actually a message, but persuasion. Language of power (primarily economics, then politics): Placing topics or content. Intensify. Generate majorities. Skimming. make believe, making facts. Manipulative figure. An interesting and necessary pairing with the fashionable, the zeitgeist. A figure of timing: „It's still too early“ / „Now is the time“.

The *forgetful*, Dostoyevsky calls it „the gentle“. A figure of maybe, as opposed to „it is“. She shows a delayed reaction, as if constantly busy making inner notes. Woman at the window. Locking herself in a room. Twilight, thin, self-centered. Figure of the possible - one does not know, will it happen? In the plural: the self-forgotten - a category, also of rebellion. A figure rich in variants and, above all, capable of increasing to: somnabulists, druggists, opium eaters. Under the influence, intensified, delayed, hallucinating. Drug - dry. Blurred. The endangered self. Suicides. This is also part of this figure: dirt, to the point of neglect.

Yet capable of reason. Able to reflect. Figure of silence: mystic. He, mystic, who puts a stop to language. The knower does not speak - the speaker does not know. However, not mute! In need of healing (cure). Figure of transition, wavering, constant change - light, light on, light off – only as the vanished does the figure leave a gap.

The dwarf

*I want to go into my little garden,
I want to water my onions, There stands a hunchbacked little man, He begins to sneeze.*

*I want to go to my kitchen,
If I want to cook my soup, A little hunchback is standing there, Has broken my little pot.*

*I want to go to my parlor,
If I want to eat my muesli, A little hunchback is standing there, He's already eaten half of it.*

Doppelgänger

„On one of my early visits to Paris. My friend and I are walking through the halls of the Louvre, suddenly she bumps into me and whispers, look over there, your doppelgänger! I'm quite startled, where, where, then I see him. Seconds. He's already moving on. At first I'm disappointed, I don't recognize myself. I also feel offended - what does my friend see in him? I go after him, want to take a photo of him and realize that there's something about the doppelgänger that I'm starting to like. Because he's not a second person, he's not another one. There is something self-contained in him, something that is his own, which my friend pointed out to me. She pointed to a corresponding moment in her relationship with me, so that I can look at it. This correspondence finally makes the closed, the finished permeable again, expands me, lets me go - albeit hesitantly. In fact, there is a little pain, like a farewell, when he, the doppelgänger, goes over to the next room and disappears and I go back to my friend.“

Text by Heinz Peter Knes