

PERFORMANCE WORLD PREMIERE COPRODUCTION

PFINGSTSPIEL

FLORENTINA HOLZINGER



FREE
REPUBLIC OF
VIENNA
FESTIVAL

NITSCH FOUNDATION

23 May, Wiener
EislaufVerein, Schloss
Prinzendorf

Florentina Holzinger is known for her unflinching confrontation of the Catholic church and its repressive approach to bodies perceived as female. Following the sensational opera performance *SANCTA*, the exceptional Austrian artist is now devising a *Pentecost Play* with her team of stunt performers and musicians for the Republic of Gods and the Nitsch Foundation. It is a one-off experience that lasts several hours. Holzinger's *Pentecost Play* has two parts: The first part, an oratory for body and machines, is inspired by the symbolism of the Holy Spirit (dove, tongues of fire, blowing wind) and takes place open air at the Wiener Eislauf-Verein (Vienna Ice Skating Club). Immediately afterwards, the audience mounts buses to go to Prinzendorf Castle for the second part: a last supper following Hermann Nitsch. An unforgettable double performance quite in the spirit of the feast of Pentecost: the descent of the Holy Spirit and the courage to start anew!

Duration
9 hours,
incl. bus transfers


barrier-free access

PRINZENDORF CASTLE

Prinzendorf Castle lies at the centre of the life and work of Hermann Nitsch. Situated amidst the landscape of the Weinviertel region, the extensive complex – comprising a courtyard, park, stables, chapel, wine cellars, and underground passageways – combines historical substance with a unique atmospheric intensity. Originally used as an estate of Klosterneuburg Monastery, the castle became for Nitsch a singular space of artistic possibility.

Here, over decades, he developed his *Orgien Mysterien Theater* (Orgies Mysteries Theatre), in which architecture, nature and artistic action merge into an intense, physical experience. Prinzendorf Castle thus became a living site where his vision of art as a sensory-spiritual total experience was realised.

Even after Nitsch's death, the castle remains a significant venue for performance art. Initiatives, supported by his wife Rita Nitsch, continue his work and establish the castle as both a museum and a place of performance. The *Six-Day Play*, for instance, has been restaged posthumously. It is within this tradition that the artist Florentina Holzinger has been invited to present her performance *The Last Supper*, engaging with the history and significance of this extraordinary site.

TIMETABLE

3.30–4.20 pm

performance in Vienna

followed by bus trip to Prinzendorf

7–9.30 pm

performance at Prinzendorf Castle

followed by closing event (food and drinks available
on site – not included in the price)

11.30 pm

bus departure from Prinzendorf Castle to Vienna Schwedenplatz

Concept, Direction Florentina Holzinger **Performance by and with** Achan Malonda, Adriana Camacho, Anja Müller, Annina Machaz, Bärbel Schwarz, Bláthín Eckhardt, Chloé Ryo, Evelyn Franti, Fibi Eyewalker, Gibrana Cervantes, Helena Bothelo, Isabel Andrade, Isabelle Volckaert, Keity Meier, otay:onii, Leo Sowa, Lilian Kaufmann, Luci Fire Tusk, Luna Duran, Lydia Darling, Mery Muñoz, Marleen Stempel, Maura Knierim, Noa Niv, Paige A. Flash, Rike Huy, Fleshpiece, Sasha Perera, Sophie Duncan, Susan Planjer, Urška Preis, Xana Novais **Sound design, Composition** Stefan Schneider, Gibrana Cervantes, Urška Preis **Live-music** Achan Malonda, otay:onii (Organ, Voice), Gibrana Cervantes (Violin, Electronics), Paige A. Flash (Cello), Adriana Camacho (Contrabass, Electronics), Leo Sowa, Marleen Stempel, Maura Knierim, Urška Preis (Harps), otay:onii (Organ), Bláthín Eckhardt (Electronic Guitar), Luci Fire Tusk (Baritone saxophone), Rike Huy, Sasha Perera (Trumpets), Noa Niv (Trombone), Bärbel Schwarz, Lilian Kaufmann, Anja Müller (Drums), Stefan Schneider (Electronics, Synths) **Stage design** Nikola Knežević **Props** Camilla Smolders, with Vasilisa Grebenshchikova **Technical direction** Lukas “Lupo” Saller and Gwen Lenoble (PlanB) **Sound** Öli Kamaryt, Lisa Holaus **Light design** Lucas Gruber, Christoph “Schnee” Schneeberger **Live camera and Video design** Zoe Bassi and Clio Marden **Rigging** Dörte Wilfroth, Jan Havers **Stage** Clara Sargant, Veronika Gasner and Frauke Zellerhoff (PlanB) **Stunt coordination** Alexander Kusmak **Stunt rigger** Ronny Horning (Gravity Stunts), Daniel Pudewill **Stunt driver** Isabelle Andrade **Project Initiation and consulting** Dominika Li **Production** Katharina Wallisch, Sarah Parolin **Management, International distribution** neon lobster (Giulia Messia, Katharina Wallisch)

Production Florentina Holzinger/ More Spirit Please **Coproduction** Wiener Festwochen (Vienna Festival) | Free Republic of Vienna, Nitsch Foundation, nitsch museum **Made possible by** KÖR Wien (for the part in Vienna) **Supported by** Hotel InterContinental Wien, Eislauf-Verein Wien (for the part in Vienna) **Technical partner** Eventtechnik; Kramer und Kramer

World Premiere May 2026, Vienna Festival (Wiener Festwochen) | Free Republic of Vienna, Nitsch Foundation

A JOINT PROJECT OF THE VIENNA FESTIVAL (WIENER FESTWOCHEN) |
FREE REPUBLIC OF VIENNA, THE NITSCH FOUNDATION AND FLORENTINA
HOLZINGER/MORE SPIRIT PLEASE

SIRENS TAKE THE STAGE

BY ANNA LEON

One has come to expect several things in a Holzinger performance. A large cast, composed of non-cis-male bodies of diverse skill backgrounds (ballet and CrossFit, circus and acting), in particular including performers of a wide range of ages and types of mobility. Holzinger herself on stage with her cast; everybody naked with the exception of black harnesses holding microphones and/or climbing gear; most with tattoos, piercings or other chosen body modifications. Some join several works: Annina Machaz in comic acting roles; Netti Nüganen climbing on improbable contraptions; Renée Copraij a discreet but stealthy presence; Nikola Knežević doing stage design; and Stefan Schneider designing sound.

Trigger warnings in the programme note; bloodflow, both fake and real; sex imagined, spoken, performed; live filming of all this, projected in real time on screens, the stickiness of gore and sex coming closer to spectators, albeit in slightly pixelated form. A performance lasting significantly more than the fifty to seventy minutes that are often seen as contemporary dance's gold standard. The performance takes place in a large theatre, its stage large, its audience-capacity large. A central,

recognisable, canonical reference point (ballet, opera, Shakespeare, the catholic church), its cultural sanctity ruptured by under-represented aesthetics and practices (vaudeville, stunts, sideshow, contortion, circus). Some transport medium – motorcycle, car, helicopter – or other piece of machinery suspended from the ceiling with bodies climbing onto and hanging from it. A climax (or two), stomach-turning moments, funny moments, poignant moments, beautiful moments, messy moments.

Each work has its specificities, not least because all Holzinger pieces are inspired by, draw from, and adapt to the specificity that her often variously non-conforming performers bring into them, purposefully leaning into the diverse practices that they envelop. But while there is no set recipe, there is, by now, an unmistakable Holzinger aesthetic and its corresponding ecology of production. Understanding this aesthetic – what we might call 'the Holzinger system' – is also understanding the mechanisms of creating relevance in Western-globalised, institutionalised contemporary performing arts.

THE RETURN OF POP SPECTACLE

A Holzinger performance is less an 'elevation' of a form of entertainment or spectacle (tacitly assumed, in dominant discourse and curating, to be of lower cultural relevance) than it is *itself* a form of expertly, artistically crafted entertainment spectacle.

THE MECHANICS OF PLEASURE AND DESIRE

Pleasure and desire are not only staged in their mechanised omnipresence, they are deeply, almost existentially, at stake: women's bodies appropriating lust; an anti-patriarchal celebration of energetic, orgasmic community; the capacity to claim 'I want to fly' or 'I want to be weightless' and to really attempt to do so. Mechanics – the mechanics of equipment, the mechanics of the body, the mechanics of the theatre – is put to the service of pleasure and desire; it is asked to yield pleasure and fulfil desire.

CONTEMPORARY SPIRITUALITY

Pain is never on her stage without catharsis: in a contemporary take on what can be seen as a catholic bodyview, pain is not just transcended, but is itself a medium for transcendence. Watching a Holzinger piece is an invitation to stick with the performers while they go through the pain; stay with them until the pain has turned into a means, until one sees the entryways to liberation that it might open.

BODY MODIFICATION

Holzinger's productions depend on the cast and crew, as a community, holding each other, holding the space for each other, rehearsing risky acts together again and again and again until they can trust their bodies to each other in the highly tense and charged moment of performing in front of an audience hungry for action. And it is therein, I believe (...) that the core of Holzinger-specific feminism primarily lies: in the investment in communities of female* bodies as transformable through acts of will, and in the exploration of emotional, physical, structural limits challenging that will.

A GAME OF REAL AND UNREAL

At a time frequently dubbed 'post-truth', Holzinger asks us to discern, and bet on, what is real and what is fake. This is not to play with the value of truth, as some kind of simplistic reflection of a Trumplike (dis)figure of thought. It is a performative process through which we are put in a position of wanting to know, *needing* to know if what we see is true: an experiment in creating the need to know another body's truth.

A DIAGNOSTIC FOR THE CONTEMPORARY PERFORMING ARTS

A Holzinger work pushes and probes its spectators emotionally and sensorially, but it also pushes and probes its institutional contexts of production and display, revealing their gatekeeping and their blindspots, their conditions for

accepting to be pushed. While making *TANZ*, Holzinger informally spoke of her staging ballet – a physical discipline in which she is not, in conventional dance training terms, proficient – as her ‘master conceit’. It is indeed because it is in *TANZ* that ballet can be done in unconventional ways; but it is also partly because it relates to ballet that *TANZ* can be unconventional. And so it is that the ‘system Holzinger’ as a spectacle producing machine functions as a diagnostic crash-test for the spectacle-producing machinery itself.

Anna Leon is a dance historian based in Vienna. Her research (currently at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna) crosses dance history, cultural history, critical theory and aesthetics. Her curatorial work includes the theory programme of Tanzquartier Wien (2022 to 2025), the curatorial-artistic research platform tanzbuero (with Lisa Hinterreithner, Gwendolin Lehnerer and Dominik Jellen), and independent projects (e.g. *Radio (non-)conference* with Netta Weiser). She is part of the board of WIENWOCHE – festival for art and activism.

This text was originally published in a more extensive version in *Etcetera*, a Belgian magazine on the performing arts (issue 178: *Amusement*, 2024). The full version can be read here: <https://e-tcetera.be/sirens-take-the-stage/#>

BIOGRAPHY

Florentina Holzinger, born in Vienna in 1986, is a choreographer, director and performance artist. She studied choreography at the School for New Dance Development (SNDO) in Amsterdam. Holzinger's dance works are driven by an exploration of identity as well as sexual and physical transgression. She draws inspiration from Viennese Actionism, body art and bodybuilding, as well as from classical ballet, cabaret and circus, and deconstructs the definition of femininity in each of her performances.

Holzinger's works have received the Nestroy Prize and the German Theatre Award DER FAUST (*TANZ* 2020, *Opbelia's Got Talent* 2023) and have been invited to the Berlin Theatertreffen four years in a row (*TANZ*, *Opbelia's Got Talent*, *SANCTA*, *A Year without Summer*). In addition to her stage productions, Holzinger creates the *Études*, an ongoing series of site-specific, one-off performances in public space. These have so far been developed in collaboration with institutions such as the Schinkel Pavillon in Berlin, Bergen Kunsthall, Berlin Atonal Festival, and the Vienna Festival (Wiener Festwochen). Since 2021, she has been an associate artist at the Volksbühne am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz in Berlin, and since February 2026, she has been represented by Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac.

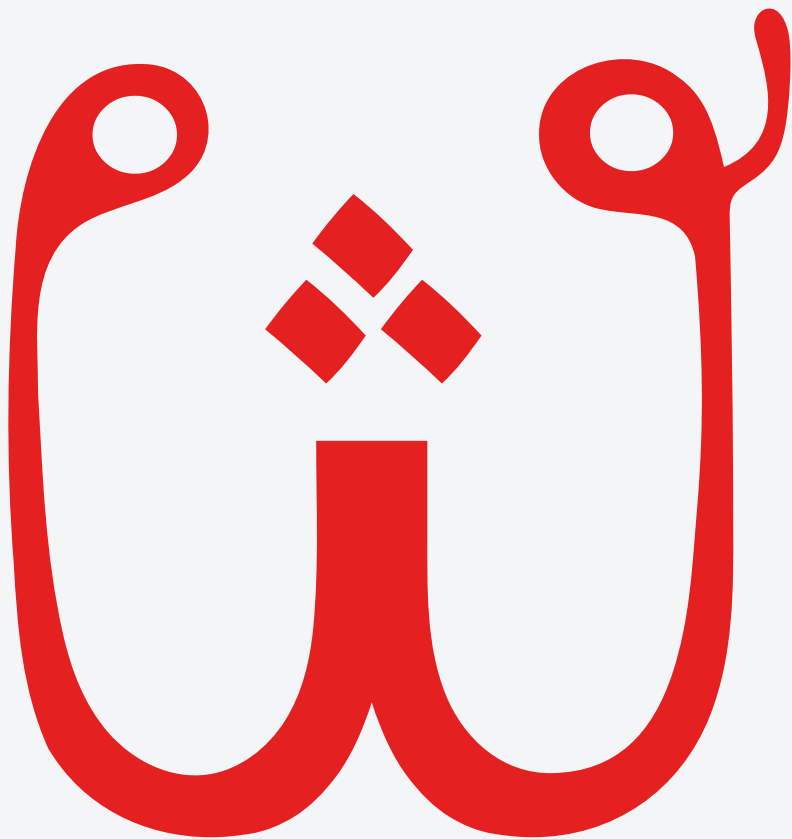
At the Vienna Festival, Florentina Holzinger most recently presented the widely discussed opera *SANCTA*. She appeared before a large audience at the opening of the Vienna Festival in 2021 with a *FESTZUG*, in which she brought bodies and machines into collision to live music by Soap&Skin.

PUBLICATION DETAILS

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