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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

## A Spectacle of Contrasts

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What happens when the postmodernist minimalism of Judson Church meets the flamboyant extravagance of Harlem's voguing scene? The answer is (M)imosa, a performance that fuses the stark contrasts of these two worlds into a vibrant, enigmatic whole. Conceived by Trajal Harrell and brought to life with collaborators Cecilia Bengolea, François Chaignaud, and Marlene Monteiro Freitas, (M)imosa is an audacious exploration of identity, performance, and the fluidity of self.

Originally part of Harrell's acclaimed series, "Twenty Looks or Paris is Burning at The Judson Church," and first seen at ImpulsTanz in 2011, (M)imosa has since become a landmark in 21st-century dance. This work continues to captivate audiences with its innovative blend of historical references and contemporary culture, offering a fresh perspective on the possibilities of dance and performance art.

From the outset, (M)imosa captivates with its bold premise: imagining a world where the avant-garde postmodernists of the 1960s Judson Dance Theater intersect with the vibrant voguing scene of Harlem. This collision of aesthetics sets the stage for a performance that is both intellectually stimulating and viscerally engaging. The performers embody this intersection, seamlessly shifting between the minimalist gestures of postmodern dance and the exaggerated, theatrical poses of voguing.

The genius of (M)imosa lies in its ability to navigate these diverse influences without succumbing to a simplistic fusion. Instead, it thrives on the tension and interplay between these contrasting styles. The performers, each claiming the persona of Mimosa at various points, inhabit a space where identity is fluid and constantly in flux. Whether channeling the ethereal presence of Kate Bush, the magnetic allure of Prince, or the grandeur of an operatic diva, they embrace and then discard these identities with effortless ease.

Marlene Monteiro Freitas stands out with her intense physicality and expressive range. Her performance is a masterclass in embodying contradiction—at once powerful and vulnerable, precise and chaotic. Freitas' ability to convey complex emotional states through her movements adds a layer of depth to the performance, drawing the audience into the internal world of her character.

Cecilia Bengolea and François Chaignaud bring a unique dynamism to the performance, their synergy palpable in every interaction. Bengolea's fluidity and Chaignaud's precision create a captivating contrast,

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their movements speaking to the themes of duality and transformation central to (M)imosa. Their duet sequences are particularly striking, showcasing a dialogue of movement that oscillates between harmony and discord.

Trajal Harrell, the visionary behind (M)imosa, infuses the performance with a sense of playfulness and unpredictability. His choreography challenges conventional narratives of dance, encouraging the audience to question and re-evaluate their perceptions of identity and performance. Harrell’s presence on stage is both commanding and enigmatic, his gestures and expressions inviting the audience to engage in a deeper contemplation of the themes presented.

The set design and costumes in (M)imosa are integral to its impact, enhancing the performance’s exploration of identity and transformation. The stage is a fluid space, shifting in tone and texture to reflect the changing personas of the performers. The costumes, a blend of glamorous, avant-garde, and everyday attire, further underscore the theme of fluidity, blurring the lines between high art and popular culture.

One of the most compelling aspects of (M)imosa is its embrace of ambiguity and contradiction. The performance is described as “a fest of contradictions, half-truths, and deeply felt lies,” a statement that encapsulates its essence. Each gesture, pose, and expression is layered with meaning, inviting the audience to interpret and re-interpret the narratives unfolding before them. This ambiguity is not a flaw but a strength, reflecting the complexities of identity and the performative nature of self.

(M)imosa also resonates deeply with contemporary issues, particularly those surrounding gender, sexuality, and race. By invoking the voguing scene—a dance form that originated in the Black and Latino LGBTQ+ communities of Harlem—Harrell and his collaborators highlight the intersectional nature of identity and the ongoing struggle for visibility and recognition. This performance becomes a celebration of these communities, honoring their contributions to culture and their resilience in the face of adversity.

The soundscape of (M)imosa, a blend of eclectic music choices and ambient sounds, further immerses the audience in its world. The music shifts from the ethereal to the pulsing beats of the dance floor, creating an auditory journey that mirrors the physical and emotional journey of the performers. This sonic landscape enhances the performance’s atmosphere, drawing the audience deeper into its narrative.

In conclusion, (M)imosa is a masterful work that challenges and delights in equal measure. Trajal Harrell, Cecilia Bengolea, François Chaignaud, and Marlene Monteiro Freitas have created a performance that is as intellectually rigorous as it is emotionally resonant. By merging the seemingly disparate worlds of postmodern dance and voguing, they have crafted a piece that speaks to the fluidity of identity and the power of performance. (M)imosa is a true celebration of the art of dance, a testament to its ability to

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transcend boundaries and connect us to the multifaceted nature of human experience.

For anyone fortunate enough to witness (M)imosa, the experience is nothing short of transformative. It is a reminder of the power of art to provoke, inspire, and challenge our understanding of the world and ourselves. Harrell and his collaborators have given us a gift—a performance that lingers in the mind and heart long after the final bow, inviting us to continue the journey of exploration and discovery it so beautifully sets in motion.

Bericht online lesen: [https://culture.en-a.eu/kunst\\_kultur\\_und\\_musik/a\\_spectacle\\_of\\_contrasts-89475/](https://culture.en-a.eu/kunst_kultur_und_musik/a_spectacle_of_contrasts-89475/)

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