

Service No. 5
**Dare
to Keep Kids
Off
Naturalism**
Adam Linder

**Kunsthalle Basel
8.–28. September 2017**

Performance Times

Opening 7.9.2017, 7–10 pm

Thursdays 3–8 pm

Fridays 1–6 pm

Saturdays and Sundays 12–5 pm

**Finissage 28.9.2017, 3–7 pm,
ongoing performance, including
from 6–7 pm *The Handover*, during
which Adam Linder will hand over
the exhibition space to Shahryar Nashat's
exhibition *The Cold Horizontals***

You might not notice it at first. But the atmosphere upstairs is cool-white, ever so slightly off, artificial. A mood is set, at once alienating and charged, in a space left largely empty, its scale and white walls rendered more apparent. Four performers move in this space, their kinetic impulses surging through their bodies as if following enigmatic orders. They capture your attention with their improbable acts and then casually pull a shroud-like costume over their head and sit or lie down in a corner, forming an amorphous blob, whenever they need time “off” from their physical exertion. **En**

Over the three-week duration of the exhibition, four dancers will sustain this for a total of sixty-five hours. They enact the newest artwork by Adam Linder, a choreographer, dancer, and visual artist. Linder is classically trained and previously performed for the likes of The Royal Ballet in London and contemporary dance ensembles such as the Michael Clark Company and Meg Stuart's *Damaged Goods*. He now makes works both for the stage and for art spaces, the latter taking the form of what he calls choreographic “services.”

In these, Linder's material is the body, or perhaps more precisely: that body's labor. His is a reflection on performance art in relation to service-based economies, while also pushing up against the museological onus on preservation and accumulation. As a matter of principle, his artworks are never for sale. And yet there is, importantly, a transactional element that drives these choreographic services: for every presentation, the hosting venue is obliged to put on view a contract in which, among other details, the artist lists for how many hours the venue has hired the “service” and how much it is paying hourly for its waged workforce. Extending Conceptual Art's “aesthetics of administration,” Linder puts the contract that binds his and the institution's negotiation front and center.

For his first solo exhibition in Switzerland, Linder presents the newly commissioned *Service No. 5: Dare to Keep Kids Off Naturalism*. His structural framework for the service acts like a choreographic algorithm that contains a set of visual, sonic and physical cues, yet within this format performers are granted an agency that allows for the piece to remain open and evolving from within. Such is the nature of each of Linder's services. Here, sound plays a crucial role. A musical score in four parts spurs multiple options for each of the performers to respond to and, as a result, across the sixty-five hours, no moment is exactly replicated.

There is a certain absurdity to the performed actions and no narrative arc or dramaturgic development. The performers—Leah Katz, Justin F. Kennedy, Noha Ramadan, Stephen Thompson—are, like Linder (who also intermittently performs), exceptionally skilled, trained in various dance conservatories. You know this because the performers' command and finesse are evident even when their acts don't resemble "dance" at all. As they move, a voice-over relays a strange list of collective actions: "we imprint, we hustle, we choose, we lubricate, we fake analyze, we shape and cry, we animate, we mystify." In tandem or apart, performers dress and undress, donning and shedding various specially conceived costumes that give graphic shape to their forms. There is something object-like, almost a sculptural quality, to these bizarre uniforms that look alternately like an astronaut's gear or sports wear, ornamental objects (one costume mimics a Persian rug) or functional machinery (one costume includes a silver, telescopic prosthetic arm, another takes on a less identifiable form but also requires the use of an air pump). These outfits prompt or enable the performers' movements. When not in use, they hang or rest in special stations created along the walls of the exhibition space.

The subtitle of Linder's piece, *Dare to Keep Kids Off Naturalism*, evokes one of the central concerns of his work: a critique of what he sees as the seemingly requisite "naturalism" of so much contemporary performance art. Linder's exhortation to keep the next generation "off naturalism" is a response to the history of performance and specifically its relatively recent adoption by the visual art world. Dance, in particular when it enters the white cube of an art space, often has been mobilized to provide a supposedly naturalistic, "authentic" encounter, visible in the privileging of everyday gestures, the so-called *de-skilling* of performers, and the paring down of bodily adornment. With *Service No.5*, Linder heads into the opposite direction. And the piece's voiceover underscores this, announcing the fundamental rift between what you are looking at and any pretense of a naturalistic representation of reality: "We are not your mirror" it defiantly declares.

Adam Linder was born 1983 in Sydney, AUS; he lives and works in Berlin and Los Angeles, USA.

Adam Linder
Service No. 5: Dare to Keep Kids Off Naturalism
Duration variable
Courtesy of the choreographer

Performers: Leah Katz, Justin F. Kennedy,
Noha Ramadan, Stephen Thompson
Sound: Steffen Martin
Costume design: Adam Linder with Natalia Gattini
Management: Andrea Niederbuchner
Production assistant: Romy Kießling

Service No. 5: Dare to Keep Kids Off Naturalism is a co-production of Kunsthalle Basel and South London Gallery.

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GUIDED TOURS THROUGH THE EXHIBITION

Every Sunday at 3 pm guided tour, in German

17.9.2017, Sunday, 3 pm
Curator's tour, in English

EDUCATION / PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Artists' talk with Adam Linder and Shahryar Nashat
12.9.2017, Tuesday, 6.30 pm

The two artists discuss their respective solo exhibitions and the ways in which they constructed reciprocity between them. Discussion moderated by Elena Filipovic, director Kunsthalle Basel, in English.

Introduction to the educational program for teachers
21.9.2017, Thursday 6–8 pm

Teachers are introduced to the current exhibitions and get a backstage visit to Kunsthalle Basel. By reservation kunstvermittlung@kunsthallebasel.ch. Conducted in German.

In the Kunsthalle Basel library you will find an associative selection of publications related to Adam Linder's artistic practice.

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