

Press Release, 9 September 2024

Gisèle Vienne

This Causes Consciousness to Fracture – A Puppet Play

12 September 2024 – 12 January 2025

This autumn, the Haus am Waldsee, the Georg Kolbe Museum and Sophiensæle bring Gisèle Vienne's work, in all its complexity, to the city as part of Berlin Art Week 2024 and present different approaches to her multifaceted practice, located between photography, sculpture and installation, film, choreography, and theatre. Over the past twenty-five years, the French-Austrian artist, choreographer, and director has created a complex and idiosyncratic body of work that reconsiders our perceptual frameworks and invents artistic languages in order to pave the way for structural societal change.

On stage and in the exhibition space, Vienne develops a language of alienation in which she explores the influence of emotions and rhythms on our perception through the use of temporal distortions in movement, sound, light, and other elements. Her focus persistently lies on emotional ruptures and crises, especially in regard to the emotions of young people. Vienne's longstanding work with puppets is another tool to understand our psyche, to explore the repressed, the subconscious, the unrepresentable, the non-narrative and the traumatic, and to find forms of expression for them. In the tradition of figurative sculpture, her use of dolls unfolds a political dimension in relation to the body as a place where culturally and socially constructed dynamics have an effect, but on the basis of which they can also be questioned, criticised, and possibly dislodged.

By staging the longing and the fears of a crisis-bound youth, Vienne's protagonists' sensibilities are validated in all their political and societal aspects. Vienne's work involves itself in the battle that rages against standardising, authoritarian forces which weigh heavy on the mind and body. 'Gisèle Vienne embarks on a meticulous, determined and challenging quest. She investigates the framework of intelligibility that governs our gestures, our imaginary and our collective myths, our identities, our morals, and, ultimately, social order.'<sup>1</sup>

The Haus am Waldsee is going to showcase a large-scale solo exhibition spanning the entire institution. The exhibition assembles the life-size puppets created by Vienne over the last twenty years in a carefully composed installation alongside a body of photographs by the artist, portraying the range and types of dolls. The staging in the form of a puppet show was developed specifically for the architecture of the Haus am Waldsee. It invites visitors to experience what can be expressed through omissions, the unsaid, stillness, immobility, and silence. Here, Vienne creates a field of tension between self-determination and heteronomy and illuminates moments that 'cause consciousness to fracture'. The title, *This Causes Consciousness to Fracture*, is borrowed from a track from the album *Patterns of Consciousness* (Important Records, 2017) by Caterina Barbieri, Vienne's collaborator for the stage piece *EXTRA LIFE* (2023).

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<sup>1</sup> Elsa Dorlin, 'To the Accursed Role We Play: Gisèle Vienne', Magazine Ruhrtriennale, 2021, online at: <https://archiv.ruhrtriennale.de/2021/en/magazine/to-the-accursed-role-we-play-gisele-vienne/62.html>.

The exhibition is part of a collaboration between the Haus am Waldsee, the Georg Kolbe Museum, and Sophiensæle, Berlin. Haus am Waldsee opens *This Causes Consciousness to Fracture* on 11 September 2024 (the exhibition runs from 12 September 2024 to 12 January 2025). At Georg Kolbe Museum, the exhibition *I know that I can double myself. Gisèle Vienne and the Puppets of the Avant-Garde* opens on 12 September 2024 (the exhibition runs from 13 September 2024 to 9 March 2025). The film *Jerk* by Gisèle Vienne will be presented as part of an artist talk at Sophiensæle on 15 September 2024. Performances of *Crowd* are shown on 14, 15, and 16 November 2024.

Gisèle Vienne (b. 1976) is a Franco-Austrian artist, choreographer, and theatre and film director. Since her childhood, she was trained in visual arts by her mother, Dorothea Vienne-Pollak. She studied dance and music, philosophy, and puppeteering. Over the past twenty years, her work, among them the productions *Showroomdummies* (2001/2009/2013/2020), *I Apologize* (2004), *Kindertotenlieder* (2007), *Jerk* (2008), *This Is How You Will Disappear* (2010), *LAST SPRING: A Prequel* (2011), *The Ventriloquists Convention* (2015) in collaboration with Puppentheater Halle, *Crowd* (2017), *L'Etang* (2021), and *EXTRA LIFE* (2023, invited to Theatertreffen Berlin 2024), has been touring in Europe, Asia, and America. Vienne has frequently exhibited her photographs and installations in museums, among them the Whitney Museum, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Aires; and the Centre d'Art Contemporain, Geneva. She has published two books: *JERK/ Through Their Tears* with Jonathan Capdevielle, Dennis Cooper, and Peter Rehberg in 2011 and *40 PORTRAITS (2003–2008)*, in collaboration with Dennis Cooper and Pierre Dourthe in 2012. Her work has led to various publications and the original music of her shows to several albums.

In the framework of the presentations in Berlin, the new publication, *This Causes Consciousness to Fracture*, dedicated to the collaborative work of Gisèle Vienne and Estelle Hanania including texts by Anna Gritz and Elsa Dorlin will be published by Haus am Waldsee together with Spector Books this autumn. 180 pages, German/English/French, 152 colour images, hardcover. On site at Haus am Waldsee and Georg Kolbe Museum: 49 Euros / In bookstores 78 Euros.

Curated by: Anna Gritz

In cooperation with:



Sophiensæle

The exhibition is supported by:



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