

About the Artist

Keren Cytter was born in Tel Aviv in 1977. She studied at The Avni Institute in Tel Aviv and received her degree from de Ateliers in Amsterdam. Cytter's work has been featured in solo exhibitions at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Tate Modern, London; Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam; Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna; KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin and Kunsthalle Zürich. Her work was included in the 53rd Venice Biennial; Found in Translation, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum; 8th Gwangju Biennale; Manifesta 7, Trentino; and Talking Pictures, K21 Kunstmuseum Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf. In addition to creating films and works on paper, Cytter has authored several novels, plays, and an opera libretto. She is the co-founder of D.I.E. NOW (Dance International Europe Now), a dance and theater company. Cytter was the recipient of the 2006 Baloise Art Prize, Art Basel, Switzerland, the Absolut Art Award in 2009, and short listed for the Victor Pinchuk Foundation's 2010 Future Generation Art Prize. Cytter currently lives and works in New York City.

About DiverseWorks

DiverseWorks is a non-profit art center dedicated to presenting new visual, performing, and literary art. DiverseWorks is a place where the process of creating art is valued and where artists can test new ideas in the public arena. By encouraging the investigation of current artistic, cultural and social issues, DiverseWorks builds, educates, and sustains audiences for contemporary art.

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Show Real Drama

Written and Directed by Keren Cytter

October 10 - 13, 2012

7:30 PM

DiverseWorks Theatre
1117 East Freeway
Houston, TX 77002

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Show Real Drama

Fusing black humor and epic theatre, *Show Real Drama* presents a series of double entendres in which the audience is made keenly aware they are watching a construction of reality. The title itself is literally a series of puns - if read aloud it can be taken as an acting command, "show real drama," however the phrase also references an actor's primary mode of distributing their work through a "showreel." Cytter cleverly utilizes the slippages between the two interpretive meanings as the conceptual construction of the performance.

Show Real Drama is based on the lives of two actors, Susie Meyer and Fabian Stumm, who, after graduating from the University of Acting in Salzburg, find themselves unemployed and in need of showreels. After countless failed attempts to get hired, they decide to write and direct scenes for their own showreels of the scenes they would like to act in one day. Using the actor's psychological state as the backdrop for the performance, Cytter approaches the stage with a bare bones aesthetic. Susie and Fabian are not only seen in a romantic relationship with one another, but also in existential crisis with their own creative direction in the world. Constructed as three discrete acts, *Show Real Drama* utilizes both live acting and projected video to organize the breaks between acts. The projected video displays each word from the title (Show, Real, Drama) as a way to introduce the acts, while also presenting the scenes from the showreel that Susie and Fabian created.

Cytter's play takes its cues from Antonin Artaud's ideas of the Theatre of Cruelty and Bertolt Brecht's notion of epic theatre. While Cytter's interruption of reality is less jarring than Artaud's forceful breaks, her use of sound, lighting, and disruptive gestures can be linked to Artaud's interpretation of cruelty. For example, Cytter uses physical points on the stage to signify the actors' psychological struggles. When Susie and Fabian are pacing in the back of the stage, the text they speak refers to their relationships and memories; when they stand in the front of the stage, their dialogue is about the stage and their careers; and finally, when they are in the center of the stage, they re-enact scenes in the showreel or prior dialogues. As Artaud believed, each physical point on the stage becomes a signifier for revealing how "theatre is a physical expression in space."

In Brecht's notion of theatre, a performance is not meant to cause emotional empathy with the actors on stage but rather to provoke the audience into action against social injustices. Cytter's approach is less extreme, yet employs a similar technique. Susie repeatedly attempts to engage audience members by speaking directly to them, laughing, or talking about forgetting her lines. In these instances, Cytter makes the audience aware of how her gestures and commands are real even if they appear fictitious. Building off of Brecht's ideas of alienation and estrangement, Cytter's performance continues to ask questions about human emotions through the use of representational and illusionist images, the blurring and repetition of presenting truth alongside fiction, and a fractured narrative that disrupts our notion of time.

Show Real Drama was commissioned and supported by Deutsche Bank, and comes to DiverseWorks following presentations at The Kitchen, Kunsthall Bergen, Tate Modern, among other notable venues.

Performers: Susie Meyer and Fabian Stumm

Director: Keren Cytter

Video: Mia Meyer / Keren Cytter

Running time: 40 minutes

Show Real Drama is presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Keren Cytter: Video Art Manual*, on view in the DiverseWorks galleries through October 20, 2012.