

STYX

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Press
Release

Michael Bäckström & Marianne Vlaschits: *BOWERBIRDS*

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Performance:

9 SEPTEMBER, 2–10 PM
10 SEPTEMBER, 2–10 PM

Exhibition duration:

9–25 SEPTEMBER 2011
OPEN FRIDAYS TO SUNDAYS
3–5 PM OR BY APPOINTMENT

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STYX Projects Berlin is very proud to present ›Bowerbirds‹, a two-day performance and installation by Marianne Vlaschits and Michael Bäckström.

Realized continuously over the course of a weekend, this piece by rising star of the Viennese art scene Marianne Vlaschits, in collaboration with Swedish artist Michael Bäckström, is an extended version of her contribution this year to the renowned Donaufestival, where Vlaschits represented the festival's section for Performance Art alongside veterans such as Jonathan Meese and Laurie Anderson.

Bäckström and Vlaschits will continually construct an island scene as colorfully playful as it is uncanny, making use of such diversely mixed media as cloth, acrylic paint, fresh fruit, clay, cardboard, glue, candles, exotic dance and gesture, atmospheric sounds, and other dubiously found objects.

Imitating the mating habits of Australian Bowerbirds, they will assemble and inhabit two love nests geared to the stimuli of their potential partners. While the audience witnesses the production of an installation piece, artistic practices and media become indistinct and their performance turns into a ›living painting‹.



In the piece the perennial desire for pastoral life is articulated in a post-pop visual language, where the stark visual code of the Bowerbirds' mating habits doubles the bright and iconic visual habits of mass cultural productions. In this way, Vlaschits and Bäckström create a connection between this most culturally visited idiom and the lightness of humans playing with animal spontaneity. A great part of the energy of this work derives from the juxtaposition between a visual idiom borrowed from mass culture; worlds removed from the real, and the happening, through and uncanny performance of the things it mimes.

›Bowerbirds‹ pursues the aim of utopian art: to give its viewer the promise – and underlining the illusions – of an elsewhere. Working at the intersection of post-pop inquiry into contemporary visuality and the idiom and problematics of the present body in performance art – with sarcastic laughter, muted aggression, and even coy sadness – Bowerbirds exploits the dissonance of these idioms

to manifest the frictional interplay between bodies and the islands of desire they are embowered in.

MARIANNE VLASCHITS was born in Vienna and graduated in Painting from the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. She has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions including ›Mataador Beach‹ (Ve.Sch, Vienna), ›Asshole Island‹ (C 17, Vienna) and ›Dear Anus‹ (Vereinigung bildender Künstlerinnen Österreichs). Past performances include ›Cockaigne d'Irt‹ (Samstag Shop, Vienna), ›Just some Gigolos‹ (Kunsthalle, Vienna), ›Sexy Magic‹ (Ve.Sch, Vienna) and ›Sexiness‹ (Brut Konzerthaus, Vienna).

MICHAEL BÄCKSTRÖM studied Fine Art at Konstfack, Stockholm. His recent projects include the Gelatin Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, the Donaufestival (with Marianne Vlaschits), ›Awkward Dinner‹ Stockholm, and ›The Rest is Silence‹ in Gotland, Sweden. He lives and works in Vienna.

▷ FOR FURTHER INFO AND HI-RES IMAGES PLEASE CONTACT info@styx-projects.com OR CALL +49 177 7095 207

Photo: Alexander Nussbaumer