

CALL FOR SPEAKERS/ARTISTS/
WORKSHOPS

NOCTURNAL UNREST

A Festival for Theory, Performance and radical
Flâneuserie

20-22.11.2020 | Mousonturm Frankfurt a. M.

nocturnal-unrest.de
info@nocturnal-unrest.de

From 20th-22nd November, 2020, we will not turn night into day, but instead blur its boundaries, which might never have existed. We are a feminist collective, which is organising a three-day festival at Künstlerhaus Mousonturm in Frankfurt. Inspired by feminist interventions such as "Reclaim the Night" and by artistic practices of making (in)visible, we want to open space for the emancipatory appropriation of night and darkness. What possibilities do these hold for feminist politics and ways of life far away from narratives of fear, devaluation and exoticization? The festival wants to explore these and other questions from a queer-feminist, post-colonial perspective, but above all to create a place where everyone can engage with bodies, imaginations, knowledge and relationships in a new and political way between dusk and dawn.

Together with a diverse audience, we will stroll together through the darkness in three overlapping areas - theory, performance, and activism. Because when we say feminism, we do not just mean the theory and its possible forms as produced in universities! We invite you to experiment with different formats. Workshops, performance-lectures, fish-bowl discussions, the design of open spaces for exchange as well as city walks, especially by young makers, theorists, activists, artists, are just some of the possibilities to explore the many nuances of being in the nocturnal shadows. We are looking for contributions that have something to say and show about the night and darkness in an original and decidedly feminist way. These can and should also take place after 10PM, since the festival will run through the night of Saturday to Sunday. Is the kind of exchange we have altered if it happens at 3AM, for example?

NOCTURNAL FEMINISM?

For us Nocturnal Feminism means to ask how we can claim the night in an emancipatory feminist way. Following the words of the literary scholar Elisabeth Bronfen, "it is also a matter of asking what it means that the night is [always] represented as a female body".¹ This is because our cultural repertoire and the epistemes of Western modernity have been structured, at least since the Enlightenment, by gendered dichotomies. These conspicuously often function with the help of light metaphors: Light is associated with connotations of divinity, knowledge, rationality and last but not least of masculinity and whiteness. Darkness, on the other hand, is associated with the mystical, the veiled, irrationality or even madness, sensuality, eroticism, transgression. All too often, these imaginations of darkness are associated with femininity, blackness, queerness.² Quite literally, female, Black, queer and subaltern imaginations, which deal with fear and precarity, but also with the dreams, utopias, desires and potentialities of the night remain in the dark. These radically question the androcentric perspective. And so it has always been darkness/night, both symbolically and materially, that has had to be forcibly contained or driven away by the male, white subject of a supposedly enlightened modernity,³ whose permanent illumination has created a 24/7 machinery of formalized productivity, as Jonathan Crary⁴ calls it. What does it mean when the night is ripped away from us? Here we must ask questions regarding the significance of the night, the politics of care and the (im)possibilities of nocturnal solidarity. Gender, sexuality and racisms are inscribed in urban space; they determine how people move and encounter each other in the city. Everyday movement through urban spaces therefore harbours the possibility of exploring and unveiling societal contradictions based on corporeal experience, as recently demonstrated in the anthology FLEXEN⁵. Those who "flex" take up space. Feminist flexing, for its part, re-appropriates the city and embodies alternative ways of being together. How can fear and precariousness, to which we are exposed to varying degrees at night, give rise to utopian moments? To this end, we also want to investigate the erotic and transgressive potentials of the night. This also includes topics related to sex, Sexuality and sex work. City walks, movement intensive Workshops and Flâneuserie⁶ through the night therefore belong naturally at this festival. Nocturnal Feminism is Unrest.

- 1 Bronfen, Elisabeth (2008): Verkörperungen der Nacht. Nyx und ihre kulturellen Nachtbilder. In: Beat Wyss, Markus Buschhaus (Hg.) Den Körper im Blick, S. 20. Our translation.
- 2 Moten, Fred (2008): The Case of Blackness. In: Criticism, 50 (2), S. 191: "[...] the multiplicity of symbolic meanings that have been attached to the color black - sinfulness, evil, femininity, maternity, formlessness, and the 'yearning for whiteness' in the West [...]".
- 3 Vgl. Federici, Silvia (2004): Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation.
- 4 Crary, Jonathan (2014): 24/7. Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep.
- 5 Transl. „Flexing“. Dündar, Özlem Özgül; Göhring, Mia; Othmann, Ronya; Sauer, Lea (2019): Flexen. Flâneusen* schreiben Städte.
- 6 Elkin, Lauren (2016): Flâneuse.



FEM*PHILS | MOUSONTURM



CALL FOR ARTISTS

In performative terms, the night calls for the practice, the invention, the collective exercise of emancipatory strategies of assembly. Can the stages of Künstlerhaus Mousonturm, its studios or the foyer be used to develop precisely these strategies in artistic and institutional ways? How should the space of a theatre be structured in order to generate movements, practices, interactions and discourses that make visible the power relations hidden in night and darkness? When do care, emancipation and freedom actually lie in not having to "show yourself"? When does invisibility become a tool for the marginalisation of individuals or groups, and how can it be resisted? Visibility can go hand in hand with power and with having a voice. But all too often it is assumed that being seen and being shown always guarantees participation and empowerment. Sometimes, they can cause misrepresentation, othering and fetishization instead, especially when the relevant individual or group is not present, audible or informed. Speech turns into being-spoken-for and participation becomes an illusion. Performance, dance and theatre can reflect this ambivalent relationship. Can and must visibility be deliberately denied in order to work from the dark, hidden or concealed? "What if dance could be seen in the dark as non-enlightened, non-fraudulently illuminated image of freedom?"⁷ Artists are encouraged to challenge, appropriate and undermine spaces and practices.

These should all be impulses, suggestions, ideas - and decidedly not requirements, regulations or necessarily production requests. The topic of the festival should be an invitation to experiment and we are looking forward to all kinds of artistic-thematic shifting of boundaries. We especially desire interdisciplinary projects from the following areas: performance, dance, puppetry and visual arts. Already existing productions can be gladly discussed in a workshop, or extracts thereof can be analysed in relation to night/darkness. If Nocturnal Feminism were already in existence, it would ask: Who remains in the dark? And why?

DEADLINE 31.03.2020

This is therefore a call for contributions ranging from the theoretical to the artistic, from the activist to the interventionist. Together with you and the audience, we want to create a space of exchange where everyone can meet in an open space outside the program and retreat in a resting room. Therefore we would like all contributors to stay in Frankfurt for the entire length of the festival if possible. The costs of travel, accommodation and food for 3 days will be covered. Since this is a student-organized project, the fees paid will depend on the final public funding amount.

Entries can be submitted until 31.03.2020. Please include an abstract (without formal requirements) in the scope of 500-1000 words that details what you're planning to do. In addition, please fill in the application sheet below in as much detail as possible (some categories may not apply to every entry). Especially for artistic contributions, we welcome video clips, work samples, etc.. The relation to the topic of the festival should be made explicit. Applications of people who identify as women and/or queer are particularly encouraged. Please specify if a slot between 10PM and 2AM and/or 2 AM and 6 AM is possible. Also let us know if you need childcare. There are no restrictions on the field of study; a university degree or academic activity is in no way a prerequisite.

Please send your application, as well as questions, suggestions and critique to
info@nocturnal-unrest.de

You will receive a reply by 31.05.2020.

WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!

7 Lepecki, André (2016): Singularities. Dance in the Age of Performance.



NOCTURNAL UNREST | 20-22.NOVEMBER 2020

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Title				
Team				
Participants for the Festival				
Contact Person				
Address				
E-Mail				
Phone				
Online (Website etc)				
Spatial and technical requirements				

Duration hrs

Duration of installation & deinstallation hrs
 hrs

Language(s)

Maximum number of workshop participants / audience

Previously presented? Yes, at/in No

Further notes/
Wishes/Needs/
Secret messages

ABSTRACT (500-1000 Words)

