MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE DE PARIS

FESTIVAL D'AUTOMNE À PARIS 50e édition

Gisèle Vienne
WORKS 2003 - 2021

18 November 2021 - 23 January 2022

PRESS RELEASE

Photo : © Gisèle Vienne

As part of the "Portrait" devoted to Gisèle Vienne by the Paris Festival d'Automne, the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris is presenting an exhibition by the Franco-Austrian choreographer, visual artist and stage director.

Since 2003 Gisèle Vienne has created sixty uncanny life-size dolls. Far from inert, these teenage figures are fully fledged, autonomous characters in her performances and photographs, sometimes activated by ventriloquism. The installation *WORKS 2003–2021* immerses visitors in the universe of this major exponent of performance and contemporary art. All her work addresses the body as a place where our culturally constructed systems of perception can be questioned, critiqued and possibly displaced.

"The colour of anguish.
Pallid complexions, blank stares, frozen faces sometimes spattered with blood and tears, come to life in teenage postures and muffled voices, like clues to a culture of repressed violence that haunts our myths of innocence, purity, whiteness. What do Gisèle Vienne's dolls tell us about ourselves – about you? What tales of defilement, of woundings, of righteousness disfigured by indifference, desire or salacious laughter, do they force us to look in the face, to listen to, to believe? So white are these dolls that the colour of anguish seizes us by the throat and in the stomach." Elsa Dorlin, philosopher.

Installation presented in the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris collection galleries, next to the permanent room devoted to Christian Boltanski (1944-2021), a recently deceased artist who played an inspiring and crucial role in Gisèle Vienne's artistic approach.

Concept : Gisèle Vienne
Text : Elsa Dorlin

Free admission

Production DACM; Festival d'Automne à Paris, in association with the Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris
With the generous support of Dance Reflections by Van Cleef & Arpels

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Biographies

Gisèle Vienne

Gisèle Vienne is a Franco-Austrian artist, choreographer and stage director. After studying philosophy and music, she trained at the Ecole Supérieure Nationale des Arts de la Marionnette. Since then she has worked regularly with the writer Dennis Cooper, among other collaborators.
For the last 20 years her performances and choreographic works have been touring Europe and are regularly presented in Asia and America. They include *I Apologize* (2004), *Kindertotenlieder* (2007), *Jerk* (2008), *This is how you will disappear* (2010), *LAST SPRING: A Prequel* (2011), *The Ventriloquists' Convention* (2015) and *Crowd* (2017). In 2020, at the Rohm Theatre in Kyoto, she and Étienne Bideau-Rey presented a fourth version of the play *Showroomdummies*. In 2021, she directed the film *Jerk* and created *L'Étang*, a theatre piece based on Robert Walser's text.
Gisèle Vienne regularly exhibits her photographs and installations in venues such as the Whitney Museum in New York, the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires. She has published two books: *Jerk / Through Their Tears in 2011* and *40 Portraits 2003–2008* in 2012. Her work has been the subject of several books as well as music albums.

Elsa Dorlin

Professor of contemporary political philosophy at the the Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès, Elsa Dorlin has been working for 20 years on an alternative history of bodies through the genealogy of modern power relations. She received the bronze medal of the CNRS in 2009 for her research on feminist philosophy and epistemology. She has been a visiting professor at Berkeley University in California (2010-2011), a Fellow at the Columbia Institute for Ideas & Imagination in 2018-2019, and resident at the Fondation Camargo (2020-2021). She is the author of *La Matrice de la race: Généalogie sexuelle et coloniale de la Nation française*, Paris, La Découverte, 2006/2009, and *Sexe, genre et sexualités: Introduction à la philosophie féministe*, Paris, Puf, 2008/2021. In 2017 she published *Défendre: Une philosophie de la violence*, Paris, Zones, which has been translated into many languages and was awarded the Frantz Fanon prize of the Caribbean Philosophical Association. She recently edited the anthology *Feu! Abécédaire des féminismes présents*, Paris, Libertalia, 2021. While continuing to reflect on the complexity of the mechanics of domination, sexism, racism, and capitalism, her thinking remains as close as possible to the resistances undertaken at the scale of the flesh, muscles, and senses.