

Project: An Investigation into Disability-Allyship and how it is practiced and performed in the Viennese Contemporary Dance Scene, and finding my personal and artistic Approach to it

What?

For three years my colleague Tanja Erhart and me have been investigating models of collaboration between dis_abled and non-dis_abled artists. Due to the preparation for the Performance *j_e_n_g_a*, funded by the MA7 and premiering in January 2021 at brut Wien, new questions arrived and it became clear to me that there is extra-work and focus needed from my side to dismantle ableist-structures and start a closer investigation into *Allyship*.

This is work, which I need to do on a personal level, but I also want to connect and expand my questions to the Contemporary Viennese Dance-Scene and investigate past and current collaborations between dis_abled and non-disabled artists and have a closer look on how *Disability-Allyship* is practiced and performed by my fellow Viennese colleagues. I want to gather knowledge and information through interviews and talks with colleagues, who are willing and available to engage in these conversations and prepared to dive with me into the investigation of *Allyship*. I am highly interested what this exchange can nurture and stimulate for the future of Contemporary Dance in Vienna. The Outcome of this Project will be a paper, offering a collection of definitions and research on *Disability Allyship*, an overview of past and current collaborations between disabled and non-disabled artists, transcripts of the interviews with my colleagues and a personal statement on the status quo of how I define my responsibility and engagement as human being and as artist to operate in solidarity with and advocating for the rights and well-being of people with disabilities.

Why?

Because of Covid19 our summer-rehearsal for *j_e_n_g_a* are cancelled and I took the decision to use the next months to clarify my personal definition of the term *Ally*. I want to focus on this work, that I feel I need to do in order to be the best collaborator possible for Tanja. Since I started working with Tanja, I had the possibility to investigate and dismantle my personal ableist thoughts and patterns. This is a process that I need to do and as long as our culture is lacking inclusion, social and disability justice, this is work, which I will need to continue doing as white cisgender non-disabled woman; especially in the context of collaborating with a disabled female artist. To me *Allyship* is a practice that needs ongoing work and focus.

How? Timeline? Structure?

- 1) June 2020: - Researching Literature, Lectures and Interviews on (Disability) Allyship and Disability Justice
 - Researching past modes of collaborations between disabled and non-disabled dance-artists in Vienna
 - Creating a template for the Interviews/Talks
 - Searching for (paid) Interview-Partners
 - Talking with my disabled colleagues and asking them for (paid) mentoring
- 2) July-October 2020: - Holding Talks and Interviews with my colleagues
- 3) November-December 2020:
 - Writing Research-Paper as outcome of the Arbeitsstipendium:
 - offering a collection of definitions and research on *Disability Allyship*
 - offering an overview of past and current Collaborations between disabled and non-disabled dance-artists in Vienna
 - offering transcripts of the Interviews and Talks with my colleagues and a personal statement/conclusion
 - Writing Project-Evaluation and handing it in until December 31st, 2020

Who?

Katharina Senk

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Katharina Senk (*1991) is an Austrian dance-artist, based in Vienna. She performed in the works of Doris Uhlich, Florentina Holzinger, Georg Blaschke, Elio Gervasi, Liz King, Anton Lachky and many more.

In her personal artistic practice Katharina looks for ways to join her interests in feminism, (post)humanism and Social Justice with her knowledge from the fields of dance, martial-arts and movement. Together with her colleague Tanja Erhart she researches pleasurable practices of dancing with „(assistive) tools“.

Her artistic work and collaborations so far have been showcased in Europe and Asia. Katharinas artistic efforts earned her various scholarships and prizes like Training-Scholarship by TQW Wien in 2015/2016, the danceWEB Scholarship 2017, the Start-Scholarship 2017/18 and many more.