

Project Description _ Ecofemme Hauntings

Ecofemme Hauntings (*working title*) is a new performance project to be created and performed by Copenhagen-based artists Kat Staub, Stephen McEvoy and Berlin-based artist Cathy Walsh. The finished performance is set to premiere at- and in collaboration with Teater Får302, in the spring of 2024. We hereby apply for funding to help cover production costs and artist salaries during research, rehearsal and performance phases of the project. Upon completion of the performance run in Teater Får302, we aim to develop the project further, and present it in other venues, both in Denmark and abroad.

The project focuses on the theme of witchcraft, and is rooted in the wish to explore the potential of a ritualistic performance practice as a way of shedding light on the often misunderstood figure of the witch. In our work, we will focus particularly on the witch-hunt as a tool of patriarchal oppression. This practice was widespread in Renaissance and Enlightenment-era Europe, and targeted those who were at the fringes of society - women, indigenous populations, and various folk deemed to be “other”, with 50,000 people estimated to have been burned at the stake during this time. While this is based on official counts some historians suggest the number to be much higher.

We will use dance, choreography, sound art and light to develop a ritualistic performance cabaret that works through our questions in a physical and sensory way. We will explore how the witch has been portrayed in film, song and pop culture, and repurpose these materials in our ritual. The figure of the witch is something we construct together - and something we can deconstruct together. By singing, chanting, dancing, and weaving ambiguously we will offer an ecosystem of yearning that dares to face what we might be losing through the oppression of the witches in us. Something that raises questions of the magical properties of our human bodies and the potential of the unknown. Through calling upon an oppressed knowledge of the witch we strive to contribute to a collective retelling of our history, and ask through a flamboyant yet visceral inquiry what role art can play in the process of healing societal scars.

Background research into this subject has already begun between Kat, Stephen and Cathy. In August 2023 our plan is to convene for one month of full-time artistic research and rehearsal sessions in the art space V7 located in Vesterhavsvej, Nordhavn. During this time we will develop a draft script and choreography for the performance, as well as conduct initial experiments with lighting and sound. In spring 2024 we will meet for 2 months of more

focused rehearsal time (again in V7), and work to create a finalised version of the performance. Finally we will undertake two weeks of rehearsal in Teater Får302, before the performance period begins.

An important part of the project is our questioning of how the art world addresses questions of accessibility, in relation to race, ethnicity, (dis)ability, class and gender. This relates to phenomena of the witch which in itself is an 'othered' figure. We wish to create a performance that doesn't close tightly around itself and that actively takes into consideration who its audience is and what the performance is a part of creating in a cultural and social context. The work is a soft revolt that identifies itself with genres like drag, music theatre and experimental dance. Aside from live performances, *Ecofemme Hauntings* will be streamed live on the Danish online theatre platform Theatre Building, and a recording of the performance will be hosted there after the performance run. Additionally, a sound recording of the performance will be streamed on two digital radio stations: The Lake, which is based in Copenhagen, and Dublin Digital Radio, based in Ireland.

The target audience is from 15 years and above, but with a focus on creating accessibility with or without pre-knowledge of the performance genre or the subject. The project wishes to take part in creating sustainable anti-burnout art that offers a foundation for community around culture and entertainment as political tools.