

KW

Pause: Jimmy Robert (After Ian White) *Joie noire*

19 and 20 January 19, 8 pm

Berlin-based artist Jimmy Robert (born in 1975, Guadeloupe, FR) presents *Joie noire*, a performance that uses KW as a stage to investigate the worlds of disco and death. *Joie noire* examines bodies in the context of nightclub history and asks: What is the nature of a body's visibility? What is the role of desire? What and who remains when the party is over? And how will the show go on?

A key starting point for *Joie noire*—conspicuous through his absence—is Robert's former collaborator Ian White (1971–2013). An artist, performer, curator, teacher and writer based in London and Berlin, White questioned how institutional infrastructures (including art institutions) could be disrupted through moments of public performance. Robert's multi-disciplinary practice, meanwhile, explores the politics of spectatorship, reworking canonical and avant-garde artwork, and challenging their racial and gendered readings. Together, Robert and White viewed their collaboration as an emancipatory force, wherein each artist served as echoes and reinforcers for the other. Infusing the content of their performances with a



unique interplay of their own biographies, vulnerabilities and desires, Robert and White challenged one another to 'do things differently' and thus asking that they each trust the unknown.

In *Joie noire*, Robert's conversation with White continues in a reflective and elegiac mode. The new performance transitions between diverse materials to see what gestures, actions and materials might achieve a heightened visibility through their shared proximity and (re)performance. This time, Robert pairs with another doppelganger, dancer Courtney Henry. Acting as guides through the gallery space and interpreters of materials the audience encounters, Robert and Henry blend, remix and restage an array of sources from the 1970s to the present day: oral histories of AIDS activism (specifically the experiences and work of women of color), reflections on club culture from the 1970s and 80s, and contemporary art work from and responding to that time.

Joie noire dissects the structure of the nightclub, understanding it as a place that hosts underground celebration—one where rhythm and sensuality (the spiritual and the carnal) can emerge. The performance blocks out the white light of the gallery to embrace the vernacular of the dancefloor, and opens up a critical meditation on the legacy of the 1980s with specific regard to AIDS, activism, gender and race.

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Performances

Saturday, 19 January 19, 8 pm
Sunday, 20 January 19, 8 pm

Admission

5 € / 3 € reduced

Tickets available on KW's website.

Image:

Jimmy Robert, 2018, research still, Charles James adjusting a black crepe gown on Juan Fernandez, photo by Bill Cunningham in: Douglas Crimp, *Before Pictures*, 2016

Joie noire is the first in a three-part *Pause* series dedicated to the late Ian White (1971–2013) and comprises work by White's friends and collaborative associates—Jimmy Robert, Emma Hedditch, and Every Ocean Hughes. The 2019 *Pause* program will explore how White's legacy continues to influence contemporary performance and durational collaboration. The 2019 *Pause* series is also part of *Reflect-Suspend-Dismantle*, a year-long program curated by Kirsty Bell and the Estate of Ian White, and takes place across venues in Berlin including Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art and DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program. *Joie noire* is produced with support from The Hunterian – University of Glasgow, and Tanya Leighton Gallery, Berlin. Thanks to Susanna Kirschnick and Christine Fenzl at gOlab, Matthias Mau, and Dominic Paterson.

Colophon

Curator: Mason Leaver-Yap
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Project Management: Sabrina Herrmann
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Head of Installation and Media Technology:
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Installation team: KW Installation Team
AV: Franz Schütte
Bouncer: Shohreh Shakuri
Costume: Claudia Gedoe
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KW Institute for Contemporary Art is institutionally supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin.