

# Press Release Berlin, January 10, 2019

## Press Contact

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### **KW Institute for Contemporary Art presents its winter/spring program 2019**

KW Institute for Contemporary Art launches its winter/spring season 2019 with three comprehensive solo exhibitions by the artist **David Wojnarowicz**, the theater director **Reza Abdoh**, and the curator **Frank Wagner** as well as two performances by **Jimmy Robert**, which initiate the exhibition season as part of the on-going series *Pause*. The winter/spring program presses on KW's continuous investigation into "the body", particularly its political usage, especially by exploring the resonance Wojnarowicz's work had on his contemporaries and later generations of artists, writers and thinkers both in Berlin and beyond. His work is framed within the current political debate in which personal, public and cultural spaces are under scrutiny and bodies are disregarded.

#### **Pause: Jimmy Robert (After Ian White)**

*Joie noire*

**January 19–20, 2019**

**Opening performance: January 19, 2019, 8 pm (Ticket required)**

**Curator: Mason Leaver-Yap**

Using KW as a stage to investigate the worlds of disco and death, Jimmy Robert's (born in 1975, Guadeloupe, FR) new work *Joie noire* starts with an examination of two bodies in the context of the history of clubbing, and asks: What is the nature of a body's visibility? What and who remains when the party is over? Considering the nightclub as a space of rhythm and sensuality, as well as assessing its potential to host underground celebration, *Joie noire* dissects elements of club culture. It blocks out the white light of the gallery to embrace the vernacular of the dancefloor, and by this means opens up a critical meditation on the legacy of the 1980s with specific regard to AIDS, activism, gender and race. This performance 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. An artist, performer, curator, teacher and writer based in London and Berlin, White's work responded critically to the role of institutional infrastructures in the production of art.

**David Wojnarowicz**  
***Photography & Film 1978–1992***  
**February 9 – May 5, 2019**  
**Opening: February 8, 2019, 7 pm**  
**Curator: Krist Gruijthuisen**

David Wojnarowicz (1954–1992) came into prominence in the East Village art world of the 1980s, actively embracing all media and forging an expansive range of work both fiercely political and highly personal. Although largely self-taught, he worked as an artist and writer to merge a sophisticated combination of found and discarded material with an uncanny understanding of literary influences. First displayed in rough storefront galleries, his work already gained national prominence at the very moment. Diagnosed with HIV in the late 1980s his work became resolutely and fervently political at a time where the AIDS epidemic was cutting down a generation of artists. From the late 1970s until his death in 1992, Wojnarowicz produced a body of work that was as conceptually rigorous as it was stylistically diverse. It is the first exhibition to solely concentrate on his photographic and filmic work presenting over 150 works including photo (test) prints, silkscreens, 16mm and super-8 film, and collaborative video works. Afterwards the exhibition will travel to the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery in Vancouver (CA).

**Reza Abdoh**  
**February 9 – May 5, 2019**  
**Opening: February 8, 2019, 7 pm**  
**Curators: Bidoun (Negar Azimi, Tiffany Malakooti, Babak Radboy), Krist Gruijthuisen**

In collaboration with MoMA PS1 New York, KW presents a solo exhibition around the work of the late Iranian theater director Reza Abdoh (1963–1995). Over a career that spanned twelve years, Abdoh pushed his actors — and audiences — to their limits. His aesthetic language was relentlessly, recklessly inventive, borrowing from fairy tales, BDSM, talk shows, raves, video art, and the history of avant-garde theater. The hallucinatory dreamscapes he produced spoke forcefully and eloquently to the ugly political realities of his time—from government-sanctioned racism to the Reagan administration's refusal to acknowledge the AIDS crisis to warmongering at home and abroad. Reza Abdoh was already one of the most compelling figures in American avant-garde theater when he died of AIDS in 1995 at the age of 32. Near the end of his life, Abdoh insisted that he didn't want his plays to be restaged. Traces of his work were to be found on videotapes passed around experimental theater circles, many of which serve as the basis of the exhibition at hand.

***TIES, TALES AND TRACES***  
**Dedicated to Frank Wagner, Independent Curator (1958–2016)**  
**February 9 – May 5, 2019**  
**Opening: February 8, 2019, 7 pm**  
**Curators: RealismusStudio of nGbK (Christin Lahr, Isabelle Meiffert, Ulrike Riebel, Vincent Schier, Susanne Weiß)**

KW has invited RealismusStudio of the neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst (nGbK) to curate an exhibition based on the extensive remains of the late curator Frank Wagner (1958–2016). Wagner has gained reputation for his groundbreaking and internationally acclaimed exhibitions on political discourses of the body, gender issues, sexuality, and AIDS, giving new dimensions to the politicization of the private sphere. The curator, who described himself as independent curator, often brought artists to Berlin before their international breakthrough. With the exhibition David Wojnarowicz – Ein Gedenkraum / A Memorial Exhibition at KW in 1992/93, Wagner

commemorated the oeuvre of Wojnarowicz, who had died of AIDS in 1992 and whose work he exhibited multiple times. The exhibition *TIES, TALES AND TRACES* is primarily based on art works and documents from Wagner's estate. It commemorates his curatorial work in a broader context while giving an insight into his complex work. A complementary exhibition will take place from Februar 1 – March 16, 2019 at the project space Between Bridges and will be curated by Wolfgang Tillmans and Eugen Ivan Bergmann.

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*Pause* takes place in collaboration with Kirsty Bell, Arsenal – Institute for Film and Video Art, DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program, and the Estate of Ian White. The exhibitions by David Wojnarowicz, Reza Abdoh and Frank Wagner are funded by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin. The exhibition by David Wojnarowicz is generously supported by the KW Friends, P·P·O·W, New York, Coleção Moraes-Barbosa, and Mariana and Adam Clayton. The exhibition by Reza Abdoh is co-produced with MoMA PS1, New York, generously supported by the Marina Kellen French Foundation, Çolecao Moraes-Barbosa, and Casper. The exhibition by Frank Wagner takes place in collaboration with RealismusStudio of the neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst and Between Bridges.

Titles and exhibition dates are subject to change.