

SUPERVISOR'S ASSESSMENT OF A Master's WRITTEN THESIS

Thesis title:	Sister, Mother, Lover: Erotics of absence and the physical language of "Yours Now"
Thesis author:	Katharina Joy Book
Programme of study:	Directing of Devised and Object Theatre
Programme type:	continuing Master's

Definition of objectives and their fulfilment:

The thesis offers a thorough reflection and contextualisation of the process of making 'Yours Now', Katharina Joy Book's diploma performance at MA DOT and a close reading of its dramaturgical principles. It fulfils this task remarkably well.

Topicality of the thesis topic (and relevance of the selected methodology in the case of a Master's thesis):

The thesis and the performance 'Yours Now' are focused on memory, as a topic but even more importantly as a dramaturgical and conceptual tool and principle for making performance. This approach opens other significant themes that are explored in the thesis: questions of truth, authenticity, temporality and absence, theatricality and antitheatricality; and the uneasy affects entangled in memory – grief and desire, that are explored as states generative of creative work, and challenging our approaches to time, visibility, and truth. It allows the author to develop a consistent and methodologically innovative approach in the thesis in a close reading of the script and score of several iterations of the performance, reflected through several key topics explored in the work.

Scholarly contribution, originality of the thesis, and its utilisation in practice:

The originality and relevance of the work comes above all from its conscious displacement, of blurring and queering of our expectations and investments in the ideas of acting versus performance, and text versus body and physical action, expressive of the larger questions articulated in the work's main topics. It is very refreshing to see acting and text examined in such minute detail and engaged in the context of a devising and object theatre department, where their potential is redefined and activated anew.

Logical construction and structuring of the thesis:

The thesis is divided into four chapters, Authenticity and Femininity; Queer Temporality; Phantom Touch; and Erotics of Absence, which are well framed by the Introduction and the Conclusion: The Betrayal of Fiction. The appendices include the full scripts, visual material, and descriptions of the two versions of the performance Yours Now. The scripts are also engaged throughout the thesis in a highly productive manner. The subchapters allow for an even more nuanced identification of the key topics explored in the work.

Formal requirements and requisite contents of the thesis, including its length:

The thesis is formally very well presented and complies with the requirements and citation standards. It is slightly longer than recommended but this is linked to the decision to reiterate the performance script throughout the thesis which as a strategy works very well and justifies the excess length of the resulting work.

Level of language, style and terminology:

The work offers a remarkably rich and nuanced approach to language and style and displays a solid grasp of terminology. The writing is of a very high standard, poetic and articulate, and highly engaging. The main premises of the thesis are very well argued and presented.

Reviewer's opinion on the result of the check by the Theses system:

OK

Evaluator's overall summary:

Sister, Mother, Lover: Erotics of absence and the physical language of "Yours Now" is a genuine, brave, and clear articulation of Katharina's creative practice, of her intimate explorations of the affective forces of death and sexuality, of the queer and feminine and their complex relations to the questions of identity and in-authenticity. As importantly, it is a rich resource of ideas, close readings, and intuitions about our relations to time and memory, to grief and desire, expressed across languages of the body and of text, of acting and performing, and of theatre and life. It is profoundly personal yet disciplined and analytical and unafraid to blur the borders between the two, with the full awareness of the fragilization that this entails. It has a lot of potential to develop further and I encourage Katharina to explore the possibility of a PhD study.

Questions and topics for discussion at the oral defence:

I would like to allow the opponent to ask the questions and would only like to hear more about Katharina's strategies for future work and further development of her this specific approach to performance making?

Recommendation of the thesis for the oral defence:	Yes
Recommended grade:	A
Date of elaboration of this assessment:	12.9.2023

Branislava Kuburović
name of the thesis supervisor

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12.9.2023 signature