

# OPPONENT'S ASSESSMENT OF A WRITTEN Master's THESIS

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

## Definition of objectives and their fulfilment:

In the Introduction we learn that "this thesis aims to detail and contextualize the driving forces and guiding principles behind the process of creating Yours Now [...] and what informed it on literary, performative and aesthetic levels." Furthermore "the thesis aims to consider different possibilities of relating to an audience and the ambiguous space between acting and performing, especially in the context of object theater". Katharina fulfils these intentions.

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

The relevance and actuality of the thesis is found in its ambitious approach to contextualise the process for creating the performance. The references used are mainly from the contemporary art field. Katharina's description of the process is mostly presented in a relevant way. A research method is not specified and there is no discussion presented that touch upon methodology. The "logic of the thesis" is described as: "I am analyzing the performance through a very close reading of the material." Anyway, Katharina shows a relevant way of taking a self-reflective approach on her own process, openly displaying moments of failure or hesitation. When presenting some reactions from the audience, the lack of (preferable a qualitative) method becomes obvious: statements like "which some people instinctively responded to with a distancing mechanism" or "Some audience members responded to the confrontation in close proximity by letting their feelings show on their face" is not very informative for the reader.

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

Katharina gives a rich overview of relevant context for her performance, e. g. queer performance, but also theoretical references (e. g. psychology) as well as literature. The manifold of references is deepening and widening the contextualization of the performance, and the thesis is in this way an important contribution to the field of performance research, especially the ability to situate her own performance in a tradition of narratives in many genres of arts. At the same time the approach opens for a plethora of side-discussions, sometimes putting the topic of the thesis – as declared in the Introduction – aside. The question is how much contextualization that is necessary for an understanding of Katharina's artistic process and the performance. The core narrative of the thesis risks to disappear in a plethora of references. The reader gets a lot of

general overviews of artistic works that has inspired Katharina, but less knowledge about the practical work with the performance and the audience's reception of it.

**Logical construction and structuring of the thesis:**

The thesis' introduction gives a trustworthy overview of what the reader can expect from the reading, and the two versions of the performance are briefly presented. The thesis oscillates between description of the working process, including excerpts from the script, and in-depth descriptions of what inspired her performance. In 3 appendices the reader finds two versions of the script as well as pictures from the performances. It could be recommended that the appendices are read before one reads the thesis.

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

Katharina fulfils the formal requirements but could have considered to be more economic in her use of references – the thesis is too long.

**Work with information sources:**

Katharina shows an impressive knowledge about the contemporary performance field and a good overview of fine arts in general. Her way of handling footnotes and references is exemplary.

**Level of language, style and terminology:**

Very good.

**Evaluator's overall summary:**

The thesis is very informative, and it gives a good example of the intertextuality of an artistic work. The presentation opens for an ethical discussion about how privacy, memory, mourning and fiction are connected to performance arts and queerness.

**Questions and topics for discussion at the oral defence:**

- What knowledge for her future artistic work, especially when it comes to the interaction with an audience, came out of Katharina's reflective process?
- How would Katharina describe the thesis' methodological approach?

<b>Recommendation of the thesis for the oral defence:</b>	YES
<b>Recommended grade:</b>	B
<b>Date of elaboration of this assessment:</b>	September 8th, 2023

Kent Sjöström  
name of the thesis opponent

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8.9.2023      signature