

Nikima Jagudajev. *Basically*

August 30 to October 27, 2024
Tue–Sun 11am–5pm

Soft opening
Thursday, August 29, 2024, 5–10 pm



Nikima Jagudajev, *Basically*
© photo: Melanie Matthieu

“Part of Jagudajev’s stated goal is to create a space where marginalized people can be together ‘without dominating power structures dictating the exchange.’ The androgynous youths and non-binary beauties that made up the cast of *Basically* ignored the codes of theatricality, like the so-called fourth wall, and instead erected a wall of autonomy. [...] I was struck by their freedom and spontaneity—such as when some of the performers started making finger paintings on the walls with turmeric—as well as by their investment in caring for one another. As they ate curry together, whispered in each other’s ears, or went for strolls like two lovers oblivious to the world, it felt like the only thing that mattered to them was the work they were doing.”

(Review in *Spike Art Magazine* by Shane Anderson)

Basically is an ongoing live project by artist and choreographer Nikima Jagudajev (b. 1990, US/AT/UZ). It utilizes the exhibition space as a hybrid production space and playground; a context to practice and perform within. *Basically* is structured as a choreographic game in which four performers hold the rules of the game constant, incorporating visitors in visible and invisible ways. The work is governed by the formal rules as well as by the subjective interpretations that occur in interactions with and between the participating artists and visitors. The creation and re-creation of the environment is central in *Basically*.

At mumok, what you encounter is one moment in a long-term long-form megawork. The recording studio is the centerpiece of this iteration. *The Producer* resides there, developing the upcoming album, *WHATEVER*. Visitors are invited to experience how the works’ characters write the world of *Basically* into existence—and to become a part of this open-world, role playing game.

Jagudajev developed ‘re-schooling’—a prefigurative practice inspired by playful ways students subvert the educational system. Some of the most creative and heartfelt acts of our early education, like self-organized play, flirting, or passing notes, were extra-curricular yet located within the institution. In *Basically*, the exhibition space as architecture and institution, contains this world in which other things are happening: eating and sharing conversations, making clothes and music, and surreptitiously playing a game.

A very important aspect of *Basically* is the continuous, ever-evolving nature of it. Every new element, such as the city and venue in which it is taking place, the team—their interests and skill, what is installed in the space, it all adds to and simultaneously remakes the constellation. The visitors also become a part of this expanding and contracting ecosystem which means that they experience different aspects of the work depending on when they arrive in the space.

Basically disrupts the traditional role of the museum as it challenges the Western, conservative history of the white cube as a safe place for a white upper middle class

Media contact

Katharina Murschetz
+43 1 52500-1400
katharina.murschetz@mumok.at

Katharina Kober
+43 1 52500-1309
katharina.kober@mumok.at

Fax +43 1 52500-1300
presse@mumok.at
www.mumok.at

audience to feed their desire to be cultured; a space where they can look at what is relevant; become well versed in the controversial happenings, past and present, without being personally imbricated. The white cube follows a white, Western trajectory in regards to the majority of the people that inhabit such spaces; some bodies move through this space more than others, but also in regards to social codes; the way habitual actions become the norm and are reenacted, solidifying expected ways of acting. The white cube is imbued with whiteness. These codes include quietly witnessing the art, perceiving it as something separate from one's body that should not be touched, eating and drinking is forbidden. One should stand at a respectful distance and contemplate the art, specified seating is few and far between. There is no place for messiness, for audible expression of emotion, for connecting with strangers. The art can be messy, but it is contained, the viewer is safe. Here, whiteness is lived as a background to experience.

Basically is proposing something messy and accessible that envelopes the visitor, something uncontrollable and spontaneous that is open to contamination. With choreography Jagudajev offers another way of orienting ourselves in a white cube, a different way of relating to art, not as something that we are separate from but as an integrative practice of being together. This is something that visitors and performers alike can take away with them. The exhibition aims to promote a new kind of civic engagement, a prefigurative practice that offers contamination through unexpected encounters.

Jagudajev's work has taken form in venues including a solo exhibition at Bergen Kunsthall (Norway), Accelerator (Stockholm), WIELS (Brussels), Shedhalle (Zurich), Kurimanzutto (Mexico City), Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève, The Whitney Museum of American Art, MoMA PS1 (New York) and the Rockbund Art Museum (Shanghai) as well as in the context of Material Art Fair's Immaterial (Mexico City), 89+ at LUMA/Westbau (Zurich), kunstenfestivaldesarts (Brussels) and as part of the Marrakech Biennale (Morocco). Future shows include an exhibition at Westfälischer Kunstverein (Münster) and Dhaka Art Summit (Bangladesh).

Published work by Jagudajev includes "The Backstreet Boys" as part of Bergen Kunsthall's Speculative Histories text commission platform (2021) and co-published by Karmaklubb*, "Relations of Unpredictable Encounters" in the Movement Research Performance Journal (2017) and "the landscape thinks itself in me" in Asad Raza's *Root Sequence. Mother Tongue* (Walther König, 2018).

Curator Marianne Dobner

Exhibition Management Natascha Boojar

Architectural Consultant Margula Architects (Itai Margula, Anna Pöll)

The Class of '23

Concept, Direction & Choreography Nikima Jagudajev

Musical Collaboration and Technical Direction Jordan Balaber & Lester St. Louis

Dramaturgy Louise Trueheart

With Matti Aikio (video, movement), Samuel Baidoo (dance, textile, light),

Jordan Balaber (music, movement), Matilda Cobanli (dance, elixirs),

Zoë Field (photography), Yoh Morishita (dance, music), Maria Muehombo (MIMI)

(music, movement), Salomon Leonard Poutsma (music, movement), Laura Stellacci

(textile design, dance), Lester St. Louis (music, movement), Amina Szecsödy (music,

dance), Camilla Schielin (dance, music), Louise Trueheart (dance)

Musical Contribution Amina Szecsödy, June Jenkins

Graphic Design Laurel Atwell, Zöe Field

Powder Deck Contribution Ayomoy Arrono, Laurel Atwell, Sanne Dodier, Nina Emge,

Olivia Erlanger, Che Go Eun, Zoë Field, Polina Filipova, Padya Humble,

Melanie Matthieu, Abigail McNamara, Saye Oyama, Salomon Leonard Poutsma,

Ra Tack, nick von kleist (nvk), Maira Villena, Petra Webb, Amalia Wiatr Lewis

Mix and Master Chris Pawlusek

Production Hiros

Homemade Ice Tea by Burger Beisl Brutal

Residencies Decoratelier, kunstenfestivaldesarts2021, workspacebrussels,

Frankfurt LAB, Im_Flieger

Partners Accelerator, Dansenshus, Bergen Kunsthall, WIELS, Dhaka Art Summit,

Oktoberdans, BIT Teatergarasjen, Shedhalle Zürich, KAAP, de Brakke Grond

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Re-imagine Europe, Vlaamse Gemeenschapscommissie, IASPIS

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ImPulsTanz – Vienna International Dance Festival

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