

## Gynoïdes dazzles with wild and beautiful primal force

In Gynoïdes, six strong circus artists assume commando over their bodies and over how they are presented on stage. It's smart, wild and beautiful – a tribute to female primal force write Anna Ångström.

Director: Marie Andrée Robitaille

Performers: Sophie Duncan, Veera Kaijanen, Sade Kamppila, Sarah Lett, Laura Lippert, Manda Rydman, Anna-Maria Hefele

Theatre: Orienteatern

Gynoïdes could allude to a robot, shaped after a human woman. The term gives associations to a rather passive being, shaped and maneuvered according to someone's needs. The figures that occupy the magnificent circus ring of the Orion theatre, however, is a crew that challenge gravity as well as the traditional image of the circus princess in lithe leaps and giddy passages through the air. Here, they create their own world, their own identities – in full control of their bodies as well as its expressions.



Sarah Lett. Picture: Einar Kling Odencrants

Gynoïdes is a feminist project, directed by the Canadian Marie-Andrée Robitaille, who once was a female pioneer on Chinese pole. These days, she's a teacher at the school of dance and circus at Stockholm University of the Arts, and also doing research on how women are represented in circus. The genus perspective is a general feature in the show, where the six international artists are dressed in beige underwear, that increasingly stress the human body and its capacity, rather than sex and grace.

However, Gynoïdes is as far from stuffy as you can get – it's wild and beautiful. Certainly, it's constructed as a numbers show, where the ability of each performer is exposed, but with a fullness in tone, teamwork and playful transitions that (slightly over-explicitly) jest about gender stereotypes as well as with science fiction. The concept is enriched by poetical lighting (Raimo Nyman) and sound (Niclas Lindgren) that also catches the movements and breathing of the artists. Anna-Maria Hefele, who plays harp and hurdy-gurdy, and sings with a special overtone technique that makes two parallel voices sound simultaneously. Miraculous.



Laura Lippert can hang by her hair. Picture: Einar Kling-Odenkrants

The esthetic is laid bare and down-to-earth, which doesn't prevent free scope for imagination. Like in the opening, where Laura Lippert is sitting on a chair that slowly soars upwards, accompanied by folk music. Maybe the whole acrobat number is just a dream. Later on, her braids are swinging like skipping-rope; the strong tenacity of Lippert's hair beats the one of Simson's, which is shown in the suggestive final, where a traditional discipline, hair hanging, gets a new form.

Nearly every number has a smart dynamic of its own. Sophie Duncan's dance contains the plastic strength of martial arts. Sarah Lett turns the metal wheel into a living partner, creating a strong feeling of liberation in a number featuring textile fabric acrobatics. Reptile woman Manda Rydman exposes humorist self distance. Veera Kaijanen sculpts beauty with rotating hoops, dance acrobat Sade Kamppila is a physical phenomenon, distributing energy and joy by violent volts, keenly sensitive clarinet playing and ukulele playing standing on her head. Apart from singular performances, "Gynoïdes" is also a collective manifestation of the primordial force of circus and female power – 90 minutes of groovy girl power.

Anna Ångström

<http://www.svd.se/gynoides-blandar-med-vild-och-vacker-urkraft>