

GYNOIDES



«The performance directed by Marie-Andree Robitailles sweeps along like one big breath of oxygen rewarding natural women/human power, we meet seven artists who completely lives up to the Performing Arts Agency subtitle «Circus female intelligentsia».

PIA HUSS, DAGENS NYHETER. JANUARY 2016

GYNOIDES

GYN ♀ IDES - CIRCUS FEMALE INTELLIGENTSIA is a contemporary circus performance, a sci-fi tale that bends, stretch and twist the way we look at women.

Meet the GYN ♀ IDES - in a fictive laboratorial universe, between times, a chorus of women with hyper natural bodies and futuristic technological devices, are on a quest for balance, transcendence and freedom. Poking with a smile at the nature of femininity, GYN ♀ IDES is an all girl power act, a mixture of poetry, acrobatic virtuosity, a gentle riot, and an ode to the power of women!

GYN ♀ IDES feature a group of International elite circus artists and high skill acrobatic. The Show explore new forms of artistic expression in circus arts through the use of motion capture technology, enabling performers to interactively control the sounds by means of their own body. World premiere is on January 6th 2016 at Orienteatern one of Sweden's most avant-garde stage. The Performance is set to tour internationally from end of 2016 onwards.



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CirkusPerspektiv Sweden is a contemporary circus company based in Stockholm, Sweden. Founded in 2011 by Marie-Andrée Robitaille, the work of the company explores the frontiers between circus practice and research, art and science, entertainment and education. CirkusPerspektiv repertoire consists of a series of 10 experimental circus pieces entitled Bêta Test. With **GYNOIDES Circus Female Intelligentsia**, CirkusPerspektiv creates its first full-length performance, aiming to rebuild circus from a gender critical perspective. The creative group of **GYNOIDES** is composed of elite circus artists from Sweden, Finland, USA and Canada. The creation of the show is accompanied by an academic enquiry addressing the agency of women in circus arts and alternative modes of composition in circus arts.

General Info

Show Title:

Subtitle:

Name of the company:

Duration:

Minimum age:

GYNOIDES

Circus Female Intelligentsia

CirkusPerspektiv Sweden

1hour 15minutes

All audience

Gynoïdes

Aerial hair and hair Hanging

Contortion, aerial hoop, handstand

Manipulation Hula hoop

Generalist and dancer

Aerial tissues, Cyr Wheel

Acro/Dance

Singer/musician:

Laura Lippert, USA

Maude parent, SWE

Veera Kaijane, FIN

Sophie Duncan, UK

Sarah Lett, CAN

Sade Kamppila, FIN

Anna-Maria Hefe, DEU

Concept and direction:

Assistant Director:

Sound Dramaturgy:

Gender dramaturgy:

Movement Advising:

Costume design:

Light design:

Set design:

Stage setting/ circus rigging:

Picture:

Administrativ Coordinator:

Production:

Marie-Andrée Robitaille, CAN/SWE

Lea Firus Norrman, SWE

Niclas Lindgren, SWE

Rebecca Vinthagen, SWE

Mari Carrasco, SWE

Nina Falk, SWE

Raimo Nyman, SWE

Marie-Andrée Robitaille, CAN/SWE

Matti Heckscher, Johan Bodin, SWE

Einar Kling Odencrants, SWE

Irya Gmeyer, SWE

CirkusPerspektiv Sweden

Supported by:

Kulturbryggan, Musikverket, The Swedish Art Council, Swedish Art Grant Committee, Canadian Art Council, The City of Stockholm

In collaboration with:

Riksteatern, Orienteatern, UNIARTS-Stockholm University of the Arts, DOCH-School of dance and circus, KTH-Royal Institute of technologies sound computing team, KTH R1-Experimental Performance Space and Presence Lab.



GYNOÏDES

Creative Process

Bêta Test

Since 2011, we have processed through a series of work-in progress (Bêta Test). Bêta Test are experimental phases of creation, in short they are the prototype of the full-length performance to come. Each Bêta test has been an opportunity to test and develop material, define the artistic orientation of the current project and build the team of artists and creators. Each Bêta Test has inquired the participatory practice of a woman-centred circus and explores narrative shapes and tactics in the creation of meanings in circus. Each Bêta Test consisted of a period of research in studio, composition and international public display (Belgium, France and Sweden).



Gynoïdes Bêta Test has been presented Internationally

2011	Bêta test I	La Piste aux Espoirs Tournai, Belgique
2012	Bêta Test II	Festivals Elles en rien encore Le Prato, Lille, France
2012	Bêta Test III	Kulturfestivalen Stockholm, Sweden
2012	Bêta Test IV	University of Dance and Circus, Stockholm, Sweden
2013	Bêta Test V	Cirkör LAB, Cirkus Cirkör, Stockholm, Sweden and Festival Pisteurs d'Étoiles, France
2013	Bêta Test VI	Women in Circus Consortium, Experimental Performance space KTH R1, Sweden
2014	Bêta Test VII	Women in Circus in Circus Consortium, Stockholm University of the Arts and KTH.
2015	Bêta Test VIII	Subcase, Sweden
2016	GYNOÏDES- CIRCUS FEMALE INTELLIGENTSIA,	Jan 6 to 24 2016, Orienteatern Sweden, 13 shows Sold Out.

GYNOIDES

Circus Disciplines and other talents

Acrobatics-Aerial hoop-Aerial tissues-Contortion-Cyr Wheel-Dance-Juggling-Hand to hand-Handstand-Hula hoop-Skipping Ropes-aerial chair-Hair Hanging-Live sound and music (Harp, Hurdy-Gurdy, Overtone)

Sound environment

Sonification and interactive technologies

The Show explore new forms of artistic expression in circus arts through the use of motion capture technology, enabling performers to interactively control computer-generated sounds by means of their own body. The movement of the circus performance is transformed into sound via motion capture technology based on wearable sensors. This is done by means of Interactive sonification that is the auditory equivalent of scientific visualization.

Academical Research

(The experience of the show can be enhance with seminars, lectures and/or work-shop on the agency of women in circus)

The show Gynoïdes Project is accompanied by academic enquiries that address the agency of women in circus arts and alternative modes of creation in circus arts. The project has acquired an international recognition, has developed an extensive and growing network of collaborators from multiple areas. Gynoïdes Project interacts with educational and research institutions, with organizations and members of the circus community, with contributors from scientific, social and other artistic fields. Gynoïdes Project is an evolving participating initiative that uses dialogues, data collections, art projects and artistic researches to analyze the question of women in circus art, how it can be understood and transform.



GYNOIDES



QUOTES

« Gynoïdes at the orienteatern: World Class Feminist Acrobatics »

Lars Wickberg Herr Low, The culture blog, January 10th 2016

« The women in Gynoïdes are wonderfully free from the objectification that female circus artists traditionally are often exposed to, and appear as supreme body artists, displaying authority and soul in their expressions. The evening becomes a poetic and striking tribute to the primordial forces of woman, but also an inquisitive, norm-critical interpretation of circus in our time. »

Nike Markelius, Tidningen Syre, Sweden, January 17th 2016,

« Playfulness pervades the whole show »

Uppsala Nya Tidning, Loretto Villalobos, 7th January 2016

« Gynoïdes dazzles with wild and beautiful primal force »

Svenska Dagbladet, Anna Ångström, January 7h 2016

« Muscles and magic. A show like Pippi Longstocking would love »

Pia Huss, Dagens Nyheter, January 2016

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Picture: Einar Kling-Odencrants

Links to Press (swedish)

Review

<http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/scenrecensioner/muskler-och-magi-en-uppvisning-som-pippi-langstrump-skulle-alska/>

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

<http://mobil.unt.se/kultur-noje/scen/lekfull-nycirkus-pa-orionteatern-4046932.aspx>

<http://tidningensyre.se/kvinnlig-urkraft-i-feministisk-cirkus/>

Articles

<http://kulturbloggen.com/?p=99506>

<http://www.fria.nu/artikel/121268>

<http://totallystockholm.se/arts-culture/roadmap-girl-power/>

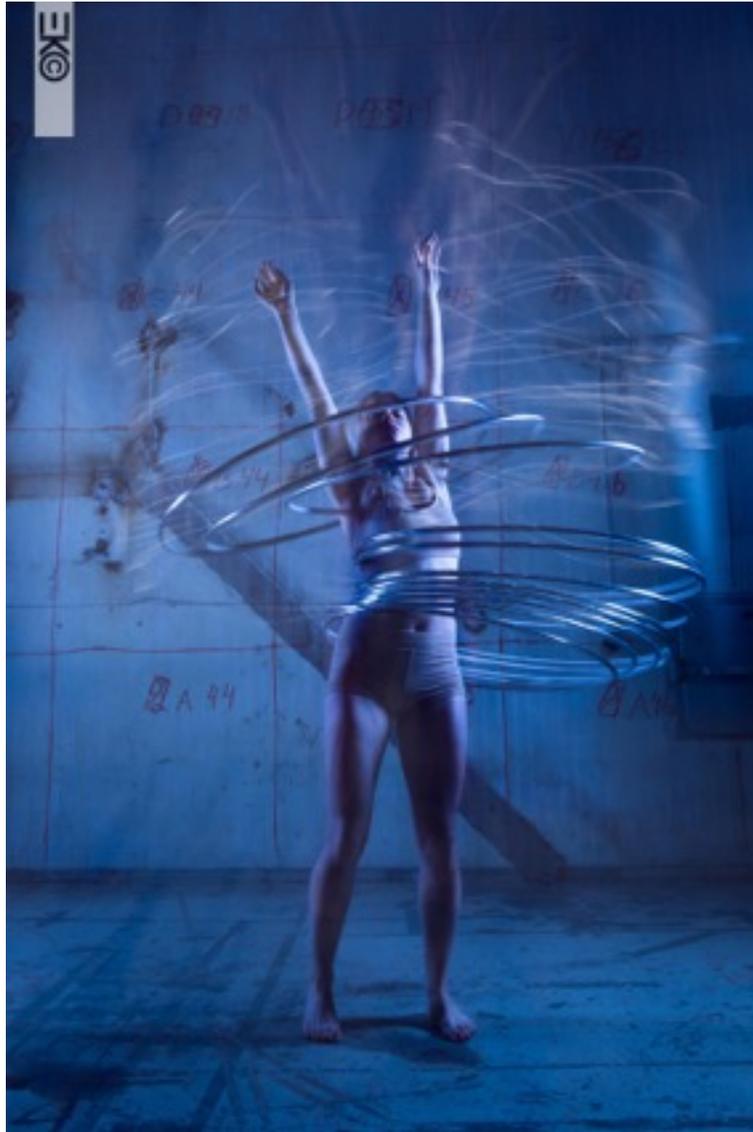
<http://teaterstockholm.se/2015/12/16/sallsynta-discipliner-i-girl-power-cirkus-pa-orionteatern/>

<http://www.corren.se/kultur-noje/sci-fi-cirkus-till-stockholm-8986003.aspx>

<http://bloggar.expressen.se/scenbloggen/2016/01/cirkus-for-det-nya-aret/>

<http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/laura-lippert-det-ar-plagsamt-att-hanga-i-har/>

GYNOIDES



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REVIEW English Translated from Swedish

Gynoïdes dazzles with wild and beautiful primal force

Svenska Dagbladet

January 7h 2016

by Anna Ångström

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.

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.

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.

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>

GYNOIDES

Playful new circus at the Orientteatern

Uppsala Nya Tidning

7th January 2016

By Loretto Villalobos

Playfulness pervades the whole show, writes Loretto Villalobos.

Imagine a race of android beings from a distant galaxy adjusting the coordinates in their mother ship to our solar system, to our planet, to a stage in southern Stockholm. Then imagine them taking shape as women, or rather gynoides, robot humans imitating women, with the task of exploring possibilities and limitations of bodies in the physical prerequisites prevailing on Tellus. Such is the basic touch of Gynoides, a circus performance created by Marie-Andrée Robitaille.

The first half of the show is strongly concentrated on a search for the positions of the bodies, strictly physically but also to a certain extent based upon Robitaille's explicitly feminist vision. The artists establish themselves on stage accompanied by different artificial sounds from, among other things, an old modem and the Pacman game, and soon Sophie Duncan breaks out in a dancing number. Contortionist Manda Rydman creates bodily centers in the most unexpected ways, and Sarah Lett makes fun of gravity in her textile acrobatics number. Niclas Lindgren's suggestive soundscape is made even more lucid by Anna-Maria Hefele on harp and hurdy-gurdy; her overtone singing creates still another landscape which according to our physical laws should be simply impossible. Sade Kamppila executes an acrobatic dance number to the sounds of her own breathing and playful amplified cries overlapping in an endless loop. All the artists display enormous virtuosity in a wide variety of disciplines. In the interval numbers, the ensemble plays with gender stereotypes, puts them on and then quickly dispose of them. Playfulness pervades the whole show, with a collective skipping-rope number as a humouristic peak. However, the basic, academically post-humanist themes decrease during the course of the performance. We're still seeing circus, human bodies deprived of all cultural gender attributes by wearing skin coloured tights, but the show is conventionally based on single numbers, and the main thread is severed. This is not a failure *per se*, not being able to stick to the theoretical angle through the whole show, as it still is an incredibly beautifully executed circus performance, with lots of humour and multi-dimensional esthetics stimulating the imagination and all the senses. As a feministic focused political project, it's also successful, in a norm-creative rather than norm-critical spirit, creating an including space of its own.

Loretto Villalobos

<http://www.unt.se/kultur-noje/scen/...>

GYNOIDES

Female primordial force in feminist circus

January 17th 2016 Tidningen Syre by [Nike Markelius](#)

The world premiere of the circus performance *Gynoïdes – circus female intelligentia* has opened at Orienteatern. It's a feminist circus art project which later will tour internationally. It explores norms and representation of women in circus art.

The whole project is a reaction to the objectification of female bodies in circus art and the stereotypes generally appearing in this art form: a whole-evening circus performance, combining artistic research and social action.

In the warm premises, we're initially met by an acoustic harp and a woman with a serious face in the middle of the room. The atmosphere is condensed, and soon the six international elite circus artists in identical body-coloured underwear enter the bare stage, displaying exceptional female power and singular abilities to extend the limitations of their bodies. Free from female attributes like make-up and glittering stage costumes, their bodies and persons have a natural presence, with the lustre concentrated to artistic expression in the movements and the eyes.

They relate physically to their accessories, they turn rings of different sizes, chairs hoisted up in the air, ropes and textiles alive by making them part of their bodies, speeding up their gravitation forces. With exuberant playfulness and glowing intensity, they bring us close to the art and its essence. Sometimes I lose my breath out of excitement !

Gynoïdes is circus art rending space and free scope to a strong and beautiful ensemble, in more ways than one. Being brilliantly skillful in their different numbers, the circus artists also saturate the room with rare warmth and female soulfulness; their beings emanate so much of their personalities that I finally feel like knowing all of them. On top of that, the suggestive music and the innovative soundscapes are deeply integrated in the show. On a balcony above the stage sits the celebrated overtone singer and voice artist Anna-Maria Hefele, alternately singing and playing acoustic harp or hurdy-gurdy in wholesome interplay with the artists below her, who also use their own voices and body sounds by microphones close to their bodies, using their bodies to trigger and move to drum loops and beats by detectors.

During the course of the evening, they undergo a kind of liberation process. There is a scene in the beginning where they all gather behind a large curtain; at first we perceive them as whispered shadows, and when they emerge they have transformed into robots, moving mechanically to steely sounds. After that a long sequence of solo numbers follow, individually refined for each character. Sade Kamppila performs a dizzyingly lithe acrobatic dance on the floor, accompanied by her own voice and breathing; then she stands on her head, simultaneously playing ukulele. She also plays eager clarinet while Veera Kaijanen walks upon an ascending cord across the whole room.

In a wonderful extended number, the artists execute a collective skipping-rope dance, and I didn't know that one you could jump rope with such amounts of joy, imagination, artistry and skill. The most surprising number of the evening is executed by the innovative artist Laura Lippert. She's a master of the uncommon circus art of hair-hanging, and has developed her own acrobatics number, hanging in her hair from a large hook, which is hoisted up toward the ceiling in the amazing final.

The women in Gynoïdes are wonderfully free from the objectification that female circus artists traditionally are often exposed to, and appear as supreme body artists, displaying authority and soul in their expressions. The evening becomes a poetic and striking tribute to the primordial forces of woman, but also an inquisitive, norm-critical interpretation of circus in our time.

[Nike Markelius](#)

<http://tidningensyre.se/kvinnlig-urkraft-i-feministisk-cirkus/>

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Muscles and magic. A display that Pippi Longstocking would cherish.

Published 2016-01-11, Dagens Nyheter, By Pia Huss,

The introductory act already sets the standard: below the mighty stage space of the Orion theatre, an airy dance around a chair is executed, equally intricate and elegant.

Scen

Gynoïdes - Circus Female Intelligentsia

Concept & direction: Marie-Andrée Robitaille. Sound: Niclas Lindgren. Lights: Raimo Nyman. Costume: Nina Falk. Set design : Marie-Andrée Robitaille & John Engberg. Movement advisers: Mari Carrasco & Charlotta Öfverholm. Music: Anna-Maria Hefe. Artists: Sophie Duncan, Veera Kaijane, Sade Kamppila, Sarah Lett, Laura Lippert, Manda Rydman. Stage: Orienteatern.

Time after time, the artist mockingly dupes the chair that seems to try to keep her locked to the seat. But oh no! In Gynoïdes, nobody is ever put in her place. On the contrary: in this performance, directed by Marie-Andrée Robitaille, sweeping ahead like one single oxygenic breath rewarding natural female/human power, we meet seven artists totally living up to the subtitle of the performance, "Circus female intelligentsia". Intelligence is of course something we have a right to expect from all scenic art, but unfortunately, there are many exceptions. The New Circus is sometimes struggling to find a sufficiently solid dramaturgy beyond the exhibiting and equilibristic. But to those who might despair in this matter, I say: book a ticket for Gynoïdes. The performance is nothing but one long delight, although the spectacular number with Laura Lippert hanging in her long hair, skillfully executed as it is, yet at the same time quite unpleasant. To be lifted by the hair, although meticulously planned as here, carries a quite painful macho charge, at least to me.

But that is a marginal note, as the entire composition is interlaced into a collective piece of art, built by powerful and gracious individualities: advanced and amazing artistry in large, rapidly whirling metal rings, on tightrope, with straps, with silvery skipping-ropes, but above all by the natural strength, the caoutchouc-like pliancy and dancing lift of the bodies. Six self-evident women in simple, skin-colored dresses, far from sexualizing, but displaying disarming energy and unaffected pride.

The musician Anna-Maria Hefe plays a decisive role in the overall impression. Her notes whisper, holler, intone and swing in harmony with the acts and motions of the ensemble.

So much muscles, magic, grace and unforeseeable humour. As when Sade Kamppila totally unexpectedly plays the ukulele standing on her head. Pippi Longstocking would love this.

Pia Huss

<http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/scenre...>

GYNOIDES

Articles English Translated from Swedish

Acrobatic circus stretching the norms

Stockholm Fria, Published: January 9th 2016 by: [Katarina Andersson](#)

With the experimental circus performance Gynoïdes, Marie Andrée Robitaille strives to develop and challenge circus art.



We worked with the show wondering how we as women can take back the initiative in the circus, says director Marie - Andrée Robitaille

It all looks spectacular and mystical. In the poster, a woman is hanging in her hair, not helplessly but in obvious control of the situation, dressed in what looks like underwear of the substantial kind, merging with her skin. She is flanked by an exotic word: Gynoïdes. The driving force behind the project is Marie Andrée Robitaille, a Canadian circus artist, who has been active in Sweden for some years. When we meet, I ask her for an explanation of the title, which should be pronounced the French way. "Gynoïdes is the analogue of android: everything that can be interpreted as the feminine form. In the beginning it was a poetic choice: we were pondering about how we as women could regain the initiative in circus. I'm a sci-fi fan, I feel that this genre often predicts the future and allows us to fantasize on a better world. To me, the Gynoïdes concept was a poetic way of treating the fact that we circus people often are preprogrammed to act in certain ways."

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The show is also part of a research project examining female representation in circus. Marie Andrée Robitaille is a lecturer at the school of Dance and Circus at Stockholm University of the arts. In Gynöides, six female circus artists are working together on stage. The artists have been handpicked by Robitaille from Europe and the US. A predominantly white group, but the director doesn't find that circus is a predominantly white art form.

"There are many disciplines and traditions stemming from China, and there are growing circus troupes in Ethiopia, Cuba and Colombia, for instance. But circus often reflects reality, and thus, women and non-whites have appeared less there, just as in other areas."

Circus educations have given birth to the term "New circus", a form that isn't actually very new any longer. But it differs clearly from the traditional, family centered travelling companies. Internationally, groups like Canadian Cirque de Soleil has taken the world by storm, and in Sweden, Cirkus Cirkör has become synonymous with New circus.

But what kind of content characterizes New circus?

"Circus is an art form which is... how should I express it – it's poetry in motion, it's physical", says Marie Andrée Robitaille. "It's much closer to dance than to theatre. To me, it's also a world of feelings. We can bring forth feelings in the audience, but they don't stem from a finished concept or a story. The viewers will shape their own stories. This show is a tribute to circus, a tribute to the female body and to female intelligence. It's an opportunity where several women can interact on stage, and that's rather unusual in circus."

In what way is this show a tribute to the female body and female intelligence?

"To begin with, I think these two matters are closely connected. We are shaped as our brain dictates: we become what we think. We are the extension of our thinking and vice versa. What I wanted to do here was to pass over the space to the pure body, meaning neither the sexualized body nor the body as character – I only wanted the energy itself. I wanted to expose the body as it is. I don't use nudity, not because I'm against it, but because it's very impractical in circus. So instead, I use a costume in the same tone as the skin of the artists. This could of course be questioned – many people ask why we undress women. But I don't feel that we undress ourselves, I'd say that we are in our natural state.

The under title of the show is "Circus female intelligentsia", which Robitaille seems to mean as a search for a female voice of its own, incorporating social aspects in the performance.

"What does it mean, using female authorship in circus? We wanted to take up this question without moralizing or trying to give all the answers. What can we do to break custom patterns, and what patterns are there? That we look at the audience after a number in some particular way, is this something we have to do, or have we been asked to do it? We question what we are doing on stage and what we have learned. And I don't think it's the task of the audience to understand all this, I hope they will feel it's a new outlook which they're not accustomed to. I think we've been surfing on just pure entertainment, but I don't feel that's enough. It's still entertainment, because that's the nature of circus art, but maybe entertainment with meaning, to the audience also."

The motion capture technique, where sound is generated by sensors from the motions of the artists, is also used in the show. Another sound element is the overtone singing of Anna-Maria Hefele, where several notes are produced simultaneously. To Marie-Andrée Robitaille, this is a good example of how the circus uses value shifting. "She does something extremely unusual. It's not ugly. It's not beautiful. It's remarkable. It's a demonstration of the abnormal, we're not used to seeing bodies this way, or hear a voice this way, it's bizarre and it opens up to something new.

[Katarina Andersson](#)

<http://www.fria.nu/artikel/121268>

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