



ANECKXANDER

Alexander Vantournhout
& Bauke Lievens

'A tragical autobiography of the body'



Dance/ Circus

Age: 15+

Alexander Vantournhout & Bauke Lievens

ANECKXANDER

A tragic autobiography of the body

ANECKXANDER is a solo in a minimal setting for one acrobatic body, a handful of carefully selected objects and three variations on a piece of piano music by Arvo Pärt. Balancing on the fine line between tragedy and comedy, Alexander/Aneckxander rewrites the autobiography of his own body: from subject to object to matter. The result is a raw self-portrait in which the body both exposes itself to and tries to escape from the prying eyes of those looking at it.

ALEXANDER VANTOURNHOUT

Alexander Vantournhout (Roeselare, 1989) studied contemporary dance at P.A.R.T.S. (Performing Arts and Research Studios, Brussels) and single wheel at ESAC (Ecole Supérieure des Arts du Cirque, Brussels). He has worked with Rolf Alme (NO), founder of the Norwegian Theater Academy, Fredrickstadt (NO), as an actor and, in addition to focusing on his own work, Alexander also lectures at ESAC and ACAPA (Academy for Circus and Performance Art, Tilburg, NL). He has created a number of solos including *Caprices* (2014), an evening filled with a choreographic solo and homage to the music of Salvatore Sciarrino, and *Don't run away, John* (2012), a performance with Niko Hafkenscheid (musician Meg Stuart, Kopergieterij, ...). In 2014 Alexander joined forces with Harald Austbo (Heimat, Skagen) to further develop his interest in improvisation. Their most recent collaboration is called *WAK* (2014).



BAUKE LIEVENS

Bauke Lievens (Ghent, 1985) works as a dramaturge for various circus, dance and theatre companies. In the past she has worked with Cie Un loup pour l'homme (FR), Kaori Ito/les ballets C de la B (JAP/BE) and the young Ghent theatre collective *Tibaldus en andere hoeren*, among others. She studied Theatre Sciences at UGent and Philosophy of Contemporary Art at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ES). Bauke is a lecturer and researcher with the Drama department of KASK School of Arts (Ghent). She is currently working on a four-year research project at KASK School of Arts investigating the methods for artistic research into the creation of contemporary circus performances. Bauke recently joined the new editorial board of *Etcetera*.

Alexander Vantournhout and Bauke Lievens met in 2011. After initially being horrified by each other's very strongly held opinions, they finally took the plunge and worked together in 2014. *ANECKXANDER* is therefore a *faux solo*. The performance is the result of an intense dialogue in which Alexander is on stage and Bauke is in the wings. With the short work-in-progress version of *ANECKXANDER* they were chosen as a 2014 laureate by Circus Next, a prestigious European platform for talented young circus artists.

CONCEPT

"The idea of this performance originated a long time ago in a workshop in which a dancer told me I had a very long neck. I didn't know him, but somehow he knew me. He even knew my name, and he joked around with calling me Aneckxander instead of Alexander. It stoke me that he dared to joke around with someone he had just met. Anyhow this incident stimulated me to analyze my body. Before I knew something was wrong with my physical proportions, but I couldn't locate the 'problem'. This incident triggered me to reflect on the conventionalized perception we have of the body."

ANECKXANDER examines how the gaze of the Other reduces our identity to a number of physical/external features: disproportions, vulnerabilities, etc. Alexander/Aneckxander tries to escape from this reduction by always taking different physical shapes. With this alienating physicality he breaks through our visual point of reference. The look of the spectator loses its orientation. Because of this alienation Alexander/Aneckxander attempts to be more than just his external characteristics.

This movement research piece is performed naked. The body bends into bizarre and confronting positions. In this way the thin line between horror and empathy is simultaneously been explored and exposed. This line builds a possible bridge between the solitude of the solo artist and the Other, his audience.

SOLITUDE/ TRAGEDY

Alexander/Aneckxander is a tragic character. As in tragedies he derives his existence from the attempt to reach an unattainable goal. But each attempt is doomed to failure. Thus Alexander/Aneckxander appears primarily as a lonely individual in his attempt to connect with the audience.

The objects on stage are only used to correct/camouflage the vulnerabilities and disproportions of Alexander/Aneckxander's body. Accordingly he uses the platform shoes (Buffalo shoes) in order to compensate his short legs or boxing gloves to protect his wrists. However, as it often comes with disguise, these 'prostheses' more often emphasize the vulnerability of his body instead of compensating them.

The movements of Alexander/Aneckxander are not an expression of his psychology or emotions. His choreography is rather the result of a series of "solitary acts". So there is no psychological approach to the character. Alexander/Aneckxander comes alive through the actions and the movements of his body. This means that the identity of the character is first of all grounded in the body that is in front of the audience. And it is the same body that separates us from the Other. This Other shapes our identity through its gaze which reduces the artist to its physical characteristics. What appears is a *tragic autobiography of the body* that focusses on situations of vulnerability and loneliness such as pain and obsession (emotions which the Other does not need), and situations of relational loneliness (e.g. shame).

RULES IN THE STUDIO

1. To write a tragedy
2. Research of comedy, as in following up, or repetition of tragical events
3. Be honest (no irony)
4. Objects are introduced as a correction of disproportions (too short legs). Because of the naked body, and their functionality (similar to prostheses) these objects reveal more than they hide
5. The body is primordial, objects are secondaire



IMAGES

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fErccPjPIdw>

<https://vimeo.com/136736710> (password: Alexander2015)

INFO PERFORMANCE

Team on tour: 3 people

Duration of performance: 60 min

Recommended age: 15 +

Audience: 250 (up to the configuration of the space)

Build up: the same day of the performance

Stage

- Surface 8x8m
- Minimal height 5 m
- Preferably flat floor theatre (level stage starting point of seats)

Important: view angle on same line as performer, plus very frontal



PRIZES

ANECKXANDER became Laureat of Circus NEXT 2014, a European platform for circustalent (BE). In the summer of 2015 got the performance the audience and young theatre award of TAZ, Oostende (BE). And recently ANECKXANDER belongs to twenty shortlisted young choreographers of Aerowaves 2016.

JURY REPORT TAZ- OOSTENDE (BE): Alexander Vantournhout finds with Bauke Lievens an interesting balance between circus and performance. In the center of their work stands the search of perfection, starting all over after each failure and raising the difficulty every time. ANECKXANDER is the exhaustion of a body, yet at the same time its rediscovery. The subtle circus references might give subtle comic effects; ANECKXANDER shows above all a great vulnerability. The melancholic piano music accentuates the tragic image of Alexander with a white collar and hunched shoulders, a harlequin who perpetually puts himself to the test.

CONTACT

info@alexandervantournhout.be
www.alexandervantournhout.be
tourplanning: info@fransbrood.com – www.fransbrood.com

CREDITS & SUPPORT

By: Alexander Vantournhout & Bauke Lievens

With: Alexander Vantournhout

Dramaturgy: Bauke Lievens

Dramaturgic advice: Dries Douibi, Gerald Kurdian

Outside eyes: Geert Belpaeme, Anneleen Keppens, Lore Missine, Lili M. Rampre, Methinee Wongtrakoon

Light design: Tim Oelbrandt, Rinus Samyn

Music: Arvo Pärt

Costumes: Nefeli Myrtidi, Anne Vereecke

Photos: Bart Grietens

Bookings: Frans Brood Productions

Collaboration with Bauke Lievens in the context of the research project *Between being and imagining: towards a methodology for artistic research in contemporary circus*, financed by the research fund of KASK School of Arts, Gent (BE).

Supported by Circus Next, a European scheme coordinated by Talents Cirque Europe, funded with support from the European Commission.

Production : NOT STANDING asbl / Beversesteenweg 78, 8800 Roeselare (BE)

Coproduction : Circus Next, Les Substances Lyon (FR), Festival PERPLX Kortrijk-Marke (BE), Festival novog cirkusa Zagreb (HR)

Residencies: Kunstencentrum Vooruit Gent (BE), Circuscentrum Gent (BE), CC De Warande Turnhout (BE), Festival PERPLX Kortrijk-Marke (BE), Centro Cultural Vila Flor Guimarães (PT), Les Migrateurs Strasbourg (FR), Subtopia Norsborg (SE), CC De Spil Roeselare (BE), La Brèche Cherbourg (FR), Les Substances Lyon (FR), STUK Leuven (BE)

With the support of: Province of West Flanders, the Flemish Government, Circus Next

Met steun van de
Vlaamse overheid



Provincie
West-Vlaanderen
Door mensen gedreven

