

mietwarlop

Production: Miet Warlop / IRENE WOOL



after all springville
disasters and amusement parks

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duration 45 min





after all springville

On the stage stands a house. It emits colourful wisps of smoke and shortly afterwards a man in green appears with a rubbish bag in his hand, ready to put it outside. The house is a springboard, a trampoline for the imagination. Are we ready for the leap into the unknown? Are we to witness a surrealistic spectacle or will we (finally!) get to see the underlying reality as it really is, in full view, fragile and blindly hurtful? The house is like a body. It swallows up the visitors through its openings and spits them out again. Strange creatures, half human, half thing, circle around the house. From a human point of view they are not fully developed. Some have arms missing. They can hardly see anything. In their clumsiness they give themselves to the full. Here and now. They sniff around, entice, scream for affection. These characters can be only who or what they are. There's nothing the table would like better than to be so attractive as to be lavishly laid. The fuse box is about to explode. A group forms briefly before the eye of a camera on wheels. *Smile!* The audience are the only ones to retain an overview. They watch as one individual drama after another unfolds, as inevitably as the banging of fireworks or a shoot-out. Until the house and the landscape take over the stage again. Everything just carries on.

In Miet Warlop's studio and imaginary world, everything is in constant motion. Components fuse together into one great swirling transformation. Characters and images from one production turn up in another. Sometimes they start to lead a life of their own. For instance, the elegant table from *Springville* – starched white tablecloth, elegant female legs in black tights and pumps – walked into a gallery and turned into an installation that functioned in its own right. Twelve years after the premiere, Warlop has taken the production up again as a memory that has to be relived or a song of her own that she wants to cover with a new group. She's ready for it. The time is right. Some questions remain. How much space do you occupy, physically and mentally? What effect do your gestures have? How do we relate to each other? How can we endure each other in a restricted space? How can we form a community when we don't see each other, or hardly ever? Something always eludes us. If it were not so funny it would be tragic. Miet Warlop combines the total upheaval of a natural disaster with the relief of a cartoon film or slapstick.

Sometimes you want to say something again, years later. Because the issues have not been resolved. Because in the meantime you have grown older and have made and experienced other things. Because it can be done better and more precisely, with more breathing space and less waste. Because it's worth seeing once again. Or just for the renewed pleasure of performing it.

BIO

Miet Warlop (°1978) is a Belgian visual artist born in Torhout. She lives and works between Ghent and Brussels. Miet Warlop holds a master degree in Visual Arts from KASK, Ghent. For her graduation project ***Huilend Hert, Aangeschoten Wild***, an 'inhabited installation consisting of six tableaux vivants and a crawling subject', she won the Franciscus Pycke Jury Award and the residence prize for Young Theatre Work 2004.

Many other performances, actions and projects followed and in 2005 she premiered ***SPORTBAND / Afgetrainde Klanken*** a forty-minute performance, in which twenty people race against time through music and sports. In the context of Lovepangs (Vooruit, 2005) she created the one-on-one performance ***Cherish the Cherries***. From January 2006 until November 2007 Warlop was one of the six artists of DE BANK (Arts Centre CAMPO, Ghent), where she was working on her series of 'Propositions', named ***Big Heap / Mountain***. In between, she was responsible for the set design for performances by Pieter Genard, Raven Ruëll, DitoDito-Jef Lambrecht, KVS (Brussels), Arts Centre Vooruit (Ghent) and Les Ballets C de la B (Ghent).

While she was touring 'Propositions' all over Europe, she realised ***Springville***, a fifty minutes during game of chaos, expectations and surprises, in which scenography, costumes, props and characters are closely interwoven and merged together. ***Springville*** premiered in May 2009 at Arts Centre BUDA (Kortrijk).

Miet Warlop moved to Berlin for three years to concentrate on her visual work and prepare a new piece called ***Mystery Magnet***, which premiered at Kunstenfestivaldesarts (Brussels) in May 2012. ***Mystery Magnet*** won the Stückemarkt Theatertreffen Prize at the Berliner Festspiele for its innovative form of theatre. ***Mystery Magnet*** has played more than a hundred times all over the world and was nominated for Theatertreffen Berlin for finding a new way of making stage-arts. ***Mystery Magnet*** is still touring all over Europe and beyond.

In the course of 2012-2013 Miet Warlop explored different possibilities with her ***Nervous Pictures*** and performances/interventions, through projects and commissions, both in visual arts as in theatre context in/with Baltic Triennial (Vilnius), Hebbel am Ufer (Berlin), Lisson Gallery (London), Southard Reid Gallery (London). In November 2012, as part of her four-year associated artist residency at Beursschouwburg (Brussels), she created the opening event of the season with the ***Alligator Project***: a weekend of combined media and performances by different artists and musicians like Reggie Watts and Michael Portnoy, a project curated by Miet Warlop.

In 2014 Miet Warlop started her own legal structure ***Miet Warlop / Irene Wool***. In October 2014 the first production ***Dragging the Bone*** premiered at Beursschouwburg (Brussels). ***Dragging the Bone*** is a solo performance in a sculptured world.

In 2015 Miet Warlop opened the festivities that celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of Beursschouwburg (Brussels) with a ***Rocket*** that took off to the grid. Also, Art Gallery Barbican (London) commissioned a performance as part of the project ***Station to Station***, hosted by Doug Aitken.

While touring her solo *Dragging the Bone* and celebrating the hundredth show of *Mystery Magnet* in Ghent, Porto and Bordeaux, she finishes the year by opening her first solo exhibition project in KIOSK Gallery (Ghent) titled ***Crumbling Down the Circle of my Iconoclasm***.

In 2016 a new large scale stage work premiered - ***Fruits of Labor***, a deep night choreographical concert performance, functioning as a painkiller for the world. *Fruits of Labor* premiered at Kunstenfestivaldesarts (Brussels) in May 2016 and is still touring around the world.

In addition to her performance work for theatre venues, Miet Warlop has created and presented an ever-growing cycle of visual art performances, interventions and live installations. ***Nervous Pictures*** has been presented in 2017 in KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), Performatik (Brussels), among others.

In 2017 she opens Art Institute Vooruit (Ghent) with the monumental performance ***Amusement Park***, and she was invited by BOZAR (Brussels) within the context of the Yves Klein retrospective exhibition to re-envision and re-stage her seminal work, *Mystery Magnet*, as well as to create the opening performance of the exhibition, ***HORSE a man, a woman, a desire for adventure*** and ***Mystery Magnet***. During the closing ceremony of the Paul Bury exhibition the visual art intervention ***The Board*** is presented.

Festival Actoral. 17 (Marseille) invites Miet Warlop for “L’Objet des Mots”, which results in a new project ***Ghost Writer and the Broken Hand Break*** – a production that premieres in September 2018 at NTGent (Ghent). Warlop cooperates with author and curator Raimundas Malasauskas and musician Pieter De Meester.

Beginning of 2018 Miet Warlop creates ***Big Bears Cry Too***, a solo performance with Wietse Tanghe. This performance for all ages premiered at hetpaleis (Antwerp) in April 2018.

Both performances are successfully touring since then. Together with *Fruits of Labor* and *Mystery Magnet*, no fewer than eighty-five performances were played in 2019 between Belgium and abroad: Switzerland, France, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Austria, the Netherlands, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Great Britain, Spain, Singapore and Canada.

In 2020 Miet Warlop / Irene Wool starts a collaboration with **Frans Brood Productions** and this results in the programming of many performances, nationally and internationally. However, since the outbreak of Covid-19, only a few of the planned shows could be performed; the remaining dates have been moved to 2021 and 2022.

During mandatory Covid-lockdown Miet Warlop / Irene Wool developed the idea to create an online platform. This is currently used for the online sitcom *Slamming Doors*, a project that functions as a public preparation for the performance ***Histoire(s) du Théâtre 4*** (NTGent, 2022). This online platform will grow into a **lively database** with archive material and a glimpse into the daily artist practice of Warlop. When visiting the web page, the viewer will see a randomly selected photo, song or piece that will never reappear after it has ended.

In autumn 2021, Miet Warlop is revisiting the twelve-year-old piece *Springville* under the new title ***After All Springville***. Warlop commemorates her much-loved piece in a new era and repositions the work within her oeuvre. The revival mixes an existing show (*Springville*) and an installation (*Amusement Park*) into a new whole and will premiere on the fifteenth anniversary of kc BUDA in September 2021.

PRESSE ABOUT AFTER ALL SPRINGVILLE

“In Springville, Warlop sets an inventive course through moving tableaux vivants – which characterise her language – combined with Keatonesque slapstick. It delivers subtle theatre that holds up a penetrating and playful magnifying mirror to the world.”

Els Van Steenberghe – Knack – May 2009

“Super strong enthusiastic applause. We should have done 10 performances more.”

Andras Siebold – Internationales Sommerfestival Kampnagel

"In After All Springville, Miet Warlop opens the door to a wonderful universe. Fresh, energetic and disarming theatre [...]. She shows us the poetry of the anomaly, the power and fragility of that which differs from the norm".

De Morgen 2021

"Miet Warlop turns out to be a sprightly homo ludens who creates her own worlds without fixed natural laws and logical connections.

De Theaterkrant 2021

"After all Springville / Disasters and Amusement Park is one of the strongest visual performances of this season."

Concertnews 2021

De Morgen, 14th May 2009

Miet Warlop unleashes disasters in 'Springville'

Of disasters both great and small

By Liv Laveyne

Springville: it sounds like a charming springtime place, but when the theatre-maker Miet Warlop is involved, nothing is ever what it seems. 'There are five characters performed by six actors: someone plays a table and I am a box.' In her latest performance Warlop pours her fascination for objects and slapstick into a variety of disaster situations.

This weekend, a refreshing breeze is once again blowing through Kortrijk, brought by the seventh Fresh Festival, where a variety of creations nurtured under the wing of the Buda Arts Centre are being shown. But for Miet Warlop, a storm was threatening a few days before. 'My house just doesn't want to fold open', she informs us. Between dream and reality, certain laws get in the way and practical difficulties – Elsschot has already written about that – but this experience has never held Warlop back.

Since finishing her 3D studies at the Ghent Academy, she has been stubbornly following her own creative course. The theatre installation *Huilend hert, aangeschoten wild*, which included a crying woman buried beneath handkerchiefs, was evidence of a strong visual aesthetic and drama and led immediately to victory at Theater aan Zee in 2004. In the physical performance *Sportband/Afgetrainde klanken* she worked her actors and musicians to the bone. During 'De bank', a two-year residential project at Ghent's Victoria theatre, she made a series of intriguing object performances under the title *Berg/Hoop: Propositions*. Chair legs with trousers became real legs, armrests arms, and garden chairs came to life and went on a pub-crawl. With a strong sense of humour and poetry, Warlop turned objects into people. In her new production it's time for a move in the opposite direction.

'Morning glory'

In *Springville*, Warlop allows people back into her work for the first in a long time. Even if it is only to turn the actors back into objects again. 'I originally wanted to make a solo where I would transform from one character into another. But I quickly realised that my work needed oxygen, other people's input. I didn't want to suffocate myself through isolation.' For the first time, Warlop used someone else to help her to write the story for this piece. 'Film-maker Nicolas Provost collaborated on the scenario and taught me the importance of montage and timing.'

In *Springville*, Warlop exposes her objects/actors to disasters great and small. From the toppling of a cardboard box to a tidal wave. She shows on stage what a hurricane does in a natural setting: with destruction you breathe new life into and give a new logic to your environment. 'Characters and objects perish in *Springville*, but I don't show it as

something negative, I also want to show the beauty of it. To have a sort of clean break at the end, an 'end of the world' feeling, not shown as a dark apocalypse but as a sort of morning glory. In the same way that the sun sets in order to rise again every morning.'

Doom scenarios: Warlop doesn't occupy herself with gloomy thoughts, on the contrary, she likes laughter. It is no coincidence that the films of Buster Keaton, Jacques Tati and Charlie Chaplin were a great source of inspiration. 'I love the slapstick and the pleasure and the emotion that sometimes hide behind failure. As humans, we clearly also find that funny: to see someone fail time after time, to see falling and getting up and falling down again and all that clowning around in between. For example, there's *One Week*, in which, as a wedding present, Buster Keaton is given a house that he has to construct himself, but on top of this he is continuously confronted with unexpected difficulties, ranging from a storm to a train crash.'

Empty box

It's no coincidence that in Springville, Warlop plays the role of the cardboard box herself. 'A box is nothing, it's no more than what is inside it at any one time. I can identify with this. I don't want to be a slave to a single concept, I think about pictures and shapes, and only fill them in later', says Warlop. 'It's much more than just a fascination, it's a genuine affection that I feel for objects. I can never see objects as purely and simply functional, I also look for the emotion behind them. How you can breathe life into an object like that and then kill it again and in the process also expose yourself to risk. For example, like climbing onto a pile of ten buckets in *Berg/Hoop*.'

Is it a child's imagination that sees a man with wide open arms in every corkscrew? 'I have always had the feeling that there's something in the world, something that I don't know, while others do. And I'm glad that I still don't know it. I try to keep myself as naive as possible. Not unworldly, because even naivety demands a consciousness of what's happening around you; even if it's on another level. But I want to keep that childlike sense of wonder.'

Knack – May 2009

Warlop's Wonderland

By Els Van Steenberghe

In this wonderland, nothing is as it seems. Everything has a heart and soul, even objects like a table or a rubbish bag. On stage stands a cardboard box that's occupied by strange beings. Like a giant who loses his head and arms and ends up walking off unperturbed as a headless and armless body. Or a cardboard box on legs, played by Miet Warlop herself.

As a rattling cardboard box (Warlop lugs around a veritable tea party with her in her box-body) Warlop explores the strange environment around the house: gracious tables in ballet shoes, fuse boxes dying of love, houses exploding under the pressure of internal intrigues and emotions, and plenty more.

Springville is a colourful mix of lively scenes that are at once aesthetic, funny and moving. Each scene springs up apparently at random out of the one before. In the final analysis, all the images seem – as quietly as can be – to tell an explosive tale about a reality that is constantly growing and falling back again.

In *Springville*, Warlop sets an inventive course through moving tableaux vivants – which characterise her language – combined with Keatonesque slapstick. It delivers subtle theatre that holds up a penetrating and playful magnifying mirror to the world.

PRESSE ABOUT MIET WARLOP

“Miet Warlop understands how to play clichés. This is what creates charm and the substance of the performance and in the meantime gives cult status.”

Tanz

“Every once in a while you can experience a performance reminiscent of a uniqueness often missed by so many others. Ghost Writer and the Broken Hand Break by Miet Warlop is one such anomaly. In experiencing this performance, something in your being is created and triggered, something that makes your heart beat just a bit faster – because you are not just a viewer, but also an active participant in its birth.”

De Theaterkrant

“Its simple act of balance and velocity rendered extraordinary through repetition and duration, made all the more impressive with music and percussion that made me feel as if my blood was vibrating.”

The Guardian

“Warlop creates a world of beautiful chaos in which things happen without rhyme or reason. It induces all sorts of complex emotions, from disgust to euphoria, while inviting the audience to be the judge of the characters’ actions – they are violent or playful, lonely or mischievous, brilliant or idiotic.” ****

Time Out Singapore

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