

Kathrin was told she was "good for woman": In protest she put on her own show

In the show "I Was Told", artist Kathrin Wagner unfolds her experiences as a woman in the circus business. The show premiered on Wednesday 17th of August and runs for three consecutive nights.



By Kathrine Rose

"I would like to go on stage, but I need your help because I can't look down". The words come from German Kathrin Wagner, who is currently balancing a plastic ring on her forehead in the middle of the audience. If she looks down, she will drop the ring.

She must carry the chair she is sitting on, down to the stage in the dimly lit room that is the auditorium of Nørregaard's Theatre in Vollsmose Kulturhus. With guidance from the audience, she maneuvers herself down onto the stage floor, still balancing the ring on her forehead. This is the introduction to an interactive show that combines juggling with spoken word.

The next hour in Kathrin's company is both humorous and audience-engaging, but also thought-provoking. In a kind of meta performance called *I Was Told*, Kathrin Wagner delves into the discrimination she has experienced as a female juggler, while showcasing why she is a juggler in the first place.

The rings go up and down in the air and glide effortlessly over Kathrin's shoulders. The tactful sound of the rings continuously landing in her hands is like a metronome for her spoken word. The words are clearly arranged so that the rhymes and alliterations match the rhythm of the rings.

Although Kathrin Wagner does not say the word feminism, it is obvious, that the words she chooses to use in her show are based on a desire to be valued for her abilities. Not her gender. After the show, she herself explains that because the work is autobiographical, it will always naturally take this feminist form:

- I think the feminist element is inherent because it's an autobiographical work about my self-perception. Because I am a female artist, my art automatically becomes feminist.

Back on stage, Kathrin becomes quiet. All that can be heard are the sounds of the rings landing firmly in Kathrin's palms. The sound of the rings landing on the floor, where they spin around until they lay flat.

Dynamo opens doors

The rings clinking against each other as Kathrin picks them up in her hands again. The seven rings lie scattered on the floor in what looks like a random pattern.

But the randomness of the show is carefully planned.

- I showed the show to the people of Dynamo Workshop a year and a half ago. The pandemic has given me the time to try it out many times and continually adapt it, so it's just perfect," says Kathrin Wagner after the show.



Flanked by friends, a single baby and her dog, she enjoys a glass of champagne as she is presented with a bouquet of flowers.

- I've been looking forward to the premiere for a long time, so I'm really looking forward to putting on the show in the next few days, says Kathrin.

The show is the culmination of her summerresidency at Dynamo in Odense. Dynamo is a production house for contemporary circus and performing arts that offers this type of opportunities for artists as Kathrin has seized.

- Circus arts receive very little, if any, financial support in my home country of Germany. So, it's a long process when you have to finance the production of your show yourself. It's easier to dive into the creation of a show when I'm on this kind of artist residency, where I have the space and peace to unfold the work.

I Was Told will be performed at 7pm at Nørregaard's Theatre in Vollsmose Kulturhus on 18th and 19th of August. Tickets are available online and at the door.