



Katarzyna Kozyra



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In Art Dreams Come True

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Summer's Tale, 2008, 20:00 min

Once upon a time in a land not too far away there was a beautiful little house in a wonderful flower garden, the birds were chirping, the bees and flies were buzzing...a midget woman was hanging laundry out to dry, beating carpets, airing out pillows, hoeing the vegetable garden, watering plants...It became dark, a starry sky, the moon was shining...suddenly in the garden three mushrooms start to grow

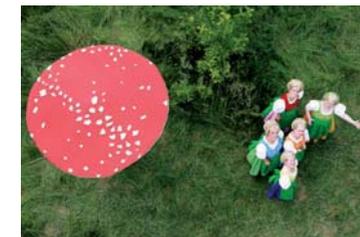
IN ART DREAMS COME TRUE

Katarzyna Kozyra, recipient of Honorable Mention at the 1999 Venice Biennale for *Men's Bathhouse*, presents *Summer's Tale*, the final piece in the series, *In Art Dreams Come True*, that consists of 13 videos: performances, quasi theatrical productions, and audience engaging happenings. The project started when Katarzyna Kozyra decided to spend her DAAD stipends learning operatic performance and make-up art, taking a definitive step in the direction of a new performance art. With the help of Gloria Viagra, a famous Berlin Drag Queen who Kozyra sees as the model of pure femininity, and the Maestro, a professional operatic vocal coach named Grzegorz Pitulej, Kozyra began a process and a work of art that demanded her to take on new feats both artistically and professionally. She entered into worlds saturated with artifice, conventions and posing. Kozyra's interest here lays in the challenging of traditional boundaries between performer-artist and audience. She suggests that the responses elicited from the audience are as much a part of the piece as the artist and everything remaining under his/her control. Indeed, as Kozyra receives continuous instruction from Gloria and the Maestro during the performance itself, she is simultaneously bending and manipulating the role of the student. The development of flexible and shifting power dynamics both between teacher and student, performer-artist and audience is documented.

The project questions what it means to be a living star and those fundamentals of femininity which allow a woman to exhibit herself, sing, dance, satisfy and succeed. Kozyra's role as both Gloria's and the Maestro's doppelganger (double) and her transformations within the different filmic works—from knave, to operatic beauty, to punk-rock diva or Snow White — serves as the back drop for a work that brings into focus the influences a piece of art has upon its setting, its participants, and its audience.

Kozyra summarizes the entire project with this confident statement:

Anyone can dance, sing, and act. And from my omnipotence comes a certainty that I will succeed at whatever I choose to focus on, because I'm potentially talented in every area.





Non So Più, 2004, 7:21 min

This was the first part in the cycle that would become *In Art Dreams Come True*. The piece is the documentation of the artist's study of classical singing, guided by Gloria Viagra and the Maestro, in an effort to learn how to express her own feelings vocally and find the woman in herself.

Nightmare, 2004, 4:26 min

Performance with creative audience participation in Teatro Sociale Trento. *Nightmare* was the first of the performances realized within the framework of *In Art Dreams Come True*. Kozyra, dressed classically in white, enacts an opera singer's dream on the night preceding her stage debut. Each act of Kozyra's performance deepens the intensity of the singer's internal drama, as she finds herself unable to sing, forgetting her lines and ultimately ignored by the unbelieving audience. Out of embarrassment, she is finally consumed by fire.

A Quarter of an Hour, 2004, 12:43 min

The performance assumed the form of a private meeting held on stage between Kozyra and the Maestro that the public was allowed to witness. The audience thus participated in a retroactive glance and review of three short films shot at various stages of this continually developing project.

Façade Concert, 2005, 4:42 min

Every hour a blue-striped booth emerged from the portico of the former royal stables at the height of the first floor. The Maestro led Kozyra out of the booth and the artist performed the Queen of the Night aria from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. Each time the aria sounded different and the costumes changed. Each was inspired by Oskar Schlemmer's geometrical patterns and made intentionally imperfect.

Madonna from Pelago, 2005, 4:03 min

In the Tuscan town of Pelago, four men carried a litter up a hill upon which stood a figure wearing a mask in Kozyra's likeness. The Maestro dressed in a rat mask and a cardinal's robe, led the procession dancing to the rhythms of Olympia's aria from Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*. At the same time as the Madonna Figure disappeared, Kozyra appeared as a cocotte. Conducted by the Maestro, she sang the Queen of the Night from Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Diva: Reincarnation, 2005-06, 8:50 min

While the audience awaited the performance, a projected photograph of a pre-war opera diva inside a cage with lion could be seen. The image then gradually disappeared and Kozyra was brought onto the stage also in a cage, dressed in a fat woman bodysuit. The artist parodied opera divas, who usually squeeze into elaborate dresses to sing the parts of the young girls. Here the situation was reversed. In this costume, the Maestro conducted Kozyra as she performed the aria of Olympia from Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

Tribute to Gloria Viagra, 2005, 4:32 min

In celebration of DJ drag queen Gloria Viagra's birthday at Berlin's Big End Club, Kozyra appeared on stage as a surprise guest during an intermission. Dressed to look like Gloria, the clone Kozyra sang a Robbie Williams song and finished with a stripping performance. The excited club audience was perplexed to see the nearly nude artist with a hand bag on her arm and a fake penis at her crotch. She proceeded to castrate herself and finally hide the penis in her bag.

The Winter's Tale, 2005-06, 11:42 min

Kozyra transformed herself into a Snow White like character, who inhabits a strange forest inn with the company of dwarves. The film combines and blends various myths and stories as well as diverse filmic styles. Here for the first time, Gloria Viagra and the Maestro appear in equally important roles, both striving for the body and soul of their student. The film is a record of the artist's struggle to insert herself and all those around her into a given convention, which is, in the end, exploded.

Cheerleader, 2006, 4:30 min

This time Kozyra takes on the role, not of an opera diva but of a pop star playing a cheerleader in a music video to the music and words of the Gwen Stefani song *What You Waiting For?* The scenes unfold in a typical men's changing room, playing with clichés of femininity and masculinity. In the beginning the young, fit men do not pay the slightest attention to the attractive singing and dancing cheerleader that Kozyra is performing.

Il Castrato, 2006, 20:00 min

In a one-act Baroque opera's finale, the Maestro and Gloria Viagra plucked the Drag Queen (Kozyra) from the audience and castrated her. Stripped of dresses and wig, the Drag Queen 'recovered' her androgynous appearance with an artificial little body and genitals that granted her all the characteristics of a young boy. Following this scene, 'accomplished' by those who were to teach her 'femininity,' the artist sang Schubert's *Ave Maria*. While in the previous projects of this series Kozyra sought to become, transform into, and dress up as a woman/princess/star, in this episode she reverted to her boyish looks in order to undergo nearly literal castration.

In Art Dreams Come True, 2006, 20:58 min

This quasi documentary film, including interviews with assistants, is the final product and tells the story of the whole project. In *Art Dreams Come True* follows Kozyra from her fascination with Gloria Viagra, through her first singing lessons with the Maestro, her tutorials in femininity with Gloria, to her stage appearance in clubs and theatres, and finally to her castration.



Katarzyna Kozyra

Born in Warsaw, Poland, 1963. Lives and works in Warsaw, Trento and Berlin.

1988- 1993 studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Warsaw, graduated from the Sculpture Department under supervision of Prof. Grzegorz Kowalski.

2002-2004 DAAD - scholarship in Berlin

Solo Exhibitions (Selection):

- 2008 Strafe und Verbrechen/Cheerleader, Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen, D
- 2003 The Rite of Spring, Haus der Kunst, Spielart Festival, Munich, D
- 2002 The Rite of Spring, Zacheta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, PL
- 2001 The Renaissance Society, Chicago, USA
- Dance Lesson, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna, A
- 1999 Men's Bathhouse, Polish Pavilion, 48. International Biennial of Visual Art, Venice, I

Group Exhibitions (Selection):

- 2008 Trunk, Färgfabriken – Center for Contemporary Art and Architecture, Stockholm, SE
- Under The Skin: New Video From Poland, New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY, USA
- All That Cinema, Ludwig Museum – Museum of Contemporary Art – Budapest, Budapest, HU
- 2007 Global Feminism, Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY, USA
- 2006 The Impossible Theatre, Barbican Art Center, London, UK
- 2005 About Beauty, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, D
- The Impossible Theatre, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, A
- 2004 54th Carnegie International, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, USA
- Videodreams. Between Cimenathic and Theatrical, Kunsthaus Graz, A
- 2003 Nackt!, Frauenansichten. Aufbruch zur Moderne, Das Staedel, Frankfurt, D
- 2002 25. Sao Paolo Biennial, BR
- 2001 Collection, Museum of Modern Art, Vienna, A
- The Body of Art, 1st Valencia Biennial, Valencia, ES
- 2000 L' Autre Moitie de l'Europe, Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris, F
- After the Wall, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, D
- Zeitwenden, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna,
- Body and the East, Exit Art, New York, USA
- 1999 Zeitwenden – The Outlook, Kunstmuseum Bonn, D
- La Casa, il Corpo, il Cuore, Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Vienna, A
- After the Wall, Modernamuseet, Stockholm, SE
- 1996 Displacement/This Placement, Kuenstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin, D



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