

MEDIA INFORMATION

Helena Eribenne Wins the H13 Lower Austria Prize for Performance 2019

- Prize-winner: **Helena Eribenne (formerly known as Chilo Eribenne)**
- Jury: Florentina Holzinger (artist), Astrid Peterle (donaufestival performance curator & chief curator at the Jewish Museum Vienna), Katharina Brandl (Kunstraum Niederoesterreich artistic director), Lena Lieselotte Schuster (Kunstraum Niederoesterreich art education)
- Press talk: TUES 03 09 2019, 5:00 pm
- Performance and prize presentation: WEDS 04 09 2019, 7:00 pm
- Exhibition: THURS 05 09 – SA 14 09 2019
- PRESS AND
IMAGE MATERIAL: www.kunstraum.net/en/press

The jury has convened, and the waiting has come to an end: The multimedia artist Helena Eribenne (formerly known as Chilo Eribenne) wins the H13 Lower Austria Prize for Performance 2019. In her award-winning performance Woman to Woman II she transforms the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich into a time machine to critically reflect upon the contemporary representation and reception of female artists of colour. The jury founded their decision with the fact that Helena Eribenne successfully makes “a productive throwback to the 1970s to question the relevant intersectional mechanisms of exclusion in the art world today”. The performance and festive H13 award ceremony will take place on September 4, 2019 at the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich.

Woman to Woman II – Time Machine with a Mission in the Present

What began with Shirley Brown's song "Woman to Woman" in 1974 as a musical appeal to her rival becomes a fictitious dialogue between a female artist of colour and a white curator in Helena Eribenne's performance. The departure point is a critique of the status quo in the representation of black female artists, which typically results from the expectation imposed upon them to artistically address, first and foremost, their marginalisation and "blackness". At first glance, this might seem like a well-intended gesture to place the focus on discrimination and social inequality, but it reproduces the very mechanisms that engender discrimination. Namely, at the point where the obligation to reflect upon one's own "blackness" becomes the sole key to participation in the institutional art world. Accompanied by music, *Woman to Woman II* surveys the divide between expectations and the many facets of identity in the art industry. An Afro-Caribbean living room becomes a portal into the 1970s from where we assess the validity of contemporary avowals of diversity: "Woman to Woman II is a throwback to 1974 with a 21st century attitude. From the visual impact of the performance, stage design and costume, what can we learn from a post-colonial perspective of black women? Is 'black art' a tradition that will not be broken with, much in keeping in line with the naked women in art spaces trope?" (Helena Eribenne)

Jury Statement

"How can a serious commitment to diversity in cultural institutions look like? What roles are assigned to artists on the basis of their race, and what expectations are placed on their artistic work? Helena Eribenne addresses these questions in the performance *Woman to Woman II*, in which she reflects and questions the conditions of visibility in the art field: In the award-winning project for the H13 Lower Austria Prize for Performance she enters into a fictitious dialogue with her female, institutional counterpart, a white curator, which is accompanied musically with reference to Shirley Brown's song 'Woman to Woman' (1974). At the presentation on September 4, 2019 in the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich Helena Eribenne's performance promises a productive throwback to the 1970s to question the relevant intersectional mechanisms of exclusion in the art world today."

The Artist

Born in London as the daughter of Nigerian parents, Helena Eribenne studied at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna from 2000 to 2004. Even before the capital became her permanent basis in 2007, Eribenne has been an integral figure in the Viennese art and performance scene. Her works reside at the interface between theatre, performance, film, and photography and are always rooted in a sociopolitical context. She is currently working on the documentary film and corresponding photo series *Love Thy Neighbour*. Many of her short film productions have been presented around the world, e.g. at the Whitechapel Gallery London, in Kunsthalle Wien, Kunstraum Innsbruck, and at the Images Festival Toronto. Her performative works include collaborations with the legendary Fluxus cofounder Benjamin Patterson, Franz Pomassl, the artist duo FXXXism^{TC}, and Discozma. Last but not least, Helena Eribenne is a woman of words and has written many songs, theatre pieces, and film scripts.

The H13 Lower Austria Prize for Performance

In 2019 the H13 Lower Austria Prize for Performance will be awarded for the 13th time by the Kunstraum Niederoesterreich. The aim is to draw greater attention to performative works by artists and make them accessible to an interested audience. The H13 is endowed with 4000 EUR prize money and is the only award for performance art in Austria.

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Image material: www.kunstraum.net/en/press

Opening hours:

Tuesday–Friday, 11:00 am – 7:00 pm, and Saturday 11:00 am – 3:00 pm

Free entrance