

## **MEDIA INFORMATION**

### **Elisabeth Kihlström & Alexander Martinz**

### **Win the H13 Lower Austria Prize for Performance 2022**

**Prize-winners:** Elisabeth Kihlström & Alexander Martinz

**Jury:** Katharina Brandl (Kunstraum Niederoesterreich artistic director), Nele Kaczmarek (curator, Tangente St. Pölten – festival of contemporary arts and culture), Claudia Lomoschitz (choreographer, performer, and visual artist), Franz Thalmeir (curator, publisher, and author)

**Press talk:** WE, 31 08 2021, 10:00 am

**Performance and prize presentation:** TH, 01 09 2022, 7:00 pm

**Exhibition:** FR, 02 09 2022 – SA, 10 09 2022

**Artist talk:** SA, 03 09 2022, 1:00 pm

**Guided tour:** SA, 10 09 2022, 1:00 pm

### **PRESS AND**

**IMAGE MATERIAL:** [www.kunstraum.net/en/press](http://www.kunstraum.net/en/press)

### **H13 Lower Austria Prize for Performance**

Since 2007, the H13 Lower Austria Prize for Performance has been awarded annually and is now endowed with 5000 Euro. The art award focuses on performative works by the younger generation of artists. In the past years, the prize-winners have included Christian Falsnaes (2008), Jakob Lena Knebl (2010), Barbis Ruder (2014), and Julischka Stengele (2020).

The performance *Metal Heads* and the festive H13 award ceremony will take place on Thursday, September 1, 2022, at Kunstraum Niederoesterreich. An accompanying exhibition will be on display from Friday, September 2 to Saturday, September 10, 2022.

### **The winning project**

Judas Priest and Oskar Schlemmer, 80s metal and avant-garde dance from the 1920s – does that fit together? Elisabeth Kihlström and Alexander Martinz, the two winners of this year's H13 Lower Austria Prize for Performance, say: YES! In their prize-winning project *Metal Heads*, a hybrid of live concert, sound installation, and lecture performance, the duo invites you on a journey through modernity and postmodernity that has it all. The focus: queer connections between the historical avant-garde and heavy metal.

Kihlström and Martinz traverse a broad spectrum – from the special symbolic meaning of metal as a material in avant-garde art and rock music to the hidden queer subtexts in the aesthetics of Oskar Schlemmer and the performances of Judas Priest. What's the connection between the Bauhaus pioneer and the metal legend? Both are credited with thoroughly upending the gender norms of their time: Schlemmer, by lending the avant-garde ideal of the "new man" its very own quirky, androgynous look between ethereal light being and droll cyborg (for example, in the famous *Triadic Ballet* of 1922); the band Judas Priest – namely frontman (and "metal god") Rob Halford – by smuggling elements from gay subcultures of the 1980s (leather, vinyl, and studs) into the heteronormative world of rock and firmly embedding them in the iconography of heavy metal. (Fun fact: Quite a few of Judas Priest's songs are about Halford's own cruising experiences).

Pursuing these and other leads, Kihlström and Martinz's performance *Metal Heads* unfolds a multilayered, playfully nerdy reflection on the winding histories of modernity, metal, and queer subversion. The accompanying week-long exhibition provides an opportunity to gain deeper insights into the artists' cosmos of references.

### **Jury statement**

"The winning performance *Metal Heads* by Elisabeth Kihlström and Alexander Martinz takes a provocative and enlightening new look at the performances of the historical avant-garde, in particular Oskar Schlemmer's works of the 1920s and the stylistics of 1980s heavy metal bands. In their performance, the artists draw connections between Schlemmer's geometric aesthetic and the queer counterculture performances of metal pioneers Judas Priest."

### **The artists**

Elisabeth Kihlström (\*1988 in Sundborn, SE) studied fine arts at the Academy of Fine Arts Umeå (SE) and the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna with Julian Göthe. Her artistic works have been shown extensively at home and abroad. Recently, Elisabeth Kihlström was selected for a residency in Tokyo and awarded a state-sponsored studio by the Austrian Ministry of Arts and Culture.

Alexander Martinz (\*1979 in Klagenfurt, AT) studied electroacoustic composition at the mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna with Germán Toro-Pérez as well as Transmedia Art at the University of Applied Arts Vienna with Brigitte Kowanz. Artistic works by Alexander Martinz have been shown at festivals such as steirischer herbst or Diagonale and can be found in the Lenikus Collection and the Ursula Blickle Video Archive.

### **Press contact:**

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Image material: [www.kunstraum.net/en/press](http://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