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PRESS RELEASE

Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart

Invalidenstraße 50/51, 10557 Berlin, Germany

Tue, Wed, Fri 10 am – 6 pm, Thu 10 am – 8 pm, Sat + Sun 11 am – 6 pm

Marianna Simnett. Winner

17 May – 3 November 2024

A special exhibition by Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Press preview: Thursday, 16 May 2024, 11 am

Opening: Thursday, 16 May 2024, 7 pm

The Berlin-based artist Marianna Simnett is presenting her new film installation "WINNER" at Hamburger Bahnhof, which deals with the societal impact of soccer. This new production for Hamburger Bahnhof will be shown on the occasion of the 2024 European Football Championship in Germany. In three acts, "WINNER" echoes the dramaturgy of the game and dissects its socially constructed power hierarchies, crowd psychology, and constant pressure to perform. Through the element of dance, the work restages and radically transforms football's most impassioned moments: elation and triumph, brutality and ferocity, suffering and defeat.

The multidisciplinary approach of Marianna Simnett (born 1986 in London, UK; lives and works in Berlin) combines film, dance and music. The five-channel film installation "WINNER" (2024), consisting of a 29-minute film and several sculptures, deals with the societal impact and the emotional dynamics of football. In three acts, the film examines the construct and choreography of the sport and is influenced by the movements of the athletes and the architecture of the stadiums. Simnett creates a vivid, hallucinatory world that extends beyond the screen and into the exhibition space. Visitors enter the exhibition through a tunnel that resembles a so-called players' tunnel, through which footballers run under the stands onto the pitch. Three podium benches made of resin serve as seats for visitors. While their shape resembles a classic victory podium, their appearance is derived from Simnett's filmic landscape: one podium made of leather is reminiscent of the texture of historical footballs; plastic testicles hang from another; and the third one looks like a bar of soap, on which pubic hair can be found upon closer inspection. The three acts of the film are interrupted by interludes in which women prepare hot dogs and sing a melancholic song about winning.

"WINNER" transforms the physical and cultural language of football by restaging iconic fouls (such as David Beckham's kick against Diego Simeone in the 1998 World Cup match between England and Argentina) and match sequences through the medium of dance. The film is based on the short story "The Destroyers" by British writer Graham Greene (1954). In Greene's original, a gang of boys destroys the only remaining house in an English neighborhood after an attack by the German Luftwaffe. "WINNER" transforms the house into a magical-realistic house of cards belonging to the former referee "Misery". Greene's group of boys become an extraordinary group of dancers called "The Cock Squad" in "WINNER", morphing

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between hooligans and soccer players. "The Cock Squad" destroys the house of "Misery" with such dedication that the act of destruction almost seems like an artistic act. A choir of babies in the Ultra fan section is voiced by the US singer and performer Lydia Lunch (born 1959).

As part of the exhibition, the Hamburger Bahnhof is offering a special program of education and outreach in connection with the European Football Championship. On Thursday, June 27, the action day "Berlin spielt mit" will bring together guided tours and workshops on football from 10 am to 7 pm and the Berlin Beats DJ series from 7 pm in the museum garden with Ellen Allien. Afterwards, the summer vacations at Hamburger Bahnhof will revolve around football in all its facets under the motto "Fun, Form, Force". There will be a varied program of workshops, guided tours, performances and talks for all age groups.

Accompanying the exhibition is the sixth edition of the Hamburger Bahnhof catalog series, published by Silvana Editoriale Milano (116 pages, 12 Euro).

The exhibition is curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, Directors of Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart, and Charlotte Knap, curator at Hamburger Bahnhof – Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart.

The exhibition is a contribution to the art and culture programme for UEFA EURO 2024 and is supported by the Stiftung Fußball & Kultur EURO 2024 gGmbH with federal funds.

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