

"Rebellische Frauen // Women in Battle"

Three evenings of Norwegian feminism

Literaturhaus Berlin / NORDWIND

Dear sister, admonished to be quiet and not take up too much space

[...]

Dear sister, who dare not to be free

[...]

Our time has come.

It is time to finally be without shame.

(From SKAMLOS by Amina Bile, Sofia Nesrine Srour and Nancy Herz)

Even over a course of about 150 years of female battle against patriarchal oppression, we hardly achieve the ideal of an equal society. Politics, economics and moreover leading discourses are often dominated by male voices. Female voices used to be silenced by various dynamics of negative representations. One might wonder, how crusted the images of women are, who aren't able to rationally speak for themselves. Imprisoned by those images and representation, a free speech seems to be until nowadays a male privilege. To speak with the Norwegian authors Bile, Srour and Herz, awardees of Fritt Ord's Honnør in 2017, „time has come“! And with a fourth wave of feminism this time washes itself into our present as an intersectional feminist declaration against patriarchal- nationalistic power structures and their culture of abuse.

To give this time and new voices of this time a stage and a bigger attention NORDWIND and Literaturhaus Berlin invite Norwegian writers and poets to Berlin for an interdisciplinary series.

Over the course of three evenings in the autumn of 2019, we intend to explore various facets of #fourthwave feminism, a generationally inclusive and wide-spread movement that currently poses challenges to patriarchal and nationalistic structures. Taken together, the three evenings investigate the diverse yet nevertheless stable nature of North European feminism, which is so often hailed as a pioneer of the new wave. This intersectional feminist series will predominantly feature young authors and creative people who assertively bring personal and autobiographical elements as well as a pop culture aesthetic to bear on feminist discourse.

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1st Evening: "Why am I so sad when I am so cute?"

The series "Rebellische Frauen // Women in Battle" will commence with a three-part evening that showcases young creative people who tell their stories in personal, unique ways. In her poetry collection, 'Why am I so sad when I am so cute', Ingvild Lothe offers a succinct commentary on the role of women in the 1980s. Her writing playfully addresses expectations, career dreams, sexuality, the Tinder craze and loneliness. She is followed by the trio Amina Bile, Sofia Nesrine Srour and Nancy Herz: they scrutinise integration from a new angle, providing profound insights into the lives of young Muslim women in Norway's welfare state. Lastly, Marta Brenner's graphic novel, 'Rebellious Women' gives a humorous and visually appealing overview of the last 150 years of the feminist battle.

The evening will be moderated by the Berlin-based collective Female Trouble, which consists of the choreographers and artists Roni Katz, Agata Siniarska and Xenia Tanik Dwertmann. For several years, the friendship-based collective has run VULVA CLUB in various Berlin locations, a platform from which they, alongside other artists, present queer and feminist responses to current issues and discourses.

Together with the Norwegian authors, Female Trouble will lead the audience through an evening that not only gives voice and visibility to the marginalised people and diverse literature of Northern Europe, but also provides a critique of extant patriarchal and capitalist structures. Actors from Studo R, the post-migrant Maxim Gorki Theater in Berlin, will read works by Bile, Srour, and Herz, augmenting the readings with their own perspectives.

2nd Evening: "Into the Wild: We Should Be Angrier Than We Are"

The second evening, divided into two parts, will examine images of the female body and explore the courage it takes to break down mentally and socially constructed borders. "Into the Wild: We Should Be Angrier Than We Are" is interested in resistance to female stereotypes as well as of the physical perimeters who deem to be perceived as female or feminine.

The evening opens with the book "Wolf Island" by Layla Rolstad, who gave up Norway's affluent society in favour of a solitary exploration of the Canadian wilderness. She lived for several winters in a remote station, largely isolated from her neighbours but at one with nature

and the surrounding wildlife. Eventually, what began as a time-out became an existential experience that complicated returning to so-called civilisation. An athlete, i.e. mountaineer Cecilie Skog talks to the writer.

During the second half of the evening, three afro-Norwegian slam poets Evelyn Rasmussen Osazuwa, Sarah Ramin Osmundsen and Jeaninne Maskika Lukusa deconstruct female stereotypes. With humour and panache, they interrogate how a seemingly heterogenous, affluent white society sees itself and others.

This second evening, which will be introduced and moderated by a young, German-speaking slam poet such as Sophia Szymula, raises the question of who or what defines a person as an integrated member of an affluent society when the rules of this society are largely influenced by economic security. How does this change when an individual's appearance is incongruous with the norm ?

The Norwegian welfare state, and with it, Norwegian society, is taken to task from two different critical perspectives by Rolstad and slam poets Osazuwa, Osmundsen and Lukusa. Where Rolstad distances herself from her origins in writing about her escape from patriarchy into the wilderness, the slam poets interrogate the parameters operating within society that facilitate and impede inclusion.

3rd Evening: "A woman grows older"

The third evening is dedicated to the deconstruction of social categories and determines where there is scope for resistance within the feminist battle. Not least in its most elementary unit, its nuclear cell: partnership and family. This last evening takes inspiration from the successful reading series started by the Literaturhaus Berlin in 2019, "Eine Frau wird älter" (a woman grows older), which has featured the likes of Ulrike Draesner, Ursula März, Yoko Tawada and Daniela Krein. The texts read and discussed showcase women who attempt to break free of prescribed roles, conventional marriages and the demands of a society to which they no longer feel indebted.



Platform & Festival for the Arts from Nordic and Baltic Countries

Over the course of the evening, a link is made between Dagny Juel, one of the most influential Norwegian authors of the late 19th century, and the contemporary author Monica Isakstuen. Juel was muse to Munch and Strindberg and spent some of her life living in Berlin. She fought a long battle to escape an unhappy marriage and lead a self-determined life... and eventually paid with her life. In "Be Kind to the Animals", the author Monica Isakstuen dissects with a sharp eye the break-down of a nuclear family in 2019.

This final evening, which will also provide an overview of the #intersectional feminist struggles of the last 30 years, will be moderated by an expert such as the journalist Caren Miesenberger. The renowned Anne Tismer, who was voted actress of the year by the magazine "Theater heute" (theatre today) following her 2002 role as Ibsen's Nora in 'The Doll's House' (directed by Thomas Ostermeier at the Schaubühne theatre in Berlin), will bring her personal connection to Norway and related critical feminist opinions to bear on a reading of Juel's and Isakstuen's writing.

The evening will be joined as well by the author and filmmaker Lars Brandt, who is a son of former German politician Willy Brandt and has a strong connection to Norway. Brandt translated Dagny Juels work into German and has written an essay, where he, little by little, draws near Juels extraordinary personality, giving a glimpse into her biography.

The event series will be attended by various simultaneous translators speakers and actors.

Cooperations

The series „Women in Battle“ that is produced and curated by NORDWIND and Literaturhaus Berlin cooperates with NORLA and the Norwegian embassy, to bring those artists mentioned above from Norway to Berlin. As Norway is the guest of honor of this years Frankfurter Buchmesse, most of the authors are invited to present their work there before hand .