
LUTZ
HORIZONTAL
A stage piece by
PROJECT KAAY
Circus - Theater - Music
2028

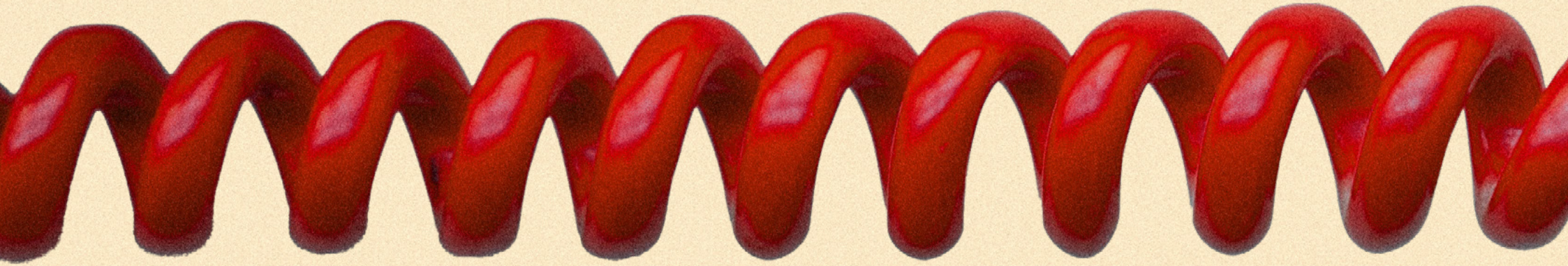
LUTZ HORIZONTAL

...is a small example of everyday life.

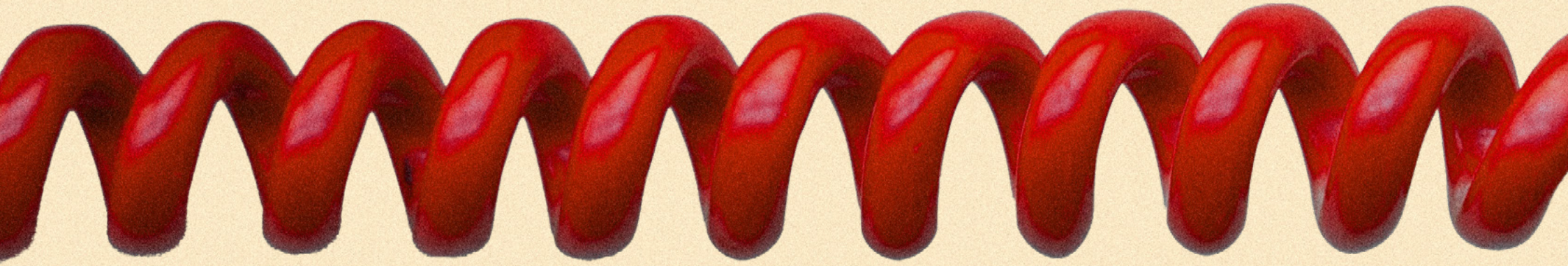
A look inside an ordinary person's head – specifically, Lutz's. We made Lutz up. He is of average height, has medium-blond hair, is around thirty, and his favorite color is beige. We don't really know much more about him. He was just there, standing calmly in front of us with a basket in his hand, ready for a day at the public pool. He just has to wait sixty minutes in a holding loop on the phone, and then he's good to go.

"Lutz Horizontal" is an interdisciplinary stage show. Bringing together live music, circus arts and text, the performers playfully engage with the expectations of our achievement-driven society and a neoliberal understanding of time as an exploitable resource. The character Lutz struggles with himself for permission to do nothing and to simply let time pass by.

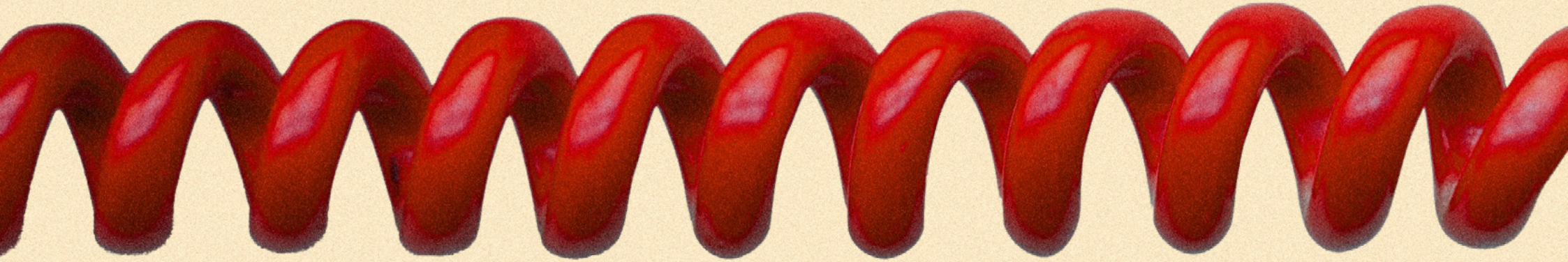
beep



beep



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Hello


CIRCUS
NARRATION
LIVE-MUSIC

WHAT IT'S ABOUT

The show is framed by the specific situation Lutz finds himself in: After missing a call regarding his participation in a clinical study on the individual waiting capacity and impulse control of young adults, he returns the call and gets stuck in an automated telephone hold loop for the entire 60-minute duration of the show.

The piece takes place in real time: We experience time from Lutz's perspective – his (im)patience, his daydreams and swirling thoughts, his attempts to distract himself, and his attempts not to get distracted.

Julian is our main Lutz. Average height, medium-blond hair, mid-thirties, somewhere between lethargy and inner calmness, trying to deal with the increasingly absurd demands of the holding loop. When they aren't busy with their day jobs as a lifeguard and pool DJ, Nele and Max are also part of Lutz. Depending on his inner conflict, they act as counterparts with whom Lutz can negotiate his own thoughts. Both in Nele's words and in Max's character and music, ambivalent traits are revealed that interact somewhat uncooperatively with the central Lutz. Particularly on a musical and performative level, balancing moments are created where all three performers merge into a single, shared Lutz.








PLEASE
HOLD

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT



Lutz is a character we have been carrying around with us for quite a while. We use him to explore various questions and test our creativity. He is our anti-hero, a completely average, nice person who remains refreshingly unbothered in a fast-paced, achievement-driven society. Through this, his political dimension arises basically by itself:

In a world that views time as an economic resource, doing nothing becomes an act of resistance.

Through Lutz, we explore the potential of refusing to make one's time available and economically exploitable.

The irony of a 60-minute telephone hold for a study on waiting competence might be obvious. Alongside this humorous potential, we especially like the ordinary everydayness of the situation. By engaging with a banal moment like this, different dimensions revolving around the act of waiting can be uncovered. This raises questions such as: Is waiting wasted time? Why do we think we can waste time in the first place? Does this mean time must be understood as a limited resource? And if so, how is this resource used and exploited? What sociopolitical mechanisms and hierarchies interfere with our personal relationship to waiting time? Philosophical themes, such as the experience of time as relative, also come to the surface.

With our character Lutz, we want to show that we do not have to fulfill impossible expectations. He is our reminder to find inner calm and joy, to embrace a horizontal existence between things. This involves understanding time as a state of being, in order to return to the present moment, which – if we are being honest – is the only form of time we will ever truly experience anyway.

We made the deliberate choice to address the role of the smartphone as a central element of this discourse symbolically through the disruption of the hold loop, rather than focusing on a direct critique of social media.

Additionally, in our exploration of Lutz, it was important to us to bring a masculinity to the stage that is defined by patience and gentleness, to display a relationship with one's own body that naturally defies gender-normative expectations. This dimension is developed, among other ways, through collaboratively created scenes where Max and Julian's disciplines of music and acrobatics interact with one another.

DRAMATURGY & AESTHETICS



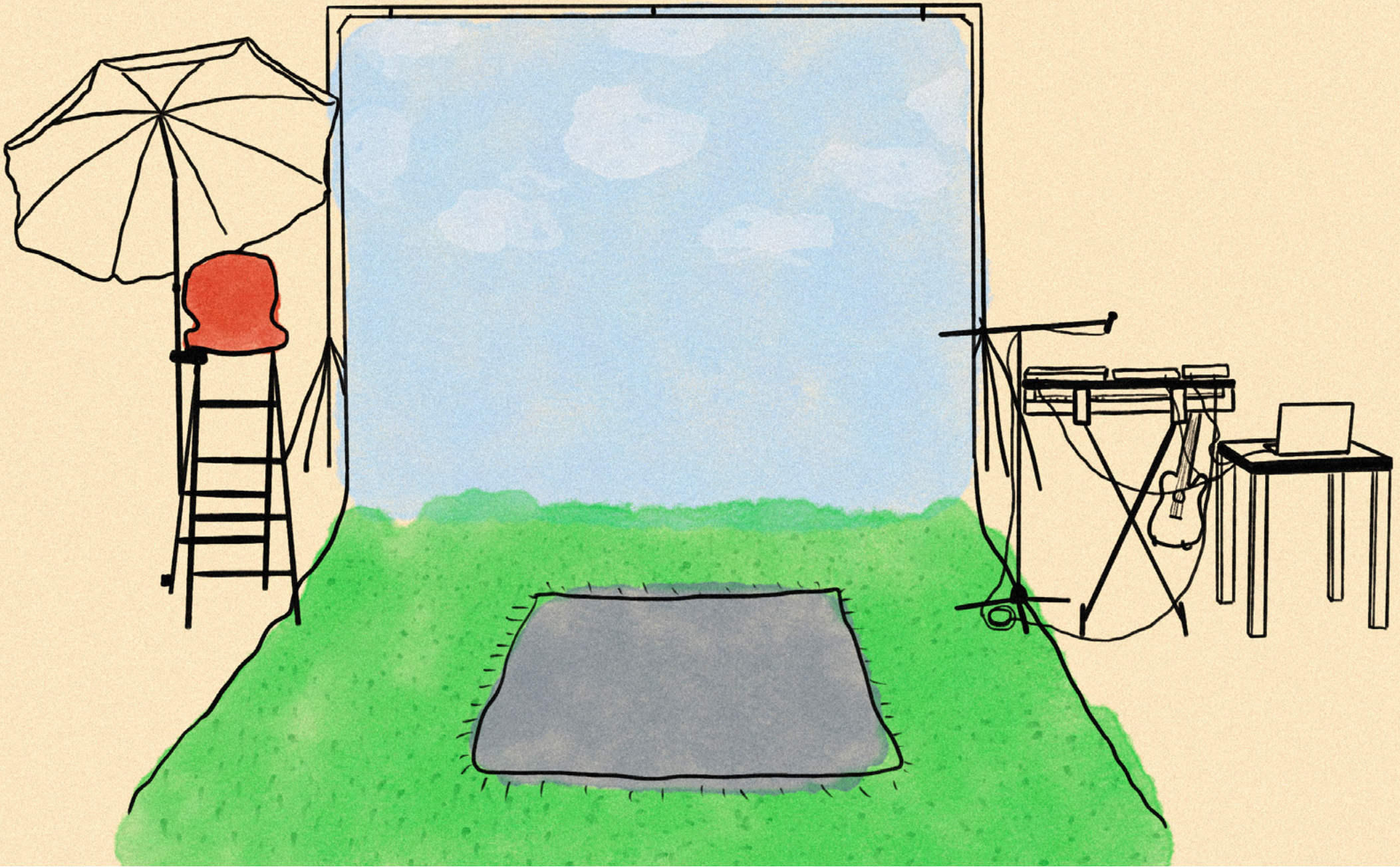
The goal of “Lutz Horizontal” is not to depict Lutz’s character development, but rather to provide insight into his coping mechanisms. Dramaturgically, a dramatic arc can still be developed within the experienced time, resulting in a harmonious resolution.

Lutz’s inner world is presented on stage through the interaction of three versions of Lutz. Through Nele’s narration, the audience learns steadily more about Lutz over the course of the show. The holding loop forms the narrative framework, while the automated recorded voice provides disruptive elements. Through contrasts – for example, between Lutz’s calmness and the hyperactive energy of the DJ – funny moments are created on the one hand, and Lutz’s central characteristics are emphasized on the other. Performative, circus-like elements and Max’s songs bring a sense of calm to the narrative and give Lutz depth.

The visual aesthetics of the show will likely be limited to a few targeted set pieces. We have chosen the public swimming pool as a symbolic place for free time which, in contrast to Lutz’s situation in the holding loop, shows how individual time is rarely allowed to be truly “free.” We are toying with the idea of building a set that resembles a photo studio. This is intended to create a Brechtian alienation effect that makes the artificiality of what is being portrayed more evident. Through this we hope to direct the audience’s gaze toward the central ideas and critiques of the show, as well as make it easier to recognize Lutz as artificial and as an individually fillable vessel. One can feel seen in Lutz; his mediocrity is reassuring. The beige of the costumes underlines this neutrality.

The show is supported by three elements: text, live music, and circus. This interdisciplinarity makes it possible to examine the theme from a wide variety of perspectives. Visually as well as aurally, we strive for energetic and dynamic moments that engage the audience while also challenging them. These meet calm, basically empty moments that characterize Lutz’s apparent passivity, as well as scenes in which the artificial, the circus-like, and the musical come to the foreground in a more abstract way.

STAGE DESIGN







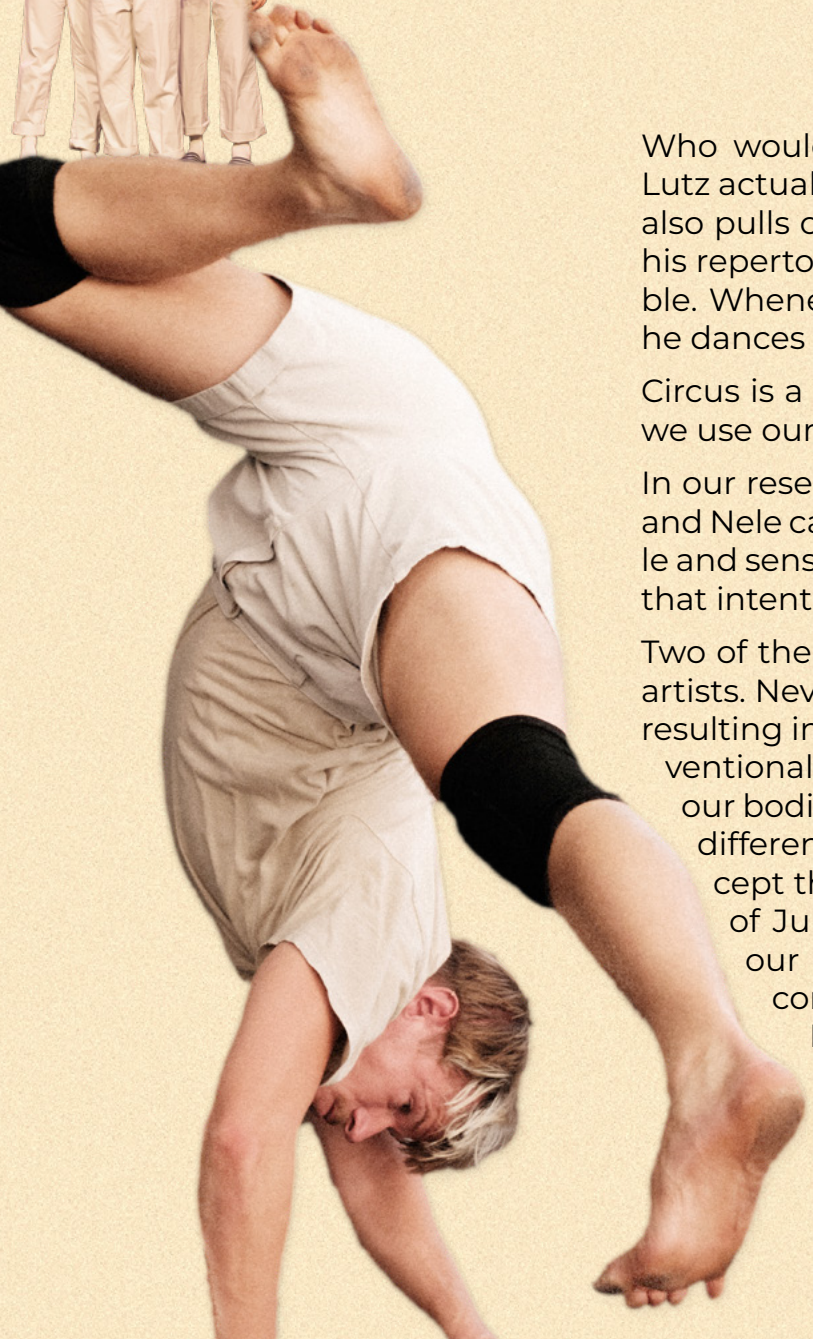
CIRCUS & CHOREOGRAPHY

Who would have thought that amidst all that mediocrity Lutz actually has a few peculiar handstands up his sleeve. He also pulls out floor acrobatics moves from time to time, and his repertoire of partner acrobatics skills is at least presentable. Whenever Lutz daydreams or is processing something, he dances – no matter how.

Circus is a central element of the piece. As a stylistic device, we use our bodies to convey emotion and aesthetics.

In our research, we are addressing the question of how Max and Nele can stage and support Julian's "circus body." A gentle and sensitive floor acrobatics sequence is being developed that intentionally surprises with brief, spectacular moments.

Two of the three performers on stage are not trained circus artists. Nevertheless, all three venture into physical research, resulting in a joint choreography. We are not looking for conventionally "beautiful" movements, but are rather meeting our bodies where they are. The limits and conditions of our different movement experiences form our basis; we accept them and even bring them to the foreground. Out of Julian's many years of professional experience and our shared ambition, a choreography emerges that constantly grows and remains adaptable. It shows Lutz in his most authentic state, at peace within himself.











LIVE-MUSIC

Music holds a specific significance in “Lutz Horizontal.” The songs, composed and produced by Max himself, allow us to get to know Lutz on a more intuitive level. Written especially for the show, they let us share in Lutz’s emotional world, which sometimes exists in contrast to and sometimes in harmony with his rational level. All musical elements are performed live by Max using a guitar, electric piano, and drum pad. In addition to the songs, he also produces the overall soundscape of the piece. What Lutz hears, we hear too: the holding loop, swimming pool sounds, the sound of Lutz’s headphones, and last but not least, of course, DJ Normal.





NARRATION





Next to circus and music, spoken word is the third element in the storytelling of “Lutz Horizontal.” Nele takes on the role of the narrator. She is mainly responsible for the characterization of Lutz while also giving voice to the critical societal standards and demands that occasionally intrude into Lutz’s mind. Generally, Lutz is mostly relaxed and in his unbothered way, not used to feelings of inadequacy. Nele’s texts represent external pressures and doubts that try to challenge his inner peace. As the show progresses, the audience learns more about the dynamic between Lutz and Nele’s words, revealing a layer of self-reflection beneath his relaxed exterior, while still preserving his inherent self-acceptance. After all, Nele is still a Lutz too.

Each of us embodies a part of Lutz, each finding our own way to express our part in his process and story.

Nele brings experience in creative writing and acting to the table. Her artistic voice is charming and open but also laced with subtle sarcasm and a critique of societal standards about efficiency and productivity. Through her delivery, the narrative balances warmth and irony, mirroring the contradictions of everyday life.




TEAM

Julian Blum

Julian began his circus and stage career as an acrobat and performer in 2015 in Cologne. In 2018, he was admitted to the prestigious circus university ÉSAC in Brussels, where he completed his Bachelor's degree in 2021. Since then, he has worked as a professional circus artist at street festivals and in theaters on various projects, including Compagnie Soif Totale, Les Lulus, and Project KAAY.



Nele on Julian

Without Julian, we wouldn't be where we are today. Yes, he has the most experience in conceiving and realizing his own projects, but above all, he drives us, motivates us, and believes that we have something to say. His bottomless patience and attentiveness also shape his presence on stage and are immediately apparent in his control over his own body – a level I can only dream of (and often do). Julian constantly seeks new physical challenges, whether in acrobatics, dance, or endurance exercises: hanging completely still for 20 minutes without using his hands on a Chinese pole, or climbing palm trees many meters tall to pick a coconut for me.

Nele Hofmann

Nele began her studies in Theatre, Film, and Media Studies in Vienna in 2016. She carried her focus on theatre studies into her subsequent Master's program in "Contemporary History and Media." During her time in Vienna, she was involved with the organization of a theatre festival at the Volkstheater and in designing and conducting theatre education workshops. Alongside her studies, she completed several small film and photography projects. Her collaboration with Max and Julian began by transforming the brothers' show "KAAY" into a book format. Later, she took on directing and dramaturgical responsibilities in revising and further developing the project. Her thematic focus lies in critical deconstruction and feminism.



Max on Nele

If the previous texts have sparked any reactions (and we certainly hope they have), it is thanks to Nele. She possesses extensive knowledge and an understanding that allows her to grasp complex connections. Add to that an impeccable sense of aesthetics and tireless perfectionism, and you have a person capable of developing important ideas and conveying them with elegant impact. All of this – and much more – is Nele: one of my favorite people, whose lightness, intelligence, and humor continually enrich my life.

Max Blum

Max has been making music since he was 13 – producing, writing, and singing. For him, music is not a hobby; it is a necessity, his language. Through his film studies at the University of Applied Sciences in Salzburg, Max expanded his artistic repertoire to include the language of visual expression. He has worked as a director, producer, and screenwriter on award-winning music videos, short films, and animated films. Since graduating, Max has been working, among other projects, on a concept album and the show “KAAY.”



Julian on Max

Thanks to Max, we can be sure to take enough breaks, since he’s always hungry. He is my favorite musician, and his music is simply excellent: emotional, creative, precise, and honest. He is also a genius when it comes to technology, photography, video, design, and aesthetics. Max is funny, highly creative, intelligent, politically aware, and sensitive, and I greatly appreciate how openly he shares his opinions throughout the creative process.