

MoMA PRESENTS MAJOR NEW PERFORMANCE COMMISSION BY ALEXANDRA BACHZETSIS, *MASSACRE: VARIATIONS ON A THEME*

Massacre: Variations on a Theme

Installation: January 17–31, 2017

Performances: January 24 (8:00 p.m.), 25 (8:00 p.m.), 27 (10:00 p.m.), and 28 (8:00 p.m.)

The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium

NEW YORK, December 16, 2016—The Museum of Modern Art presents Alexandra Bachzetsis’s *Massacre: Variations on a Theme*, a new performance commission consisting of a video installation on view during regular Museum hours, and four ticketed live performances, taking place on the evenings of January 24, 25, 27, and 28. Comprising choreography for three dancers and a musical composition for two pianos, Bachzetsis’s performance takes the form of a feverish interchange between violent physical movement and excessive mechanical repetition, with a physical and visual vocabulary drawn from a variety of sources: Tarantism, classic Northern Soul dancing, and Surrealist imagery.

Tickets for the performances are \$12 and can be purchased on [ShowClix](#) starting December 16. *Massacre: Variations on a Theme* is commissioned by The Museum of Modern Art. The exhibition is organized by Stuart Comer, Chief Curator, with Giampaolo Bianconi, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Media and Performance Art, and produced by Lizzie Gorfaine, Performance Producer, with Kate Scherer, Assistant Performance Coordinator.

The work of Alexandra Bachzetsis (b. 1974) frequently brings together the tropes and gestures of popular culture with ancient rituals and the choreographic language of landmark figures in dance such as Trisha Brown. In *Massacre*—literally a “*ballet mécanique*,” with nods to the brutalistic, industrial rhythms and Dada sensibility of Fernand Léger and Dudley Murphy’s landmark 1924 film—three female dancers perform to a live score for two pianos, one of which is an automatic player piano. The performance alternates between the spasmodic gestures of Tarantism, a dancing mania that appeared in medieval Europe and was believed at the time to be caused by the bite of a tarantula; the circular, up-tempo rhythms of Northern Soul dancing; and the tentative but instinctive cavorting typical of primates. Each sequence of movements is transmitted, almost virally, from one performer to the next.

The images, gestures, and sounds that form *Massacre* also draw on many precedents from Dada and Surrealism—notably representations of the female form within the work of Man Ray, Marcel Duchamp, and Hans Bellmer—as well as a fascination with the formation of gender and sexuality within a culture increasingly shaped by technology.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Alexandra Bachzetsis is a choreographer and visual artist based in Switzerland and Greece. Her practice explores the intersection of dance, performance, the visual arts, and theater. Collaboration, transference, live-feed video, and a plurality of voices and histories of gesture have informed Bachzetsis’s work. Her work has been exhibited in a variety of contemporary art spaces and museums, including Kunsthalle Basel (Basel, 2008), the Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam, 2013 and 2015), Tate Modern (London, 2014), and the Museo Jumex (Mexico City, 2014), as well as a number of international biennials, such as the 5th Berlin Biennial (Berlin, 2008), dOCUMENTA (13) (Kassel, 2012), and the Biennale of Moving Images (Geneva, 2014). Bachzetsis was nominated for the DESTE Prize (2011) and is a laureate of the Migros-Kulturprozent Jubilee Award (2007), the Swiss Performance Prize (2012), and the Swiss Art Award (2016).

SPONSORSHIP:

Massacre: Variations on a Theme is commissioned by The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Generous funding for the exhibition is provided by The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art and by The Modern Women’s Fund.

Pianos provided by Yamaha Artist Services, New York.

Additional support is provided by the Annual Exhibition Fund.

No. 52

Press Contact:

Meg Montgoris, (212) 708-9757, meg_montgoris@moma.org

For downloadable high-resolution images, register at moma.org/press.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400, moma.org.

Hours: Saturday through Thursday, 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Friday, 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

Museum Admission: \$25 adults; \$18 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$14 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Free admission during Uniqlo Free Friday Nights: Fridays, 4:00 p.m.–8:00 p.m.

MoMA.org: No service charge for tickets ordered on moma.org. Tickets purchased online may be printed out and presented at the Museum without waiting in line. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs).

Film and After Hours Program Admission: \$12 adults; \$10 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$8 full-time students with current I.D. The price of an After Hours Program Admission ticket may be applied toward the price of a Museum admission ticket or MoMA Membership within 30 days.