

Dampfzentrale Turbinensaal
SA 9.5. | 19:30
SO 10.5. | 20:00
Stammtisch | SA 9.5. | 21:15

Ontroerend Goed (Gent)
Sirens

Mit: Charlotte De Bruyne, Aurélie Lannoy, Anemone Valcke, Marjan Deschutter, Karolien De Bleser, Verona Verbakel
Regie: Alexander Devriendt
Bühne, Kostüm: Sophie De Somere, Manu Verschueren
Technik: Jasper Taelemans, Elke Verachtert
Komposition: Joris Blanckaert
Produktionsleitung: David Bauwens
Koproduktion: Theatre Royal Plymouth, Vooruit Gent, Richard Jordan
In Zusammenarbeit mit: Summerhall

Sprache: Englisch
Dauer: 1h
Eintritt: 35.–/25.–

Feminismus ist heute viel spannender – und verzwickter – als vor 50 Jahren, denn der Feind ist nicht mehr so leicht identifizierbar. Auf dem Papier sind Männer und Frauen bei uns gleichberechtigt. Doch im Alltag sind wir noch lange nicht gleichgestellt. Ein bisschen weniger Lohn hier, ein herablassender Spruch da und ein bisschen Betatschen dort: kleine Vorkommnisse, die im Einzelfall weggelacht und unter den Teppich gekehrt werden können. Wenn man sie aber mal an die Oberfläche bringt, entpuppen sie sich als Muster.

In Sirens erzählen sechs Frauen von genau diesem alltäglichen Sexismus, von Erwartungshaltungen, von anhaltenden Ungleichheiten, aber auch von ihren Freiheiten und der Freude daran, eine Frau zu sein.

Ontroerend Goed sagen über ihre Arbeit: «At the core of all our work is the belief that the world is inevitably doomed but also the belief that every action matters, every interaction is worthwhile.»
Bei AUA 2015 zeigen sie neben Sirens auch Fight Night (> S. 20)

ANKÜNDIGUNG DER GRUPPE

*“we are the weaker sex,
but there are more of us & we live longer.
we are goddesses, muses, warrior queens.
we can't control our feelings
& we bleed once a month
because we deserve it.
we cry, scream, sulk
& suffer inexplicable mood swings.
we're princesses getting off on hoop skirts.
we need a bloke to fix things for us.
we have hypersensitive receptors & they hurt.
we are whores, sweethearts, mommies.
we read signs in everything.
we like to provoke
but we don't fully grasp the impact.
we're good liars, use our bodies to get on in life
& you simply can't understand us
when you're not a woman.*

We're sirens & the stage is ours”

Sirens is Ontroerend Goed's modern-day feminist manifesto.

Six young women talk, sing, cry their way through their experience as a female in the Western world at the beginning of the 21st century.

The performance starts off as a concert. Six voices, six vocalists screaming their lungs out. Loud but controlled. Because they enjoy it. Because women are overemotional. Because they want to show their power. Their anger. Their pride. Because they are the weaker sex.

Sirens takes you on a journey through a panoply of issues revolving around contemporary femininity. After decades of feminism, six performers make the balance of how to be a woman – dealing with role models, patterns of expectation, persisting inequalities, acquired rights, inner censorship and everyday abuse as well as the new-found liberties and joys of being a female in the free world.

They've taken control of their appearance and use their range of expression to great effect. They've moved on, past militant anti-male rage to the belief that men can be just as feminist as women.

ÜBER ONTROEREND GOED

Ontroerend Goed (a punning name, roughly translated as “Feel Estate”) is a theatre performance group based in Ghent, Belgium. At the core of all our work is the belief that the world is inevitably doomed but also the belief that every action matters, every interaction is worthwhile. The performances we create deal with how people, as individuals, cope with the world around them, the problems it poses, the high probability of iets bad outcome and how everything people do, all their interactions as human beings, are extremely valuable and important. We embrace the tension between there two beliefs in every idea we try to communicate. We look for the ideal form to

convey each idea. Ontroerend Goed is Alexander Devriendt, Joeri Smet, Charlotte De Bruyne, Karolien De Bleser, Angelo Tijssens, David Bauwens, Wim Smet, Sophie De Somere, Jeffrey Caen en Karen Van Ginderachter.

www.ontroerendgoed.be

BIOGRAFIEN

Director **Alexander Devriendt** (Belgium, °19XX) is the artistic director & one of the founders of Ontroerend Goed. His past work includes the creation of the individual theatre trilogy ('The Smile Off Your Face', 'Internal' & 'A Game of You'), the direction of the three celebrated teenage plays 'Once, and for all we're gonna tell you who we are so shut up and listen', 'Teenage Riot' & 'All that is wrong', and 'A History of Everything' co-produced with Sydney Theatre Company. His most recent work is 'Sirens', a performance on feminism. Currently he's working in Belgium on ARE WE NOT DRAWN ONWARD TO NEW ERA.

His plays have won several awards around the world, and is performed all over Europe, Australia and America, recently visiting the Middle East, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Charlotte De Bruyne – actor started acting in 2002 at the Ghent based youth theatre “Kopergietery”. This is where she first met Ontroerend Goed, as one of the teenagers in “Once and for all we gonna tell you who we are so shut up and listen”. After a two year tour she played in several other OG-shows including “The smile off your face”, “Internal”, “A game of you”, “A history of everything” and “Fight Night”. She went to the royal academy of fine arts in Ghent to study acting. In 2012 she played her first movie role in “Little Black Spiders” directed by Patrice Toye. For her role in “Flying Home” she won an Ensor, a Flemish Film Award for Best Actress.

Verona Verbakel – actor was first seen on stage in 2008 in “Remember Me” by Jan Sobrie and Geert Vandyck in youth theatre Kopergietery. She performed for Ontroerend Goed in “Once and For All” and in the second performance of the teenage trilogy, “Teenage Riot” in 2010. She played in the series Witse on Flemish television and graduated as a Master in Drama at the Antwerp conservatory.

Marjan De Schutter – actor made her debut on stage in 2003, during her studies of drama and word art in high school. She studied singing at the Jazz studio in Antwerp and featured in BOOH, a television series for children. Marjan performed in “Underground” of Johan Simons at the Ghent city theatre, in “Voorbijgangers” with company Fernweh and “Haven en Goed” with company Boston. She played in the feature film “Little Black Spiders”. Marjan graduated as a Master in Drama at the RITS in Brussels and studies classical singing at the Antwerp conservatory.

Anemone Valcke – actor started her acting career in film, in the successful Flemish feature film “Aanrijding in Moskou”. She received numerous awards and nominations for her parts in “Oxygen” by Hans Van Nuffel and “Offline” by Peter Monsaert and played guest roles in various Flemish television series. In theatre, she realized the projects “NEST” and “GONE” and created the performances “Report on the Party and the Guest” and “Een Lied” with her companion Lieselotte De Keyzer, for which she won an award. Anemone is Master in Drama at the Ghent Drama School.

Karolien De Bleser – actor first performed with Ontroerend Goed in Soap (2006) and became a regular, featuring in Hard To Get, Under The Influence, A Game Of You and A History of Everything. She has worked with various companies, including Buelens Paulina, Luxemburg, Zuidpool and Nunc. In 2008, she founded her own company, Cie. Barbarie, where she writes, performs and devises new work. Karolien graduated at the Brussels drama school Rits.

Aurélie Lannoy – actor works and lives in Brussels. Her collaboration with Ontroerend Goed started 10 years ago, when she performed and co-created the individual shows The Smile Off Your Face, Internal and A Game of You. Trained at the Jacques Lecoq-inspired drama school Kleine Academie, she wrote a solo, “Moi Aurélie Lannoy” and she is a regular guest at Brussels underground parties as a part of the DJ-tuosome “Kiki et Poupou”. Aurélie played main roles in the short films “Inicia” by Charlotte Dupont and “Lubcha Libre” by An Sinot and Raphael Bolboni. Recently, she followed workshops at the Susan Batson Studio in New York.

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALEXANDER DEVRIENDT

A feminist performance with the title ‘wijven’, a slightly disparaging term for women in Flemish. How do you reconcile these two?

Alexander: When we started working on the performance, I didn’t really envisage making a feminist statement. I wanted to convey an image of young women and their experience of femininity here and now. In this sense, I considered the word ‘wijf’ as a reappropriated term used by confident, unrepressed women who can stand up for themselves and at the same time don’t shy away from embracing female clichés. On the other hand, the English title refers more to the screaming, which is a central part in the show.

Can you name some examples?

Alexander: We’ve stumbled upon very subtle forms of discrimination, sometimes hilarious stuff but also persistent, implicit customs and patterns of thought. It starts in childhood: ‘gendered products’ such as earplugs for girls in pink, a girlie toy microscope or tape – again – in a pink holder, which hammer home to the children that there is a difference between the sexes. When, for instance at a family gathering, the women spontaneously clear the table and the men remain seated, it’s a reminder that old role patterns are still at work. And then there are of course the flagrant forms of sexism, often disguised under irony and humour: remarks about body shape or menstruation, cliché-comments such as ‘she needs a good fuck’ or ‘women can’t park a car’. In itself, all of this isn’t dramatic, but when you add it up, it’s just too much and no longer funny.

The performance plays with the form of a concert. Any particular link between women and music?

Alexander: My first idea was to create a wordless performance and only work with images, in a very associative ‘female’ manner. Then I thought: what if I let the performers scream throughout the entire show? The screaming would refer to the stereotype of female hysteria, unrestrained emotion and some kind of primal feeling. It would also immerse the audience into a trance-like, intuitive

mood. The first tries blew me away and I asked the composer Joris Blanckaert to create a piece for six voices. Hence the structure of a concert, which also allows to show supreme control over emotional expression. Gradually the need for words increased, so the result is a mix between theatre and a live concert.

Six women on stage, one male director. Forgive me for the commonplace remark, but didn't they drive you mad?

Alexander: The prejudices about the show were an item during rehearsals. "Six women making a theatre play? – thank God there's a man in charge", that kind of typical comments. People quickly assume that among women, tensions and quarrels are inevitable. However, we've formed a united front from the beginning. We weren't interested in female rivalry. I even had to defend myself sometimes, as a man. For example, when I explained why and how I watch porn and what it does to my image of women. On the other hand, I didn't want to avoid the confrontation. For me personally, this performance is an investigation into my own sexism, which is often in very hidden places, very subconscious. I think I'd like to invite the men in the audience to perform this kind of self-scrutiny, because feminism is a two-way street, an exchange between women and men.

What are the most important negotiation points in the feminist agenda?

Alexander: I think the concrete demands are obvious. For instance, to me it's only natural that women get paid the same amount of money as men for the same jobs. I'm mainly interested in the less tangible issues, the undercurrent, the mindset behind the inequality. I think the most fundamental change is on a mental level. In the past hundred years, women have gone through an immense evolution, socially, but a lot of men haven't found a way to reposition themselves. Sexism in a professional environment is a sign of the subconscious resistance against change, as if men are still protecting their territory. A lot has to do with how we define 'being a man'. The concept urgently needs an update.

Let me play the devil's advocate: haven't women in the world achieved all possible rights and liberties by now? In many third world countries, women face a lot more difficulties.

Alexander: ... and we mention that in the performance: "elsewhere, you get circumcised, elsewhere you're not allowed to drive a car, elsewhere you get murdered at birth". Compared to those atrocities, we do live in some kind of paradise, although this is also a deceiving image, when you look at the statistics of rape and domestic violence against women. By the way, violence is a central point in the whole men-women discussion. Men will always be physically stronger than women and there will always be a possibility for them to abuse that. It's shocking to what degree women are conscious of this fact.

Does the performance offer a solution?

Alexander: We've been careful not to be too pedantic, but we do ask the question to solve the inequality together. At the end of the day, men need to face that a sexist society gives them certain advantages. As long as they don't want to give those up, feminism will remain necessary.

Performers Charlotte De Bruyne, Karoline De Bleser, Marjan De Schutter, Anemone Valcke, Aurélie Lannoy and Verona Verbakel on feminism, the ideal world, offensive everyday sexism and pleading guilty to stereotypical behaviour.

- Karoline:** I think feminism is about equal treatment for men and women, on all levels, in every domain. My ideal world from a woman's point of view is pretty much the realization of this equality.
- Anemone:** The fact that feminism exists is significant. We shouldn't even ask how an ideal world for women would look like.
- Aurélie:** Feminism is a reaction against abuse of women in society. Maybe women pointed it out first, but both men and women can share this reaction. I'd like a world in which men and women encounter the same problems.
- Verona:** The demands are clear: job equality, equal division of child care between men and women, less focus on beauty ideals, for instance in the movies.
- Marjan:** Men and women united against male dominance and the distorted relation between the sexes. I think we should approach the differences positively, instead of abusing them and creating a hierarchy.
- Charlotte:** Feminism means not to accept inequality, to be open about it, discuss it, fight it. I'd like a world in which a woman can be a woman without being submitted to men as a result of that.
- Marjan:** Competence and talent are more important than gender.
- Karoline:** What annoys me is ironic sexism. When offensive remarks are made, but you're not allowed to take it seriously: "It was just a joke, you bore..."
- Charlotte:** I agree. Ironic sexism is particularly irritating and obnoxious in the media, because you can't really react to it. I also hate the little remarks that slip through the net. The fact that there are so many pejorative words for women with no male equivalent, such as frump, spinster or fishwife.
- Anemone:** Sometimes I get irritated with my own relativization or cynicism towards the issue. For instance, when I make fun of other women and their clichés.
- Marjan:** We've learned to let annoying remarks pass, but we shouldn't. We also allow certain standards of beauty to become a requirement.
- Aurélie:** Sexism as abuse of power – or in some cases: physical strength – deeply offends me. Or when stereotypes are applied to me, even if it's totally beside the point.

- Verona:** I hate it when they try to limit you to only two dimensions of life as a woman: whore and mother. I once said that I don't want to have children and a man said I should get my uterus removed.
- Karoline:** I have to admit, sometimes I play dumb in traffic so they'll let me pass first.
- Charlotte:** I sometimes pretend to be physically weaker, out of laziness.
- Anemone:** I cry for no reason. And then I blame my period.
- Marjan:** I can panic shamelessly in every situation. Women are hysterical anyway...
- Verona:** I behave like a diva, I can get overemotional. I wear high heels on a daily basis. I do the cleaning in a knotted shirt.
- Aurélie:** I put on red lipstick to get what I want.

Pressematerial (Fotos in druckfähiger Auflösung und Pressedossiers zu den einzelnen Produktionen) stehen auf <http://www.auawirleben.ch/medien.html> für Sie zum Herunterladen bereit.

Für weitere Auskünfte, Unterlagen zu den Produktionen, Bild- und eventuell Videomaterial wenden Sie sich bitte an +41 (0) 31 318 62 16 resp. nicolette.kretz@auawirleben.ch. Wir stehen gerne zu Ihrer Verfügung. Spezielle Wünsche wie Interviews oder Porträts melden Sie bitte frühzeitig an.

PRESSE

The language is lacerating, the performances bruising in their upfront intensity - and the effect is utterly exhilarating. **The Times - Sam Marlowe *******

Sirens: so powerful, that even men turn into feminists. **De Standaard - Wouter Hillaert *****

It's the unexpected juxtapositions that make this beautifully put-together show so startling and so thought-provoking. Big, bold, brazen, and not a hussy in sight. Only real women asking what it means to be a feminist. **The Guardian - Lyn Gardner ******

Despite what sometimes seems a disturbingly confused line of thought, Sirens emerges as a tremendously vivid piece of work about young western women in the early 21st century, checking their privilege, identifying the battles still unwon, insisting on the right to express their own blazing sexuality; and using their voices in ways that break new theatrical ground, and mark this show out as a fantastic theatrical experiment... **The Scotsman – Joyce McMillan ******

Throughout the years, Ontroerend Goed has become so much cleverer and fiercer in its strategy of confrontation, which makes the opinion of six all the more powerful: the male norm still starts too often between the legs. **De Standaard - Wouter Hillaert *****