

2020

8.2. *Petra* (Berit Einemo Frøysland, Dock 11, Premiere)

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71 out of 100 points

<https://www.cargo-film.de/notizen-2020/>

Translated from German by Berit Einemo Frøysland

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From the Fassbinder film with the title – DIE BITTEREN TRÄNEN DER PETRA VON KANT – only “Petra” is left. Lights out, first a swift crossing of the floor in darkness, then clogged, intertwined: Solo for Petra, solo for Berit Einemo Frøysland. At first, no music, then, right before the light reveals the body out of the darkness, there is singing. *I Am The Great Pretender*, sung by the dancer herself, the same song that comes at the very end in Fassbinder’s film, in The Platters’ version. By that it is made clear: whatever the dance piece adopts from the film, it is not the narrative. The film tells the story of the ruin of Petra von Kant: in a language from the iambic to the free prose; from the sadistic dominance of sexual dependence on and downwards. Here, the figure is decomposed in another way.

Petra von Kant – Margit Carstensen, is standing, lying, bending and is almost herself a livelier version of the many mannequin-dolls standing around in the painting-wallpapered apartment. In the furry flokati-rugs and swelling flesh-coloured interior, the mannequins are frequently moved up to the foreground in Ballhaus’ image (*Michael Ballhaus, cinematographer in the film, translators remark*). Berit adapts postures, gestures of arms and hands and translates them into dance in a number of variations, telling own stories, emancipating the gestures of Petra, emancipating the Petra from the film-Petra throughout these gestures. It is what Petra from the film does, only cut out: the reference to the other women, the mute and oppressed Marlene, the worshipped and later despised Karin, the daughter. All that is only a side note in these solo-solipsistic figures of dance.

The dance, that is telling the story of a figure who in the film loses her (self-acclaimed) autonomy, is itself autonomous from the film. Hence, the dance can in its own right communicate something different about the conflicted relation between heteronomy and autonomy. At times fluid, stretched out, freeing, drawing tracks on the floor, confident,

autonomy of the body in space. At first, alongside the sound of electronic, dripping rain, there is the liberation from the clogged-intertwined from the beginning. But then there is not only liberation. In one act or a chapter (the piece is certainly split up in clearly separated sequences), Berit is crossing the floor on the tip of the toes in square tracks, as though following a labyrinth of barriers from an empty cuing-system, from left downstage to backwards in the room. Accompanied by the music, in which something is hammering away and bringing Marlene's clattering on the typewriter to mind. Later comes a passage, where almost metonymically, the Mannequinesque seems to have taken over the body of Petra von Kant, the movements are angular, jerky, half-mechanic, this body appears as though being led by strings. But also from here emerges, in contrast to the film, a road that leads only somewhere else, to an unmade-up Petra without the fake eye-lashes, to another Petra, to Petra from Petra from Petra von Kant. (71p)