

# CONTRA.

**Laura Murphy**

## **A Spectacle of Herself**

**Following on and zooming out from the occupation and commodification of the body explored in their debut show Contra, Laura Murphy presents A Spectacle of Herself - a vulnerable and deeply personal intervention into what it means to take up space, to spill out and be seen...**

"A Spectacle of Herself is a show about what it means to occupy space and the way in which different spaces transform how we are seen. As Kae Tempest recently described it, exceptional behaviour can make you a target, but in another context it can make you safe. My experience of theatre is a reflection of this, as it's a space where my difference and the behaviours and characteristics I mask in daily life, are accepted and enjoyed. So for me the often outsider identity of the circus performer extends beyond acrobatics, into performances of human emotion, neurodivergence and gender queerness, experiences and expressions that in many spaces still don't feel acceptable.

As an artist and writer I often explore personal autobiographical experiences in contrast to and in relationship with broader social narratives. Political events over the last three years have particularly led me to question myself, my identity and the place that I and others occupy in the world. With A Spectacle of Herself, I wanted to explore the link between mental health and personal identity, in tandem with these bigger scale political expressions of space-taking, including the "space race" led by billionaires to colonise Mars and the global climate disaster we are witnessing. Patriarchy and objectification are central themes in this work, given the way that space is often policed, organised and monopolised"

Laura Murphy, performer and writer

### **Credits**

Performer & Writer: Laura Murphy

Director: Ursula Martinez

Producer: Nicole A'Court-Stuart

Lighting Designer: Jen Roxburgh

Captioning & Projection Designer: Ben Glover

Film maker: Holly Black

Production Manager: Dean Sudron

Devising Captioning & Projection Designer: Mark Morreau

Access Consultant: Max Sutherland

Lip Sync Supervisor: Dickie Beau

Trailer: Patch De Salis

A Spectacle of Herself is a Contra co-production with Le Carré Magique and Cambridge Junction and a recipient of Summerhall's Mary Dick Award 2023

## **Join us on tour**

**Summerhall Main Hall:** 2nd-13th August | **Derby Festé, Déda, Derby:** 21st September | **Circus City Festival, Bristol:** 6th & 7th October | **Jacksons Lane, London:** 1st November | **Cambridge Junction, Cambridge:** 9th November | **The Lowry, Salford:** 28th November

## **With thanks to our supporters**

Arts Council England National Lottery Project Grants. Summerhall Mary Dick Award Winner 2023. German language creative captioning commissioned by CircusDanceFestival Cologne.

## **Supported by and created through residencies with**

The Island Bristol, Le Carré Magique, Jerwood Arts, National Centre for Circus Arts, La Verrerie d'Ales, La Grainerie, Cambridge Junction and Jacksons Lane.

## **About Laura Murphy**

Laura Murphy is a genre-defying queer performance maker from Bristol, who makes text-driven and dynamic physical performance about things that she thinks needs to be talked about. Challenging, intimate and spectacular, her work is a cross-disciplinary fusion of theatre, live art, aerial choreography, dance and verbal explosions.

Laura's methodology involves asking her circus technique to serve the work rather than lead it, helping her to push the boundaries of what is expected from aerial work and what aerial disciplines are able to communicate within a theatrical context.

## **About Contra**

Contra is a collaboration between creative producer Nicole A'Court-Stuart and performance maker Laura Murphy. We make, tour and support the development of politically engaged, interdisciplinary and boundary pushing Circus work. Our practice is informed by our queer and neurodivergent leadership, as well as our shared passion for exploring the critical role virtuosic practices can have within live work.

The shows we create are bold, provocative and thoughtful. We hold connection at the heart of our relationship with audiences and experiment with playfulness, vulnerability, and emotional depth in order to forge meaningful links with the people who see our work. We are passionate about contributing to critical discourse around circus practice and in addition to our own creative output, produce public and industry presentations, speak about our research, teach creative workshops.

## **Follow us on social**

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