

## MQ: Exhibition 'No Dancing Allowed' frei\_raum Q21 exhibition space

Opening: Tuesday 21 June, 19h

For the first time in recent history, we were globally instructed not to move, not meet, and socialise. Not being allowed to move freely was equal to not being allowed to express freedom. While governments worldwide imposed strict bans and dance became viewed as dangerous, the collective need for dance resulted in various actions worldwide. From widespread dancing on Zoom and VR platforms to 'Unmute Us' protests in the Netherlands in support of club culture and against the closure of clubs and festivals, sports and other events were allowed. Dance has the power to unite and transform communities - posing a threat to governing bodies. 'No Dancing Allowed' emphasises how restrictive laws can give rise to creative solutions as people find ways to move, no matter what, collectively or alone.



*No Dancing Allowed, „GMO Video Mixtape“ (2020) © Gabber Modus Operandi & Rimbawan Gerilya*

Largely produced during the Covid-19 pandemic, the exhibition showcases multi-media artworks looking at the state of movement, bodies, and space around a period of global restriction. Focusing on instances of dance that happened despite 'not being allowed', the dancing ritual persisted via new technologies like virtual reality, digital art, and increased social media. TikTok rose to prominence as dancing families in lockdown shared videos distributing viral dancing trends, while the Instagram of Britney Spears performing homemade dance routines signaled a non-verbal cry for help giving fuel to the global 'Free Britney' campaign.

Despite the lockdown on movement, socio-political injustice proved to be ongoing, threatening lives in the various forms of war, femicide, rape, racism, homophobia, and transphobia. The exhibition gathers artworks from around the globe highlighting these issues by combining resistance, connection, and empowerment strategies to emphasise group resilience and growing rage.



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In a large-scale mural by illustrator **Clémence Mira**, called 'Where's Steve?' 2022, Mira invites us to spot a portrait of Steve Maia Caniço - a French party-goer who lost his life during La Fête de la Musique (Music Day) in Nantes. A police intervention on account of noise ended in 14 people falling into the nearby river; Steve never came out.

This governmental interruption of autonomous community development was counterproductive in that it united a previously fragmented scene leading to the founding of cooperative projects and platforms. One such platform is Space of Urgency, a community-led social and political initiative fostering collective resilience and rituals. The exhibition will include Space of Urgency ongoing research accompanied by filmed interviews by **Jan Beddegenoodts**.

Prohibition of free spaces extends in modern-day beyond the dance floor and into surveilled public space. In **Liam Young's** work, 'Choreographic Camouflage', 2021. Young as director and speculative architect worked in collaboration with choreographer **Jacob Jonas** in creating performance in digital realm to glitch the detection algorithms of surveillance software in the city, demonstrating the agency dance restores to individual bodies in an oppressive society. The work has been inspired by technology used during the 2019-2020 Hong Kong protests.

As the world started to emerge from restrictions on movement and gathering, Ukrainian artist and photographer **Anton Shebetko** created his video artwork, 'Brave', 2021. Featuring portraits of nightclub goers at Brave Factory Festival in pre-war Kyiv, Shebetko asked them to look into the camera for a full minute against the white backdrop. In the light of the ongoing war, these portraits now gain poignant meaning concerning the safety of the young people immortalised in the film.

With public activism at the forefront of **Colectivo LASTESIS's** work, their videos of groups of women protesting in choreographed formation went viral on social media. In their piece for the exhibition, 'el violador eres tú danceurgencia', 2020, the collective confronts the worldwide issue of rape, femicide, and domestic violence through a performance filmed at home during the lockdown. With violence against women exacerbated by the isolation of the pandemic, the work delivers shocking facts about rape cases in their native Chile while tapping into a global problem.

Expanding on this idea of unity through dance culture is the collaboration between **Gabber Modus Operandi & Rimbawan Gerilya** in their work, 'GMO Video Mixtape' 2020. 'GMO Video Mixtape' culminates in an eclectic vision of utopia: in a future of free energy and production through automated machine labour, they imagine conflict to have given way to joy, backed by a trance-inducing soundtrack

In 'Everybody in the Place - An Incomplete History of Britain 1984 - 1992', 2019, **Jeremy Deller** takes the classroom format and teaches a new generation about rave culture history and contemporary legacy of the 'Second Summer of Love' to illustrate the significant cultural movement.



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This tension of absence is authentically performed in **Natalia Papaeva's** video work, 'Yokhor', 2018. The piece documents Papaeva coming to terms with the loss of her native Buryat (Siberian) language. It is one of 2600 indigenous languages to disappear. In her performance, she repeatedly sings the only two sentences she can remember in a powerful display of mourning oral heritage.

The most prominent group prosecuted and made a public example of was **Spiral Tribe**, a free party sound system and art collective born from London's squat scene in 1990. This powerful collective movement of the masses triggered UK police crackdowns on rave culture with the infamous Criminal Justice Act of 1994 - giving police power to shut down events featuring music that's 'characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats'. Unable to peacefully deal with the dance floor's pushback, the fearful authorities turned to police brutality to suppress self-organising party-goers turned protestors.

**Participating Artists:**

Authentically Plastic\* & Keith Zenga King, Colectivo LASTESIS, Nick Coutsier, Jeremy Deller, EMIRHAKIN\*, Escape 010101 | Yannet Vilela & Jesper Frederiksen, Lucia Fernandez Santoro\*, Gabber Modus Operandi & Rimbawan Gerilya, KAMVA Collective\* | Chris Kets & Amílcar Patel, Adriana Knouf, Vera Logdanidi\*, Luiz Felipe Lucas\*, Yarema Malashchuk & Roman Himey, Clémence Mira\*, Ania Nowak\*, Nude Robot, Nyege Nyege, OTION\*, Natalia Papaeva\*, Julius Pristauz, Shanghai Community Radio, Anton Shebetko\*, Space of Urgency\* & Jan Beddegenoodts, Spiral Tribe | Mark Angelo Harrison\*, Maša Stanić, Paula Strunden, Olga Udovenko (Udda)\*, United We Stream, Bambi van Balen | TOOLS FOR ACTION, Liam Young, #FreeBritney, and others.

\*Artist-in-Residence of Q21/MQ

**Curator Bogomir Doring**

Encountering club culture and dancing as a form of protest and resilience during the NATO bombing of Doring's native Serbia, he discovered how socio-political instability and collective coping mechanisms of movement are linked, sparking ongoing Artistic Research and later a PhD at the University of Applied Arts Vienna providing dance culture knowledge since 2014. This long-running study has contributed to various international projects, festivals, and symposiums. It is a continuation of the online events that happened in lockdown times in cooperation with the department of 'Social Design - Arts as Urban Innovation' of the University of Applied Arts Vienna.

"No Dancing Allowed" is supported by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs.

Exhibition display: Michael Hofer-Lenz, student at the department for stage- and costume design, film- and exhibition architecture, Mozarteum University Salzburg



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**No Dancing Allowed**

22.06. – 20.11., Tue-Sun 13-19h, free admission

**Opening:** Tue 21.06., 19h

**Guided tour for the press:** Tue 21.06., 10h

**Location:** frei\_raum Q21 exhibition space/MuseumsQuartier Vienna  
[www.Q21.at](http://www.Q21.at)

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