

## PRESS INFORMATION

# A unique collaboration: the Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin and C/O Berlin present the photo exhibition *SVEN MARQUARDT . STAGELESS*

Berlin, 17 September 2020



Palast dancers Théa Barnwell and Ezzat Gamel | Photos: Sven Marquardt

From 2 October to 29 November, the Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin will present the photo exhibition *SVEN MARQUARDT . STAGELESS* in collaboration with C/O Berlin. Around 70 portraits of 26 dancers from the ballet ensemble, who have been deprived of their stage due to the coronavirus pandemic, will be displayed in the Palast's foyer in an exhibition curated by Felix Hoffmann, chief curator at C/O Berlin.

Sven Marquardt, the photographic chronicler of identities and curator of clubgoers on Berlin's techno scene, photographed members of the Palast's ballet ensemble just after a performance last October. Using his hallmark visual language, Marquardt has successfully captured the transition from dramatic, mask-like stage characters to the exhausted faces of the dancers after the show. The result is a series of vivid portraits depicting the performers' metamorphosis from dance professionals back to their true selves. Authentic and timeless, the photographs reveal a different facet of the dance ensemble, sharing a glimpse behind the glittering façade of the world's biggest theatre stage.

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General Director:  
Dr. Berndt Schmidt

Chairman of the Supervisory Board:  
Dr. Klaus Lederer  
Senator for Culture and Europe



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The Grand Shows normally enthrals around half a million guests every year. But on 11 March, the plug was pulled from the Palast's electrifying kaleidoscope of colour. The artists portrayed no longer have a stage, as all performances had to be cancelled until December due to the coronavirus pandemic and subsequent refurbishment of the theatre's ventilation system.

The collaboration between the Palast and C/O Berlin shows, however, that even a theatre that currently has no programme of its own due to the coronavirus crisis can invite visitors to an extraordinary guest performance – by transforming itself into an exhibition space to give a photographic glimpse behind the scenes. "Give" can be taken literally here: admission is free and the exhibition is open daily from 11 a.m. until 8 p.m.

"We have joined forces despite the different programmes offered at the Friedrichstadt-Palast Berlin and C/O Berlin, united in our desire to show our solidarity and to finally let Berlin shine again as a capital of culture," said Dr. Berndt Schmidt (General Director, Friedrichstadt-Palast) and Stephan Erfurt (CEO, C/O Berlin) in a joint statement. "We are united by the belief that in a crisis, no art is not an answer. Rather, new creative paths can be pursued instead."

Marquardt, who could not have foreseen the present situation at the time of taking the photographs, describes his thoughts on the impressive series of pictures as follows:

*"Remember the end at the beginning ...*

*After experiencing the VIVID Grand Show, I remained standing outside the Palast with my team for quite some time, gazing up at the theatre's huge illuminated sign. I pondered how the dancers would be feeling at that moment, pumped full of adrenaline yet exhausted and busy wiping away the final traces of their flawless make-up*

*A true metamorphosis!*

*Upon arriving home, I watched the wonderful Annie Lennox in her music video WHY what felt like a hundred times over. She is shown backstage, melancholically preparing for her grand entrance. With every stroke of the brush, she shines more and more as a diva.*

*Thus the idea for STAGELESS was born."*

The photo series was created in collaboration with Klaus Stockhausen, who is Fashion Director at ZEITmagazin, and curated by Felix Hoffmann from C/O Berlin. The exhibition comprises 70 portraits on large-scale screens and projections. A publication will also be released to accompany the exhibition.

Performances will resume at the Palast on 2 January 2021, as the Berlin Senate decided to bring forward necessary work to refurbish the theatre's ventilation system to counteract the coronavirus crisis.

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Images to download: [www.palast.berlin/stageless-presse](http://www.palast.berlin/stageless-presse)

Exhibition trailer: <https://vimeo.com/455766312>

Information about the exhibition: [www.stageless.berlin](http://www.stageless.berlin)

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