

POLYMER DMT

聚合舞

Kim

Dance theater by Fang Yun Lo
based on a novel
by Khuê Pham

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The dance theater piece 'Kim', based on the novel 'Wo auch immer ihr seid' ('Brothers and ghosts') by prize-winning Berlin-based journalist Khuê Pham, investigates the impact of the Vietnam War (also known as the 'American War' in Vietnam) and the resulting dispersion of the author's own family across continents.

'Kim' is the neutral German name that the protagonist of the book assigns herself in order to avoid having to field constant questions about the pronunciation of her Vietnamese name and her 'real' origins.

The book thus sheds light on Kim's feeling of being lost between cultures, on her speechlessness when it comes to the past, and on the relativity of concepts like good and evil.

With the book's story as the backdrop, German-Taiwanese choreographer Fang Yun Lo explores the long search for identity undertaken by young people from immigration families in her collaboration with Khuê Pham and five dancers, all with their own intercultural experiences.

In a mixture of dance, literature, and film, they ask questions that affect everybody: What has made me the person I am today? Who are our parents – who am I? And what effect do historical catastrophes and wars have on the lives of entire generations?

The dancers assume various roles from the book but, at the same time, also tell their own stories and those of their families – above all those of their parents. This paints a moving panorama – from the pre-war era in Vietnam in the 1950s and 1960s, through connections with East Germany, to the most recent experiences in Ukraine, where families of Vietnamese descent have found themselves having to flee once again.

“A sensitive, playful, condensed adaptation of Khuê Pham’s novel. A glimpse into a family shattered by the American War as we have never seen it before.”
– Dieu Hao Do, film director

“The dance theater piece ‘Kim’ achieves the monumental undertaking of transforming the topics that we view as ‘migration stories’ into a choreography that carefully leads the audience through unfolding layers of fiction and reality.” – Marque Pham, director

“The moment where the dancers push, shove, and jostle one another is disturbing. They are portraying the situation in Saigon in 1975. Back then, thousands of southern Vietnamese people gathered before the US embassy to board an evacuation plane.” – Grit Krause, MDR Kultur

“This production unfolds seamlessly on the stage, combining dance, video, and exceptional music into a harmonious and gripping artistic fusion.” – Ao Yunmin, theater studies scholar

“A fantastic, inspiring piece!” – Agnes Gunawan, graphic designer

“What a moving piece!” – Anna Till, choreographer, Tanznetz Dresden

VIDEO RECORDING

Vimeo link:

<https://vimeo.com/polymerdmt/kim?share=copy>



ON STAGE

Nam Tran Xuan is a dancer from Chemnitz specializing in hip-hop with house, breakdance, waacking, and popping influences. After numerous competitions, show performances, and workshops, he founded his own crew Chapter Raptor and, in 2021, the dance studio Room – Hip Hop Spot in Chemnitz. Since 2021, he has been dancing in contemporary dance pieces.

Lan Mi Lê is a Vietnamese-German hip-hop and break dancer, curator, and filmmaker from Leipzig. Since 2018, she has been an active part of the female dance crew Gems. She is a co-founder of the political dance festival “Somewhere In-between Jam,” which was launched in 2021, and has been studying film at the Academy of Media Arts Cologne since October 2023.

Khuê Pham was born in Berlin in 1982 and grew up in a Vietnamese family of five. She studied at Goldsmith College and at the LSE in London. She trained as a journalist at Henri Nannen Journalism School and has been a political editor at ZEIT since 2009, currently working for ZEITmagazin. Khuê Pham has received various prizes for her reporting, including the Helmut Schmidt Prize and a nomination for the 2020 Kisch Prize. In 2012, she published the book ‘Wir neuen Deutschen’ together with Alice Bota and Özlem Topçu. In 2021, she published her first novel ‘Wo auch immer ihr seid’ (‘Brothers and ghosts’) as a means of coming to terms with her family history in literature.

Ta Vu Kha Chanh was born in 2001 in Odessa, Ukraine, into a Vietnamese family of five. She has trained in various dance styles, in particular ballet, at the Odessa Opera Ballet Theater and, since 2018, at Ivan Franko National University in Lviv, Ukraine. She has toured numerous countries as a classical ballet dancer.

David Le Thai was born in Dresden, studied stage dance at Palucca University of Dance Dresden, worked as a dancer at the Ballet National de Marseille from 2010 to 2015, and has been a member of the Olivier Dubois company since 2015. In 2018, he founded his own musical collective, BIDA X Lethai, and now works as a freelance dancer and musician in Dresden.

Kati Masami Menze was born in Germany in 1998 and grew up in Tokyo, Japan. She studied dance at Folkwang University of the Arts in Essen and has since been working as a freelance dance practitioner. In 2019, she produced “LIMINALITIES” with the Láttraction collective at Vacant Harajuku Theater in Tokyo. She lives in Essen and also co-coordinates the work done by IG Dance Essen and the Spacelab Essen co-working space founded by Polymer DMT.





BACK STAGE

Betty Yi-Chun Chen, dramaturgy, born 1983 in Taipei, Taiwan, dramaturge and translator. She studied English literature and theater studies in Taipei and Bochum and has worked on international co-productions with the Taipei Arts Festival. She has been living in Munich since 2020, where she works as a dramaturge with festivals like Theater der Welt 2023 and Spielart. She also writes for various magazines and edited volumes.

Andrés Hilarión Madariaga, camera/film, born 1979 in Columbia. Filmmaker, cameraman, and anthropologist with experience in the fields of documentary film and filmmaking. As a cameraman, he has worked on dozens of short films, narrative films, a number of video installations, and institutional projects between Argentina, Columbia, and Germany.

Cheng Ting Chen, stage design, born 1985 in Taipei, Taiwan, theater designer and performer. After completing her dance training, she studied theater design at Taipei National University of the Arts and stage design at the TU Berlin. From 2007 to 2010, she worked as a theater designer and technical director for various theaters in Taipei. Her stage designs were nominated for the World Stage Design competition in 2009 and 2018. Since 2010, she has been living and working in Berlin.

Fang Yun Lo, directing/choreography, born 1982 in Taichung, Taiwan, dancer, choreographer, and director. After studying dance in Taipei and at Folkwang University in Essen, and after completing her first works in the field of contemporary dance theater, she has been increasingly working with documentary theater, urban dance, dance for young audiences, and discursive formats since 2015. In 2011, she founded the label Poylmer DMT. Fang Yun Lo has been living with her family in Dresden since 2018. Polymer DMT works internationally and is based in Essen and Taichung/Taiwan.

“Kim” is a production by Polymer DMT / Fang Yun Lo, co-produced with HELLERAU Dresden and the PACT Zollverein Essen.

PREMIERE: September 29, 2023

LENGTH: approx. 80 min.

LANGUAGE: Stage language: German; subtitles: English and Vietnamese; other languages possible (Panthea/Spectitular system)

ACCESSIBILITY: Live audio description (AD) and tactile guidance possible (not pre-recorded), accessibility for people with hearing impairment or deaf individuals through subtitles or optional sign language via Panthea tablets.

TEAM

Creation, dance: Kati Masami Menze, David Le Thai, Lan Mi Le, Ta Vu Kha Chanh, Nam Tran Xuan; Text: Khuê Pham (btb/Penguin Random House); directing: Fang Yun Lo; video: Andrés Hilarión Madariaga; video sound: Alicia Luz Rodríguez; dramaturgy: Betty Yi-Chun Chen; stage design: Cheng-Ting Chen; costume: Cristina Lelli; music: David Le Thai, Patrik Zosso; lighting design, technical direction: Max Rux; production management: Sabina Stücker

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All images: Stephan Floss

Polymer DMT / Fang Yun Lo, November 2023

