

“[...] And both our hands are filthy
Pointing up at the moon
And tonight I'll hold you close, close enough to bruise
Hope a garden grows where we dance this afternoon [...]”

Frank Ocean, “Wither”, in: *Endless*, release: 19.08.2016

**CANER
TEKER**

Luisa Rittershaus Ed.

„[...]

IHR SAGT IDENTITÄT / WIR SAGEN VIELFALT

IHR SAGT SCHAM / ICH SAGE TRANSFORMATION

IHR SAGT KRAFT / ICH SAGE WIDERSTAND

[...]“¹

caner tekers *SHAME MANIFESTO* (2021) – in seiner vollen Länge und im englischen Original auf Seite 13 in diesem Buch zu lesen – ist Augen öffnend. Die 45 kurzen monologisierenden Zeilen, die im Wechsel zwei sich konfrontierende Blickwinkel zu Wort kommen lassen, vereinen auf der einen Seite eine Vielzahl an Ansätzen, um die sich caner tekers künstlerische Praxis dreht, und zum anderen artikulieren sie den Spalt, der gesellschaftliche Gruppierungen voneinander trennt. Dabei wird deutlich, es geht um Präzision, darum, die richtigen Worte zu wählen. Es geht um Definitionen und die Frage danach, wer definiert was oder wen. Und sofort werden Machtstrukturen einer Dominanzgesellschaft² sichtbar, die zum einen am liebsten in Stagnation verharren würde und zum anderen für alles und jede:n immer eine Schublade braucht. *SHAME MANIFESTO* dreht sich um divergente Wahrnehmungen und darum, wie diese vorgegeben werden. Als Manifest tituliert und vorgetragen, werden die Zeilen zu einem schnellen rhythmischen Schlagabtausch, an dessen Ende erst einmal Stille steht ... und dann Erkenntnis. Auf den ersten Blick politisch, aktivistisch positioniert, gibt *SHAME MANIFESTO* beim erneuten Lesen caner tekers Persönlichkeit und die um diese kreisenden Sujets preis. Sich selbst als „survivor“, „supporter“ und „sex worker“ beschreibend, führen caner teker soziale, geschlechtliche und situative Divergenzen performativ zusammen und fokussieren intersektionale Verschränkungen von Identitäten, Ritual, Tradition, Arbeit und Postmigration vor dem Hintergrund der eigenen deutsch-türkischen Familiengeschichte.

caner tekers künstlerisches Werk ist fließend, kollaborativ und formiert sich aus einer Vielzahl an Medien,

“[...]

YOU SAY IDENTITY /
I SAY MULTITUDE
YOU SAY SHAME /
I SAY TRANSFORMATION
YOU SAY POWER /
I SAY RESISTANCE
[...]”¹

caner teker's *SHAME MANIFESTO* (2021) – here printed in the full original English version on page 13 – is eye-opening. The forty-five short lines of monologue, which alternate between two confronting points of view, unite a variety of approaches around which caner teker's artistic practice revolves and at the same time articulate the rift that separates social groupings. It becomes clear that it is about precision, about choosing the right words. It is about definitions and the question of who defines what or whom. And immediately, the power structures of a “society of dominance”² become visible, which, on the one hand, would prefer to remain in stagnation and, on the other hand, always needs a pigeonhole for everything and everyone. The *SHAME MANIFESTO* revolves around divergent perceptions and how these are predetermined. Titled and performed as a manifesto, the lines become a rapid rhythmic exchange of blows, at the end of which there is initially silence ... and then insight. At first glance, politically, activistically positioned, on re-reading, the *SHAME MANIFESTO* reveals caner teker's personality and the subjects revolving around it. Describing themselves as “survivor”, “supporter”, and “sex worker”, caner teker performatively bring together social, gender, and situational divergences and focus on intersectional entanglements of identities, ritual, tradition, work, and post-migration against the background of their own German-Turkish family history.

caner teker's artistic work is fluid, collaborative, and comprises

a variety of media that are interwoven as mutual extrapolations (performance, sound, texts, posters). From an initial focus on writing and publishing, they pose the question of forms of presentation of written works and generate the possibility of transforming these in terms of content into movement and choreography. In addition, the constant overproduction of images and their viral circulation seems to call for a focus on the ephemeral – on performance, in which proximity, vulnerability, immediacy, sensuality, and temporality culminate. It is perhaps the most direct artistic medium: “My work is very much rooted in my own body, being queer, brown, non-binary, a supporter and a survivor – terms that i found expressions for way later. [...] i was under the impression that i had to perform myself due to representational reasons in identity politics, since the subjects of my interest – the making-of the queer self, the body as experimental field, Turkish Halay dance, queer (sex)parties, – had to be presented through my own body [...]. Nowadays, i'm much more convinced that choreography is about shifting representation and movement research between other bodies.”³

caner teker draw on their own biography and critically explore, among other things, the perception of bodies and bodily interactions, the interpretation and reinterpretation of traditions, and the understandings of roles, as well as the (non-)possibilities of institutional participation and transparency.⁴ Their performances are embedded in constant rituals that first visually or atmospherically transform the space into a safer space and then focus on it. They are an elementary part of the event, marking, on the one hand, the transition into the performative act and, on the other hand, the intimacy and intensity of the moment. There is no stage, no clear boundary between audience and performance, but rather a co-presence of performer and recipient. In the movements, the most diverse elements – borrowed from club culture, Turkish dance, and the martial arts, as well as the BDSM

die als gegenseitige Weiterschreibungen miteinander verwoben sind (Performance, Sound, Texte, Poster). Aus einem ursprünglichen Schwerpunkt auf das Schreiben und Publizieren heraus stellen caner teker die Frage nach Präsentationsformen von Schriftwerken und generieren die Möglichkeit, diese inhaltlich in Bewegung und Choreografie zu transformieren. Darüber hinaus erscheint die fortwährende Überproduktion an Bildern und deren virale Zirkulation nach einer Fokussierung auf das Ephe-mere zu verlangen – nach Performance. In ihr kulminieren Nähe, Verletzlichkeit, Unmittelbarkeit, Sinnlichkeit und Zeitlichkeit. Sie ist vielleicht das direkteste künstlerische Medium: „Meine Arbeit ist sehr stark mit meinem eigenen Körper verbunden, queer, braun, nicht-binär, unterstützend und überlebend zu sein – Begriffe, für die ich erst viel später Ausdrücke gefunden habe. [...] Ich hatte den Eindruck, mich aus Gründen der Repräsentation innerhalb von Identitätspolitik selbst performen zu müssen, da die Themen meines Interesses – die Bildung des queeren Selbst, der Körper als Experimentierfeld, türkischer Halay-Tanz, queere (Sex-)Partys – durch meinen eigenen Körper präsentiert werden mussten [...]. Heute bin ich viel mehr davon überzeugt, dass es bei Choreografie darum geht, Repräsentation und Bewegungsforschung zwischen anderen Körpern zu verschieben.“³

caner teker setzen an der eigenen Biografie an und erforschen unter anderem kritisch die Wahrnehmung von Körpern und körperlichen Interaktionen, die Deutung und Umdeutung von Traditionen und Rollenverständnissen sowie die (Nicht-)Möglichkeiten der institutionellen Teilhabe und Transparenz.⁴ caner tekers Performances sind eingebettet in stetige Rituale, die zunächst visuell oder atmosphärisch den Raum in einen safer space transformieren und darüber hinaus fokussieren. Sie sind ein elementarer Teil des Geschehens, markieren sie zum einen den Übergang in den performativen Akt und zum anderen die Intimität und Intensität des Moments. Es gibt keine Bühne, keine klare Grenze zwischen Publikum und Performance, sondern eine Kopräsenz von Performenden und Rezipient:innen. In den Bewegungen verschmelzen die verschiedenen – der Klubkultur, dem türkischen Tanz oder





about clubs and darkrooms? Well, here's why. As products/subjects of the West, we're surrounded by a constant pathology of knowledge that has been formed in the Enlightenment. We're surrounded by the subsequent assumption that this is the only knowledge that exists in the world, and by the requirement that we as individuals as well as a society must accept and protect these knowledges at all costs.

But for queer, trans and/or BIPOC-identifying people, such knowledges erase, abuse and isolate us. They do not provide us the space we need in society to feel seen, to feel heard, to feel respected. They do not allow us to walk in the *light* with them. Club spaces have historically become a subversion against this. A place of *darkness* only in the physical sense, which provides us as the Others an opportunity to create our own *Enlightenments*. Clubs allow us to leave the spotlight of the gender binary, the histories of colonialism, the rhetoric of racism and other ongoing mechanisms of hegemony and control outside. Club spaces and their various subspaces allow for us to use physical *darkness* as a vehicle with which to embrace new forms of *light* – sexually, socially, racially, religiously, and socio-economically – through the sounds of music, the rhythm of dance, the heat of intimacy, the rush of performance, and the thrill of non-familiarity.

"I am a person with a reasonable amount of privilege. I was sent to a 'good' school. I studied at 'good' university. I tried to chase all the things that I was told by my parents would grant me security: employment, mortgage, love. But as a trans person of colour, as a queer person with a radical set of politics (well, considered radical to the powers that be at least), I have never felt secure. The way I view and am viewed by the world does not fit into the roles that the world expects from me. I try to fight against being a subject of it. I try to push myself out of the comforts of just accepting its knowledge as fact. Do you know how fucking exhausting that is? When I feel so fucking beat down by this world, that doesn't want people like me to THRIVE rather than survive, I put my best outfit into my bag and head to the club. I get changed in the toilets and I spend 12–24 hours in its darkness finding light. I watch how the same people who would police themselves out of fear in public, whose eyes would dart from carriage to carriage when they step on a train, strut into a room as the music pumps in the background – they/we own this goddamn space. This is OUR space. We are a library that reflects the multiplicity of experience. We are a sanctuary that protects the integrity of difference".*

- 1 I want to leave a space here for us to consider how you as the reader may perhaps approach this discussion of unpacking dark(ness) too. For instance, I would not be surprised to read pieces of work that explore the complex binaries of dark(ness) vis-à-vis lightness that can be presented in the arenas of racial discourse and identity politics. I won't sit here & type on this topic as if I am an authority – whilst I am very much a person of colour with my own lived experiences, my physical proximity to lightness in a racial sense is much higher than that of other Black and Brown siblings living in our world. In order to truly understand these implications of dark(ness) within the context of race(ism) and colourism, we must turn to the works of incredible writers and activists such as Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Nandita Das and Pax Jones.
- 2 Although ironically, it was created at the turn of the 20th century to do the exact opposite of this. Terrible figures of history like Enoch Powell have walked through the doors of SOAS throughout the 1900s, but eventually this narrative has been overshadowed and replaced with an (albeit naive) endeavour to decolonise academia internally.
- 3 Evolution, Ibn Khaldun & the Progressives, Cambridge Islamic Sciences Worldwide. <https://www.cambridgeislamicsciences.com/evolution-ibn-khaldun-the-progressives/>
- 4 The Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing <https://www.britannica.com/topic/The-Compendious-Book-on-Calculation-by-Completion-and-Balancing>
- 5 And more specifically, even if the very thinkers in this Western hemisphere have more often than not appropriated and redistributed the knowledges of non-Western thinkers as their own?

Text by

Tunay

GAY MAZE AND THE DARK FIRE

An Intimate night at a Berlin Sex Club

Each winter, Berlin's vibrant queer social scene morphs into isolated cocoons hosting mostly singles and lovers. As the winter nights get longer so do the city's nocturnal activities. In this piece I will take you with me to penetrate the dark and get acquainted with an infamous adult playground: the gay maze. Feel the warmth in the darkness, in the belly of the beast where *the dark fire* burns.

It is one of Berlin's long January nights, and I am preparing for a night on my own: I am heading to a sex club in my neighborhood. This will be my first time at this particular location. I start my day's diary with the following note: "I'm trying to break away from the horrors of online dating." It is not a surprise, especially after repeating another cycle of sending photos, receiving photos, sending more, and receiving more; I was simply overwhelmed with the rapid digitalization of dating people.

1) Getting into the maze: no phones, no clothes, no wallets

I park my bike, approach the entrance, and ring the bell. A person around my age opens the door with a smile and lets me in. I will later realize that with each ringing of the bell the naked guests inside curiously turn their heads to see who is about to walk in.

(A small detail that makes the waiting inside ever more curious.) After a deep breath, I walk in. I am new here, and the person who admitted me certainly knows it, but the rule is to act natural: to pass as a person who knows it all.

One thing I love about this place is their no-phone policy. This is, of course, not the case for many other darkrooms, but this place asks me to leave my phone at the counter. Without my phone, without others' phones: there will be no checking notifications and no exchanging numbers. From that moment on, we are already experiencing something new, something different from other interactions at random bars. Since nudity, anonymity, and comfort are the utmost priorities, the same rules apply to your wallet and your clothes.

After putting my belongings in a trash bag, I get marked with a number on my right shoulder: 74. This number will be my reference e when I order drinks and when I pay and leave. After walking in almost naked, I exchange some glances and continue walking to the bar to order a drink. Freed from their usual habit of checking and holding my phone, my hands want to hold, explore, do something! I reach out for the tobacco pouch on the counter and start rolling a cigarette.

"ALL TENDER TOUCHES AND RECIPROCAL SUPPORT"

**STANTON TAYLOR ON
"KIRKPINAR"
PERFORMANCE, LOOP 60 MIN
CONCEPT, PERFORMANCE, CHOREOGRAPHY CANER TEKER LIVESOUND LOU
DRACO PERFORMANCE AARON RATAJCZYK / LUISA FERNANDA ALFONSO /
EWA DZIARNOWSKA / RAONI MUZHO SALEH SOUNDDESIGN VALERIE ANNA
ZWOBODA STYLING BILLY LOBOS AND CANER TEKER CREATIVE PRODUCTION
SOFIE LUCKHARDT DRAMATURGY ANNA MUELTER, ISABEL CATZKE TEXT
STANTON TAYLOR A PRODUCTION BY CANER TEKER IN CO-PRODUCTION
WITH SOPHIENSAELE. SUPPORTED BY KUNST UND KULTURSTIFTUNG DER
STADTSPARKASSE DUESSELDORF & TANZHAUS NRW**