

For the exhibition "Suzanne Perrottet. After Dada, After Dance", Tarren Johnson and Joel Cocks have developed a new performance and a spatial installation. Both works emerged in close dialogue with the archive of Suzanne Perrottet. Their point of departure is a range of Perrottet's dance notations; through an intensive engagement with these materials, the artist duo—together with collaborators—developed a work that focuses on the peripheral moments of performance: what takes place before and after the stage event.

At the center of the work is the motif of falling in love as a form of temporal containment. Intimacy appears as the desire to inscribe time, to hold onto it, and at the same time to leave it open. In this way, the work addresses a key question of the exhibition: how can dance, movement, and other ephemeral practices be exhibited without fixing them? And how can archives remain porous, incomplete, and alive?

An important point of reference for both the performance and the installation is Suzanne Perrottet's Swan Lake notation, which is displayed in the exhibition's Dada Showcase. In 1945, Perrottet drew bodies in motion beneath the musical score of the famous ballet by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky from 1877. Swan Lake continues to be performed again and again to this day and—much as in Perrottet's time—continues to inspire audiences.

The story of the enchanted swan princess, who can only be redeemed through true love, interests Johnson & Cocks both for its narrative component and because of its political appropriations. In various countries, Swan Lake has repeatedly been broadcast on television as an aesthetic interlude during moments of political upheaval or shifts in power. This tension between aesthetics and politics, between art and real political realities, forms a central resonant space of the work. Against the backdrop of the artists' current lives between Paris and Los Angeles—cities in which political ruptures are highly visible—this dissonance becomes particularly palpable.

The performance is presented on December 18 in the Historic Hall on the occasion of the exhibition opening; its traces will remain visible in the vaulted cellar until January 17. It unfolds to a composition by John Schwerbel, which departs from the musical notes of Perrottet's Swan Lake notation and incorporates concrete sound elements such as the tambourine. At the same time, the music is to be understood as an introspective journey: an inner movement of finding oneself and expressing oneself—an aspiration that was also central to Suzanne Perrottet. An echo of this music, as a trace of movement and inner experience, can also be heard in the Vaulted Cellar.

The dance responds to these musical references and takes up Perrottet's interest in collected movements as recorded in her notations. Gestures of prayer, references to dances by Mary Wigman, or the notation "Verliebt" flow into the choreographic work. What is at stake is a renewed testing of information in the body, a

living with it—something scenographic that remains anchored in everyday life. Entirely in the spirit of Perrottet, this is not an abstract approach but a dancing with and in front of life: different moments and places, thought together. Accordingly, the large-scale mosaics in the background of the Historic Hall (visible only until shortly after the performance) are an integral part of the work.

These images function as personal documents and come from the analog photo archive of Johnson & Cocks, which has developed over more than a decade of collaborative work. The photographs have a familiar, almost domestic format, reminiscent of private archives. Through their enlargement into photo mosaics, these intimate images shift into atmospheric visual fields in which peripheral moments acquire an architectural presence.

Rather than documenting the performance itself, the photographs capture the situations that surround it: transit, preparation, waiting, and observation—the before and after of a performance. One image shows a bag from a Parisian fabric shop that Johnson & Cocks visited regularly while sourcing materials for their performances. The bag functions as a container that protects and carries materials, while at the same time pointing to what it once held. Even when empty, it preserves traces of use, labor, and intention, thus becoming a metaphor for archival material itself.

The second panoramic mosaic in the Historic Hall is conceived as a triptych. It connects three images across different geographies and temporalities: a view from a moving car along the Los Angeles River, a view from an apartment window, and a cinema or screening room. Together, they open up different spatial and emotional registers—movement, lingering, and mediation—and point to states of transition, attention, and spectatorship.

A similar approach characterizes the mosaic in the exhibition space, which places the image of the screening room in direct relation to Perrottet's archive. In her biography, Perrottet describes how she sat in the theater, observed, took notes, and translated movement into other forms of expression. The repeating vertical structures of the photographic paper allude to questions of final testimony, residue, and what remains once movement has passed. In close proximity to Perrottet's archive, the image reflects on how performance is perceived, preserved, and inevitably transformed through documentation. This approach resonates with Suzanne Perrottet's legacy, whose movement practice has been transmitted primarily through notations, fragments, and secondary traces—rather than through completed or fixed works.

Performance and installation: Tarren Johnson & Joel Cocks

Costume: Marcus Karkhof

Piano composition and performance: John Schwerbel

Sound engineering: Jacob Samuel Snider

Recorded at Midair Recording Studios

Works in the Historical Hall (visible only until shortly after the performance):

Tarren Johnson & Joel Cocks
Beauty (Shell Note Verliebt), 2025
Chromogenic prints on Fujicolor Crystal Archive paper, in 10 × 15 cm units
600 × 340 cm

Tarren Johnson & Joel Cocks
Panoramic (Shell Note Verliebt), 2025
Chromogenic prints on Fujicolor Crystal Archive paper, in 10 × 15 cm units
1200 × 320 cm

Works in the Vaulted Cellar (on view until January, 17):

Tarren Johnson & Joel Cocks
Viewing Room (Shell Note Verliebt), 2025
Chromogenic prints on Fujicolor Crystal Archive paper, in 10 × 15 cm units, audio
168 × 314 cm