

Lemon Press Collective

The Trace of the Snail

A contemporary circus piece celebrating the power of softness

(Creation 2022-2023)



**What happens if we let down our guard and
give room to our own vulnerability?**

About the piece

"The Trace of the Snail" is a poetic and immersive circus piece, centering around two questions. Do humans have a shell? And how does it feel when we let go of it?

In this first production of the Lemon Press Collective, the two circus artists Mika Schnapper and Aurélie Tercier combine juggling, hand balancing, movement and poetry to give the spotlight to vulnerability. Two harmonic bodies being one, listening and being permeable - until this openness threatens to be taken over by doubts, shame and the fear to have shared too much.

Softening the walls between each other - the message of the piece gets reinforced by an approach that cracks open the boundaries between classical fourth wall show and immersive exhibition. After 45 minutes, the audience finds itself on stage, which in the meantime has transformed into a museum. The exhibits are traces of past audiences, who immortalized in the form of letters and drawings their own experiences of softening their shell.

"Sometimes, when I feel like I am shattering into a million tiny pieces, I try to make myself as soft as possible.

Soft face, soft throat
soft stomach, soft chest.

I am in the eye of the storm.
And I think:
I could be like this forever."



The background

In this creation we explored "letting go of our shell". Too often we hide our weaknesses and fears, but also our kindness, behind a facade, because we want to seem strong. We erect a shell around ourselves that stops others from looking in, but at the same time it prevents us from reaching out.

The show zooms in on the moment of softening this protective case. During the research process we found out that this is a very tangible, relatable and powerful moment. It enables us to let go, show vulnerability or ask for help - in short, it enables us to connect to other people. A moment that can be both beautiful and uncomfortable - in which we find softness, care, fragility and honesty.

The idea for this research emanated from a personal urge to embrace our own softness and vulnerability, but we strongly believe that it is not only a private matter.

For us, embracing being soft, giving in and being small on stage is a relevant political action. Care and solidarity, two values that emerge from connecting with others around you, are not the qualities that bring you further in the race for money and status, but they are the glue that holds humanity together.

"The Trace of the Snail" aims to reinforce a positive connection to softness with each other and one's self in the audience. Especially the exhibition part of the piece was created for this reason: witnessing what other audience members thought about "letting go of their shell" is very touching. It is important for us to enable this form of voluntary indirect or direct exchange between all the people in the room - past or present.



About us

The Lemon Press Collective consists of Aurélie Tercier and Mika Schnapper, a hand balancer and a ball juggler who graduated from Codarts Circus Arts in Rotterdam in 2022.

Aurélie (she) grew up in Switzerland. After studying biology, where she found a great interest for the small and the detailed, she decided to give more room to her physical expression and become a circus performer. During her studies in Codarts she discovered her interest for including objects, which she uses as tools to explore different vocabularies in the handstand discipline.



Mika (he/she) spend her teenage years between the youth circus and political activism in Germany. Practicing art in any form was always an interest of his, especially as a tool to share his visions and ideas about the world. When Mika found the circus, she got immediately hooked by the sense of community. With her circus studies in Codarts and becoming a professional performer she now uses circus to combine her love for movement and juggling with her love for art and activism.

By collaborating regularly during our studies, we discovered that we share a similar physical language, love for shapes and nonchalance and a wish for talking about political issues on stage from a personal perspective. Also, Aurélie likes to use objects in her hand balancing and Mika often includes handstands in his object manipulation – a perfect fit, you could say.

The full team

Artists: Mika Schnapper and Aurélie Tercier

Dramaturgical outside eye: Leon Rogissart

Outside eyes for dance and movement: Clémentine Télesfort, Lisard Tranis, Julia Färber

Sound design: Mawu’Nyo

Light design and technician on tour: Lina Brockob

Mentors: Farina Berndt and Yolande Sommer



Technical information

Length: 1h (45min performance + 15min immersive exhibition on stage)

Location: Indoor venues (theatre, tent) with professional theatre lighting

Audience setting: Frontal or semi-circular (**Audience invited on stage during the show!**)

Audience capacity: 40-200 people

Target group: Teenagers and adults, school classes (13+)

Language: English, German, Dutch or French

Stage: 9x6m, 6m high

Touring crew: 2 artists + 1 technician

Download technical rider [here](#)

Watch trailer [here](#)



Some shared thoughts from the audience



"I fucking love feeling soft and when I feel like I can be open and truly SEE other people. I am more forgiving, more relaxed and more sensitive, with myself and with others. When I am stressed and don't like myself is when I become hard and want to hide."

"Sometimes I feel like the smallest piece of a Russian doll. The bigger pieces only look like me, so similar, they are my cage. I don't even know if I should ask people to open it up piece by piece until they arrive at the smallest..."

"I always try to avoid letting go of my shell. I don't like that feeling at all"

"What is difficult? To carry the shell or not to carry the shell?
What is easy? To open up or not to open up?
I take a look outside, not because it is easy, but because it is hard. Are you also looking?"





Contact

Email: lemonpress@posteo.net

Instagram: [@lemon_press_collective](https://www.instagram.com/@lemon_press_collective)

Website: www.lemonpresscollective.com



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