



**PORTFOLIO**  
TIIA KASURINEN

ARTIST / CHOREOGRAPHER

"My work indulges in the themes of identity, gender, power and pop culture. The performances I create have a strong and recognisable visual aesthetic; arising from the tools of theatre make-up and visual transformation combined with somatic bodily practices."

**cover photo:** Nicolas Wujek





**ONSTAGE -  
THE CONCERT**



# ONSTAGE - THE CONCERT (2023)

## live performance

**concept, choreography, direction:** Tiia Kasurinen

**performance:** Tiia Kasurinen, Lydia Ofi Teresia, Amanda 007, Olli Lautiola

**sound design:** Olli Lautiola & Tiia Kasurinen

**lighting design:** Mikko Kaukonen

**costume design:** Annukka Havukumpu, the red outfit in collaboration with Landys Roimola

**stage design:** Landys Roimola & Mikko Kaukonen

**videos:** Tiia Kasurinen, Mikko Kaukonen, Gabriel Boicel

**mentoring/artistic dialogue:** Minna Lund

**supporters and collaborators:** Zodiac - Center for New Dance, Helsinki Festival, Dance House Helsinki, Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation, Arts Promotion Centre Finland, The Finnish Cultural Foundation, Kone Foundation / The Saari Residence

**residencies:** The Saari Residence / Kone Foundation, Vantaa Dance Institute, Zodiac

**production:** Tiia Kasurinen, Zodiac - Center for New Dance, Helsinki Festival

**pr photos:** Saara Taussi

**teaser videos:** Eva-Liisa Orupõld

What emerges when contemporary choreography and visual transformation meet the practices of making and performing music?

**ONSTAGE - The Concert** explores alter ego bodies and stage presences in the context of live music.

The work is based on the electronic pop-band formed by the choreographer Tiia Kasurinen and the sound designer Olli Lautiola - and an EP-record of the band, which Kasurinen and Lautiola composed and wrote during 2021-2023. The protagonist of the performance is an alter ego - body practiced by Kasurinen. The stage will be also joined by a voguing performance art duo Amanda & Lydia (Lydia Ofi Teresia and Amanda 007).

The performance is an album release party, a dance piece, a musical try-out and a choreographic alter ego-exploration. What does the combination of a gig and a choreographic work evoke - in the performers and in the audience?

The performance is interested in spontaneous and pre-planned choreographies of the concert context. The work observes the themes of gaze and charisma, and is influenced by artists such as Nadia Tehran, Grimes, Madonna, Lizzo, Arca100000, Ariana Grande, Whitney Houston, Donna Missal and fka Twigs.





ONSTAGE - The Concert (2023). **Photo:** Saara Taussi

"Kasurinen is a collection of different gestures, movements and attitudes. But where such an expression usually leads to plasticity and soullessness, the opposite happens in the work.

Ah - enjoyment, laughing at one's own pleasure and becoming sensitive to its strangeness supports the performance until the last sparkle reflected from the artificial nail. "

**Maria Säkö, HS**

<https://www.hs.fi/kulttuuri/art-2000009807058.html>



# SURFACE





# **SURFACE (2022)**

**live performance, solo**

**concept, choreography and performance:** Tiia Kasurinen

**lighting design:** Sofia Linde

**sound design:** Olli Lautiola

**costume design:** Annukka Havukumpu

**set design:** Landys Roimola

**set design/assistance:** Essi Mikkola

**dramaturgical Assistance:** Tuuli Vahtola, Martta Jylhä

**supported by:** Arts Promotion Centre Finland

**residencies:** Tero Saarinen Company / TSC Residency, Vantaa Dance Institute

**production:** Minimi, Tiia Kasurinen

**photos:** Saara Taussi

**duration:** 58 minutes

**target audience:** Adults/young adults/generation Z

*“SURFACE is inspired by mermaids, plastic surgeries, the ocean, in-betweenness, the internet, heartbreak and a happily ever after. In this 2022 version of a widely known mermaid story, ‘Ariella’ dreams of a new life above the surface – including a dangerous operation.”*

**SURFACE**, premiered in November 2022, is a dance performance inspired by mermaids, the internet, femininity, in-betweenness and the ocean as a thematic landscape. The work uses dance and visual transformation in order to observe different themes, such as gaze and agency.

The performance is loosely influenced by known stories describing mermaids (H.C. Andersen – The Little Mermaid and Disney’s The Little Mermaid) and looks through contemporary choreography into the themes of gaze, gender, power and identity. What do known – old and new – mermaid stories propose about agency? What kind of dance and movement does the anatomy suggest? How do known stories and tales shape our assumptions about gendered roles? How do mermaid tales and post-Internet-reality meet on stage?

The performance is targeted for adult and young adult audiences. The performance is a solo performed by Kasurinen. SURFACE seeks to embody a grasp of the present moment together with the old stories we grew up with. It’s a part of a series of works investigating visual and bodily transformations through make-up by Kasurinen.

*“A work more complex than its shiny surface”*





SURFACE (2022). **Photo:** Saara Taussi



# LIVE STREAM





# LIVE STREAM (2021)

video installation/short film, in collaboration with Johanna Naukkarinen kanssa

**concept:** Tiia Kasurinen in collaboration with Johanna Naukkarinen

**performance:** Tiia Kasurinen

**cinematography:** Johanna Naukkarinen

**editing:** Tiia Kasurinen

**sound design/composition:** Johannes Brotherus

**text:** Emma Chamberlain: QUESTION EVERYTHING...  
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qG-iM8V8pew>)

**voiceover:** Tiia Kasurinen

**color grading:** Mika Onnela / Post Control

**supported by:** Kone Foundation/Saari residence, Arts Promotion Centre Finland

**production:** Tiia Kasurinen

**video duration:** 17 min

**photos:** Johanna Naukkarinen



**Live Stream** is a video work that was shot at Saari Residence in spring 2019 with visual artist Johanna Naukkarinen. Through video and the character it presents us, Live Stream explores peep, reality and YouTube cultures and the concept of loneliness. In the 17 minute long video the bodility, inspired by the Saari Manor and its surroundings, dances and gets bored in the empty Manor isolated from the outside world – all while the gazes of strangers focus on the character through cameras.

The work premiered at New Performance Turku Biennale in September 2021, and it has then been presented at Reykjavik Art Festival in Iceland and Gátt Festival in Copenhagen.





*- I'm not entirely here (cybersad)*

**I'M NOT  
ENTIRELY  
HERE  
(CYBERSAD)**



# I'M NOT ENTIRELY HERE (CYBERSAD) 2020

**sooloteos**

**concept, choreography, performance, video:** Tiia Kasurinen

**lighting design:** Sofia Linde

**sound design:** Olli Lautiola

**costume design:** Annukka Havukumpu

**supported by:** Arts Promotion Centre Finland

**residency support:** Kekäläinen & Company, KEIDAS -residence, Vantaa Dance Institute

**production:** Zodiak - Uuden Tanssin Keskus, Tiia Kasurinen

**pictures:** Saara Taussi

**teaser videos:** Eva-Liisa Orupöld

**I'm not entirely here (cybersad)** is a dance performance inspired by the themes of identity, gender, the Internet and sadness. The performance, premiering on the Zodiak Stage in September, deconstructs Internet phenomena, trends and cyber-expression using methods of performing art.


What are Internet identities and how they are interpreted? How are they experienced in the world outside the Internet? How are gender and sexuality expressed in social media? How does the cyber-body move?

The performance uses make-up, movement and costumes to introduce a character whose appearance is inspired by the algorithms of the choreographer's social media feed. Pieced together of virtual world performances and inspired by YouTube tutorials, Kardashian reality stars, drag aesthetics, Instagram and memes, the character takes to the stage in order to explore the meeting between virtual and everyday spaces and identities. How does the character connect with its audience?

I'm not entirely here (cybersad) seeks to embody a grasp of the present moment and the post-social media era through dance and performance. The aesthetics and the movement material of the performance as well as the emotions of the character can be studied in more detail through online choreography materials on social media (Instagram: @notenterilyhere).

I'm not entirely here (cybersad) had its premiere and 8 sold out performances in Zodiak Stage, Helsinki during September-October 2020.





“ The dance piece, which was inspired by the culture of posing on social media and the modification of identity, was hypnotic to watch from the very beginning. ”

Irmeli Haapanen, TS

<https://www.ts.fi/kulttuuri/5453744>





**THE LIFE  
OF  
HARMONY**



# THE LIFE OF HARMONY 2018-

**solo**

**concept, choreography and performance:** Tiia Kasurinen

**light design:** Sofia Linde

**sound design:** Olli Lautiola

**artistic advice:** Tamara Alegre

**photo:** Milkdrop Studio

**The Life of Harmony** is a solo work inspired by female-looking objects and robots, indulging in the themes of post-humanism, femininity, objects and objectification. The slow-phased and minimalistic performance invites its spectator into a meditative yet uncomfortable stage, where they have the opportunity to investigate their usage of gaze.

With the help of theatre makeup and physical practices, the performer becomes a doll-like character to practice embodiment of three different female-gendered objects. The restricted anatomy of the figure defines the dramaturgy of the performance from start until finish, leaving plenty of room for the audience to look, feel, objectify and have an inner dialogue.

The performance has a loaded atmosphere with a lot of expectations, but it leaves you melancholic: it doesn't know how to offer a relief.

The Life of Harmony premiered at Weld-theatre, Stockholm June 2018. The work had a 4-hour durational version in New Performance Turku -festival in 2019.





The Life of Harmony: extended, New Performance Turku (2019).  
**Kuva:** Jussi Virkkumaa





**VULCANO**



# VULCANO 2017

**a solo performance and the presentational part of a degree project**

DOCH, University of Dance and Circus

BA of Fine Arts in Dance Performance

**choreography and performance:** Tiia Kasurinen

**light design:** Sofia Linde

**costume design:** Lucy Martin

**artistic advice:** Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris, Halla Olafsdottir

**production:** DOCH, Tiia Kasurinen

**photos:** Anni Riitaho (previous page), Nicolas Wujek (next page)

**Vulcano** is a dance solo and a presentational part of a degree project "Dragging The Drag" at DOCH, BA of Fine Arts in Dance Performance, presented in January 2017. Vulcano is made in a collaboration with the light designer Sofia Linde, costume designer Lucy Martin, choreographer Halla Ólafsdóttir (mentoring) and artist Bronwyn Bailey-Charteris (mentoring).

Through movement, performing and transformation, Vulcano works with the themes of gender, identity, space-claiming and vulnerability. The work is born from the possibilities of the internet; it feeds its purpose from feminism and Judith Butler's performative gender theory. It introduces the gender-fluid drag queen Vulva T, who asks: if there's no biological gender, what is drag and where can you take it?

Vulcano is a tool and a moment to deal with shame: with the character as a shield, the performer finally dares.





"This degree project (**Dragging the Drag**) poses the urgent question whether a drag identity can be queered or dragged further. As such it asks questions around identity construction and authenticity of gender. The practical presentation (**Vulcano**) was an emotionally strong performance which skilfully balanced between the different gender identities of Vulva T, Tiia and perhaps others."

**Pavle Heider, Tove Salmgren and Josefine Wikström** (Grading Statements, Examination works, DOCH)





# DRAGGING THE DRAG



# DRAGGING THE DRAG / VULVA T 2016-

## artistic practice

Tiia Kasurinen

**photos:** Akseli Kaukoranta, edit Pia Örn  
(previous page), Jukka Moisio

15.11.2016

I wanted to become a drag queen, so I did. Now I'm asking, what happened and what happens now.

This project feels reversed: the character emerged earlier this year and at that time I didn't know why. I just really wanted to do it. It was "intuition". It felt urgent and important. Now I'm trying to analyse. Where did the desire to try drag arise, when did the character emerge, why did I feel like I found something fundamental? Why am I dragging my own gender? Why does the character make me question gender? How did I make the decisions about the character's looks and personality? And finally: what can Vulva T do?

- quote from essay part of the degree project "Dragging The Drag", 2017, DOCH University of Dance and Circus.

**Dragging the Drag** is an artistic practice, a BA thesis, a workshop format and series of performances by Tiia Kasurinen. In the work, Kasurinen practices the drag queen tradition as a biological female in order to investigate gender and its cultural construction. Dragging the Drag has given birth to a gender fluid drag queen **Vulva T**, who mixes both traditionally feminine and masculine characteristics in aesthetics and movement qualities.

The work is inspired from Judith Butler's performative gender theory. The practice wants to gender-reinforce, empower it's performer and her audience, and shake up gender stereotypes.

Dragging The Drag believes that drag as an art form can continue to expand; questioning the binaries of gender, movement and performance.





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