

D.A.V.E.

digital amplified video engine

Transplantation technique, prosthetic surgery, microphysical stimulation of the human body—these technologies are no longer being sent to other planets; rather, they're launching the invasion of man himself, who has really nothing left to protect him, neither ethics nor biopolitical morality.

Paul Virilio, The Conquest of the Body, Hanser Verlag 1994

The performance *D.A.V.E.* deals with the potential future removal of limitations upon the body. This is personified by a performer whose body is simultaneously the stage and the mediator of a utopia, and proclaims that, thanks to futuristic technologies and implantation, mankind will be in a position to eliminate the restrictions upon the natural body. A wide variety of experiences will become possible: a man will be able to find out what it's like to be a woman, and vice versa. And there won't be any reason why people pursuing the realization of their individually dreamed fantasies won't be able to be man and woman simultaneously. It will no longer be just the aging process that will be putting the body through changes; the undreamed-of intervention possibilities make the body itself into an "object of sensation."

D.A.V.E. switches effortlessly between young and old, male and female; he distorts his body, his limbs. His anus recites biblical passages both profound and ironic with the voice of a child; the body dissolves into streaming worlds of digital images. *D.A.V.E.* deals with the manipulation and reformulation of the human body by means of biotech, genetic engineering and computer technology.

D.A.V.E. plays with real and virtual situations and the dissolution of the boundary between these two states, morphs between nightmare, redemption and transformation, culminating in the suspension of physicality.

The concept of the performance is based on using equal measures of the video, music and dance media via computer interface. The aim was to create a staged reality that can hold its own both with respect to content and technology, without it being necessary for the public to know all the details about the technical tricks and tools being used.

What's novel about this approach is the concentration of the projections on the body in motion while avoiding conventional spatial and screen projections. You don't think about the video anymore; it just belongs to the body. It's a part of the body, or rather the performer is part of the video. The boundaries grow indistinct and are deactivated. Complex computer processing and the development of special sequences of movements that the dancer can follow make it possible to exactly position the projections on the moving body or on body parts.

Video projection, physical presence and acoustic environment thus blend into a symbiosis and create their own new reality: *D.A.V.E.—digital amplified video engine.*

For who knoweth what is good for a man in his life, all the days of his vain life which he spendeth as a shadow?

(The Book of Ecclesiastes, Old Testament)

D.A.V.E. is based on an idea by the media artist and composer Klaus Obermaier, and was developed in collaboration with the choreographer and dancer Chris Haring.

