

SOYA THE COW IN MANY FORMS AND STATES

A CHARACTER FOR A PLURALITY
OF ARTISTIC FORMS & AUDIENCES



A PROPOSAL BY
DANIEL HELLMANN

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SOYA THE COW

The character

A sex-positive, feminist and vegan drag creature, breaking the binaries of gender and species. Soya the cow dances, sings and speaks for the liberation of everybody.

Soya was born to inspire and challenge the status quo. She fights for animals and for all those whose voices are not heard. She has the will and determination to stir things up and scare those who want to cling to the toxic and violent systems of the past. Soya stands for love, freedom and climate justice for all living beings on this planet.

This new multifaceted body of work by Daniel Hellmann is a comprehensive examination of veganism, speciesism and feminism. In doing so, he walks the line between art and activism, utopia and parody.

THE GENESIS

«The great civil rights movements and revolutions have all had their soundtracks, and I want to be a voice for animals and for the environment. We are in the midst of an unprecedented environmental emergency and we need to change our mindsets and lifestyles to preserve life on this planet. I hope my album and music videos will make people dance, laugh and cry, think and act.»

The idea for Soya the Cow was born during a six-month residency of Daniel Hellmann in San Francisco (2017-2018). A year before he had decided to become vegan during his research for the play Requiem for a piece of meat.

«What seemed innocent, like a glass of milk or a traditional family meal, was suddenly exposed as a cruel practice I no longer wanted to participate in. The people I loved (and still love today) were suddenly no longer part of my community of values, in my eyes they had become people responsible for unspeakable and unnecessary suffering, whether through convenience or ignorance.»

«At the beginning, I felt a brutal disconnection. A cocktail of emotions including disappointment, anger, frustration, fear, sadness and despair accompanied me for some time. The quarrels around the performances of Requiem for a piece of meat, which were cancelled/censored by the Theater Chur, encouraged me to detach myself internally from the dance and theatre scene. I did not want to be part of a cultural community that celebrates the expression of bodies, that discursively and artistically campaigns for diversity and the rights of so many minorities or oppressed people, but serves to eat the dismembered body parts of others. I didn't feel free because I knew that no one wanted to see didactic or moralistic art on these subjects, but at the same time, most people already perceive the simple reproduction of facts around this topic as moralistic. At the end of the day, we all know that the animal industries are one of the greatest crimes committed by the human species. In the 21st century, there are simply no more excuses or justifications for it.»

In San Francisco, Daniel Hellmann met with an animal rights organisation that aligned the fight for animal rights in the tradition of other emancipatory movements for freedom (abolition of slavery, women's rights, civil rights movements, LGBTQ*) and published a detailed report proclaiming that the US would be vegan within 40 years. Hellmann was deeply moved that people would dare to articulate this vision and place it in people's heads. Suddenly, it was no longer a question if others would go vegan, but only when. Inspired by these animal rights activists and San Francisco's highly political drag queens and kings, Soya the Cow formed as a hybrid being, a creature of fantasy, beyond clearly definable species and gender:

«I chose a cow because these strong, gentle beings are a symbol of man's dominance over animals. They have been used for ploughing, milk and meat production for thousands of years. Drag art deals playfully with femininity and masculinity. As a drag queen/cow, Soya points out that the exploitation of cows is based on the exploitation of motherhood and female reproductive systems. Soya is a feminist cow and stands in solidarity with women around the world who are committed to equality and self-determination over their bodies and sexualities. Soya's udders hang between her legs and are far too small to truly match the performance standards of 21st century dairy cows, but they are big enough to cause questions and irritation.»



DEAR HUMAN ANIMALS

The play

Soya the Cow – Dear Human Animals is a solo performance by Daniel Hellmann about the utopia of a new relationship between humans and other animals.

How do we bear something that is unbearable? How do we change something that we cannot change all by ourselves? And how do we become something that we are not?

Soya the Cow attempts the impossible. As a species-fluid, vegan drag cow she stands for love, freedom and climate justice for all living beings. With strong arguments and moving songs she challenges the self-image of humankind as the centre of the universe, to which all non-human beings are subordinated. Deeply rooted in the fundamental discomfort of a single individual, Soya transcends human limitations. She is pop star and healer, activist and clown, present and future.

Daniel Hellmann's new solo performance is carried by the power and ridiculousness of his cow-shaped desire to change the world. *Dear Human Animals* uses the theatre space to create an experience that is both thought-provoking and transformative.

Artistic direction, concept, performance | **Daniel Hellmann**

Dramaturgy | **Daniela Lehmann**

Musical creation | **Philipp Constantin**

Video creation | **Nora Smith**

Mask construction and make-up | **Nadja Jeberien**

Costumes | **N.N., Ran Chai Bar-Zvi**

Scenography, light design | **Theres Indermaur**

Outside Eye | **Anne Welenc & Marion Zurbach**

Production | **Patricia Bianchi**

Assistant | **Quentin Barthassat**

A production by Daniel Hellmann/Cie. 3art3

In coproduction with Gessnerallee Zürich & Schlachthaus Theater Bern

TEASERS

<https://youtu.be/NAcJ1spy7o0>

https://youtu.be/aCSWaZz_Wpo





THE CONCERTS

Soya in music

Soya the cow offers several concert formats.

PIANO & VOICE

Intimate and direct, mixing moving piano ballads with funny stories from Soya's activist life, this concert has a very flexible format and can reach people of all generations. It showcases Daniel Hellmann's skills as a singer-songwriter, as well as his sense of humour and authentic stage presence. It can be performed indoors or outdoors, with only a sound system and a piano.

Duration: 15 to 60 minutes (number of songs flexible)

Video example: Three little words (opening of the VEE exhibition, 2020)

ELECTRO-POP

Soya the cow will also perform the electro-pop songs from her first album «Purple Grass». A clever mix of powerful anthems, moving ballads and angry hip-hop songs. The pain and sadness of some songs are contrasted by a light-hearted sense of humour and irony in others.

Duration: 15 to 60 minutes (number of songs flexible)

Video example: Purple Grass (Clima Now, 2021)

CONCERT WITH VIDEO PROJECTION

Both versions (voice and piano, electro-pop or a combination of both) can be performed with visual projections, creating a more spectacular immersive experience and a deep dive into Soya's aesthetic universe. This option is ideal for gala performances or nightclubs.

Durée : 15 to 30 minutes (the duration of this proposal may be increased when new visuals are created)

Video example : Unbreed Me (Melt Festival, 2019)



ONLINE

The website, the album & the music videos

Soya the cow and her musical projects have a strong online presence on various platforms.

THE WEBSITE

The website is the central resource for Soya the cow's presence. It includes a presentation of Soya the cow and the reasons surrounding her creation, links to her album and clips, a photo gallery, performance dates, press review and contacts.
<https://soyathecow.com/>

THE ALBUM

Soya the cow's first album, Purple Grass, mixes several musical styles (electro, pop, ballads, hip hop, etc.) to communicate Soya's utopian and militant eco-feminist message.

[Purple Grass on Spotify](#)

[Purple Grass on Bandcamp](#)

THE MUSIC VIDEOS

Directed by experienced visual artists, each of Soya the cow's music videos creates an immersive and compelling universe and is an artistic object in itself. The music videos are available on Youtube.

[Soya the cow's YouTube channel](#)





PLANET MOO

The exhibition

Planet Moo is the first exhibition of Soya the cow. It presents a series of fashion photographs featuring clothing made from lettuce, radishes, grapes and other edible fruits and vegetables. This series was produced with photographer Tomas Eyzaguirre and costume designer Raki Fernandez and playfully questions the relationship between humans and non-humans, food and fashion, those who eat and those who are eaten. The confrontation between edible materials and the body of the cow-human hybrid creates hypnotically beautiful textures and political fashion statements about a throw-away consumerist society where our identities are constituted not only by what we wear but also by what we eat.

The exhibition will be complemented by floating manequins wearing Soya's masks and costumes, as well as archival photographs from Soya's eclectic artistic portfolio - from a mud bath with rescued pigs in an animal sanctuary to documentation photographs of a protest outside the German Ministry of Food and Agriculture.

The exhibition will premiere at the Goethe Institute in Seattle in May 2022, and will be followed by a tour to Houston, Kansas City and other cities - accompanied at each location by theatrical performances, concerts, panel discussions or workshops.

THE COLLABORATORS

Tomás Eyzaguirre is a Chilean artist based in Berlin. He started working with photography and moving images in 2012, mainly in collaborative projects for fashion and music. Over the years, his work has expanded into the disciplines of installations, performance and music. He has been published in print media such as AB international, Solar, Maps, Dmag, Harpes Bazaar, Issue; and in digital media such as Vogue Italia, Noisy, Dazed and Confused, Fucking Young, Kaltblut, and Infringe. He has participated in exhibitions at the Mahalla Cultural Centre, KuLe and 8 Rooms Gallery, and has performed at HOR, The Ballery and Ernesto Artillo's artist residency in Spain. In 2020 he developed the ongoing project «Queer Calendar of Berlin», the proceeds of which are donated to a local queer rights organisation. versées à une organisation locale de défense des droits des homosexuels.

He is currently featured in Die Hasen Stunde, a 30-page newspaper-format artist's book dedicated to his work, and is finishing the first album of his second music project «Auno».

More info at: <https://tomeyzaguirre.com/>

Raki Fernandez is a stylist, fashion and costume designer from Barcelona who has been living in Berlin since 2006. Her professional experience ranges from editorial and commercial styling to costumes for music videos, theatre and film. She draws on all these influences to create her fashion brand and one-off collections.

More info at: <http://rakibcn.com/>

Concept | **Daniel Hellmann**

Model | **Soya The Cow**

Art Director & Photographer | **Tomas Eyzaguirre**

Stylist | **Raki Fernandez**

Assistant Stylist | **Liina Nilsson & Jon Marmol**

Make-up | **Gianluca Venerdini**

Mask | **Nadja Jeberien**

Hooves | **Chaos Costumes**

Photo assistant | **Diego Nawrath**

Photo editing | **Andreas Sichel**

Video | **Fiona Castineira**





WORKSHOPS

Mediation & guided tours

In addition to her stage performances, Soya the Cow also offers workshops, guided tours and mediation programs to raise awareness for animal rights and climate action.

These programs aim to deepen the reflections on human-animal-relationships and their impact on the planet and our health through interactive programs and encounters around the realities that are at the origin of Soya's creation. These events, often organised as a parallel program to the performances, can also be set up by themselves and are intended to allow a different approach to the themes addressed. They should be developed specifically according to the organiser's territory.

EXAMPLES OF WORKSHOPS AND EXCURSIONS THAT HAVE ALREADY TAKEN PLACE

Excursion: vigil in front of a slaughterhouse

The Save Movement, a global animal rights organisation, started in Toronto in 2010 and has grown to 200 local groups. Activists stand outside slaughterhouses, animal markets or auctions and hold vigils. If animal transporters have to wait outside the gate or at a nearby traffic light, they take the opportunity to make contact, give the animals water and document what they have seen. Drivers and other members of the animal processing industry are treated with respect. It is about helping animals in the last hours or minutes of their lives while bearing witness to the fact that sentient beings are sent to their deaths in the midst of our society. In collaboration with a regional Save Movement chapter, Soya the Cow will participate in the early morning vigil with interested audiences.

Workshop: non-violent civil disobedience

Together with Extinction Rebellion activists, Soya the Cow is offering a two-hour workshop on using non-violent civil disobedience as a strategy to fight for climate justice. The workshop will focus on practicing nonviolent techniques: participants will learn how to de-escalate tense situations, how to interact with police, what to do when arrested, and much more. Extinction Rebellion is an international movement that uses non-violent civil disobedience to bring about radical change and minimise the risk of human extinction and ecological collapse.

Children's workshop: How do you imagine the ideal relationship between humans and animals?

In a two and a half hour workshop, Soya the Cow will work with a group of school children to develop a fictional scenario in which the children can think about how we, as humans, should ideally deal with other animals. The random division between farm animals, pets and wild animals is questioned in a playful way. At the end of the workshop, the model developed by the children will be compared with the current reality.

Guided tour: a field trip to a sanctuary for animals rescued from the slaughterhouse

The participants follow Soya on a visit to an animal sanctuary near the theatre. They get to know animals that have been rescued from abusive farms and slaughterhouses and now can live happily without being exploited or killed by humans. They will hear the stories of the different residents and see how new cross-species communities can form in these places. A moving and almost utopian experience of peaceful coexistence.





TASTY FUTURE

Towards an ethical and sustainable gastronomy

The gastronomy sector in theatres and cultural venues is one of the main causes of CO2 emissions and environmental destruction in the cultural industry. In 2022 and 2023, Daniel Hellmann is teaming up with Barbara Ellenberger and Klimakontor Basel. Together they will accompany 10 Swiss cultural institutions in a transformation process, where theatres and festivals change the menus of their restaurants, bars and canteens.

The project is funded by Migros Kulturprozent and aims to empower the cultural sector to take action on the climate and biodiversity crisis. By reducing or eliminating animal products from our food habits, we can make a massive contribution to climate and biodiversity protection and step into our footsteps as leaders in a broader social and cultural transformation.

This culinary reorientation can be integrated into a venue's programme as a co-creative artistic process and can mobilise the entire team, as well as artists and the public. Soya the cow can accompany this process with a concert, the Planet Moo exhibition or with round tables around food, ecology and climate justice.



DANIEL HELLMANN

The artist

Daniel Hellmann is a singer, performer, dancer and theatre artist from Zurich. He studied philosophy, classical singing and theatre, first in Zurich, then in Lausanne and Bern. Since 2012, he has been developing his own artistic work, touring internationally and winning various awards. Daniel Hellmann sees his artistic practice as a form of intersectional activism. His projects explore the body, bodily relationships and desire, and question social norms and power relations in the fields of sexuality, human and animal rights.

As part of his interactive performance «Full Service» (2014), Hellmann has executed hundreds of services around the world for a corresponding negotiated fee. His solo performance «Traumboy» (2015) on male sex work was selected for Sélection Suisse en Avignon and for Swiss Selection Edinburgh. Hellmann recently developed the female counterpart «Traumgirl» together with Anne Welenc - a third production on the subject of sex work, which premiered in August 2019 at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe.

Hellmann was awarded the June Johnson Dance Prize for his piece Requiem for a piece of meat (2017) and was invited to the Swiss Dance Days 2019. With his alter ego Soya the Cow - a vegan, sex-positive and feminist drag cow, he performs in theatres, at street protests and in TV shows, and he has recorded his first music album Purple Grass (2021).

Between 2018 and 2020, Daniel Hellmann has been in charge of the live arts programming for the interdisciplinary gender and sexualities festival La Fête du Slip in Lausanne.

www.daniel-hellmann.com



CALENDER

2022

- 10.-16.10.2022 Concert & performance at Fierce Festival in Birmingham (UK)
23.09.2022 concert at Kunsthaus Zürich (CH)
05.-10.07.2022 Art walkt & concert at Festival de la Cité Lausanne (CH)
16.07.2022 Concert at Animal Pride in Kreuzlingen (CH) / Konstanz (DE)
05.05.2022 - 04.06.2022 US-tour with *Planet Moo* (exhibition) & *Dear Human Animals* (play) in Seattle, Kansas City, Houston, Los Angeles (USA)
23.-30.04.2022 Artist residency *Soya at the Sea* on the sailing Bise Noire
12.-14.01.2022 Workshop *Dear Human Animals* with a school class (6th grade) in Hausen (CH)
05.01.2022 Protest performance in front of a sausage factory in Nurnberg (DE)

Other projects in 2022

- All year: Protest actions and performances in the streets, at slaughterhouses, etc.
- All year: Tasty Future - Towards an ethical and sustainable gastronomy
- Summer 2022 Recherche Pro Helvetia et tournée de concerts dans les sanctuaires

2021

- 09.12.2021 Concert at Clima Now, Kosmos Zürich (CH)
05.12.2021 Workshop for children with Henry Art Gallery, Seattle (US)
13.11.2021 Concert at Feinkost Lampe, Hannover (DE)
14.10.2021 TV-appearance : The Voice Of Germany, Pro Sieben (DE)
23-25.09.2021 *Dear Human Animals* (play) at Schlachthaus Theater Bern (CH)
18.09.2021 Concert at Fiftyval - 50 years Greenpeace Switzerland, Zürich (CH)
09.09.2021 Music video: official release of *Starving Vulture*
27.08.2021 Concert at Wandeltage, Minden (DE)
15.08.2021 Protest performance in physical absence at Mousonturm, Frankfurt (DE)
01.08.2021 Concert at Hof Narr, Hinteregg (ZH)
17.07.2021 Concert at Theaterformen Hannover (DE)
14.04.2021 Album & Music video: official release of *Purple Grass*
10.03.2021 Music video: official release of *Unbreed Me*
14.02.2021 Music video: official release of *Soy Much*

2020

05.12.2020 Concert at Human Rights Film Festival, Zürich (CH)

24-29.11.2020 *Dear Human Animals* (play) at Gessnerallee, Zurich (CH)

08-09.10.2020 Art Walk 1:1 at Sophiensaele, Berlin (DE)

19.09.2020 Concert and protest concert at The Official Animal Rights March, Köln (DE)

12.09.2020 Concert at Vegan Festivals, Zürich Hb (CH)

01.08.2020 Concert at Festival Für Freunde, Dahnsdorf (DE)

04-05.07.2020 Concert and rescue action of 10 chickens at Froh Ussicht, Samstagern (CH)

15.06.2020 Concert with Extinction Rebellion, Invalidenpark Berlin (DE)

21.01.2020 Talk show in the Swiss TV SRF (CH)

18.01.2020 Protest performance at Wir Haben Es Satt, Berlin (DE)

2019

07-14.10.2019 Protest performance with Animal Rebellion, Berlin (DE)

19-21.07.2019 Concert & performance at Pornceptual | Melt Festival, Ferropolis (DE)

29.06.2019 Concert at Freshera li | Else, Berlin (DE)

13.06.2019 Concert at Maxim Gorki Theater, Berlin (DE)

11.06.2019 Concert at Be'kech, Berlin (DE)

05.05.2019 Workshop at Zürich Tanzt (CH)

08.04.2019 Concert at Zürich Moves! (CH)

2018

02.09.2018 Round table at Arc Artist Residency, Romainmôtier (CH)

26.08.2018 Concert & protest performance at Animal Rights March, Berlin (DE)

CONTACTS

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