

POCKETART collective / Sabina Bočková & Johana Pocková

# FAIRY TALES

DANCE REIMAGINATION OF OUR HAPPY ENDINGS



- „Pocková and Bočková do not present any flattened or banal idea of femininity, but a multi-layered work full of ideas, impressions and feelings that are at the same time so abstract that they open themselves up to the possibility of broad interpretation. Most of all, they show that there is no rigid definition of femininity. And that the search for one's femininity can be playful and fabulous.“ *Clara Zanga, review for Dance Context (written from the pre-premiere on 7.11.2023)*
- *Fairy Tales* is a dance performance celebrating womanhood and freedom of identity with strong visual aspect for 8 female dancers and 2 musicians.
- *Fairy Tales* is part of Upscaling Artists programme of European project Big Pulse Dance Alliance. Co-producing partners of *Fairy Tales* are festivals TANEC PRAHA (CZ), Sismógraf (ESP), Julidans (NL), CODA (NO). Other partners are SE.S.TA – centre for choreographic research (CZ) and REZI.DANCE Komařice (CZ)
- WORLD PREMIERE - 26th of April 2024 / Sismógraf / Olót, Spain  
CZECH PREMIERE - 4th of June 2024 / TANEC PRAHA festival / Prague, CZ
- Other dates
  - 27/4/2024 // Sismógraf / Olót, Spain
  - 1/6/2024 // One Dance Festival // Plovdiv, BG
  - 12/7/2024 // Julidans // Amsterdam, NL
  - 13/7/2024 // Julidans // Amsterdam, NL
  - 22/10/2024 // Dance Umbrella // London, UK
  - 23/10/2024 // Dance Umbrella // London, UK
  - 1/11/2024 // PONEC // Prague, CZ
  - 2/11/2024 // PONEC // Prague, CZ

♥ CONTACT ♥

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∞ ARTISTIC INTENTION ∞

In the beginning of the process, we asked ourselves a question – *who would we like to be and ought to be in today's society?* We both arrive in the phases of our lives where there are some crossroads ahead of us, where we are thinking about the direction where to go next. How to continue in our artistic work in the light of a desire for family? How to take in all the roles which we encounter as women in society - those which we identify with and those which we don't? What is the place of woman's essence in our world? **Imagination, the ability to imagine our own "happy endings"** played a major role in the answers to these questions from the beginning. An option that we felt our mothers' generation had very limited. That's why we wanted to make full use of it and celebrate it in our own way. From these initial thoughts, we came up with the only possible outcome - **to create a new fairy tale for ourselves and for our present (and future).**

We wanted to open a **space for dreaming and sharing ideas about happy endings.** A space for otherworldly powers and magic, for sharing **stories that have different scenarios and outcomes, but all are simply possible and can be accepted without judgement.** We started the joint sharing of these

topics with other women with the question that was also a part of the application for the workshop / audition for the performance - *"What is your female perspective on real life and on life how it could be?"*. The texts, full of authentic answers\*, only confirmed the main idea of the project, which was centred in the search for free expression, overcoming stereotypes and creating a fairy-tale utopia together.

*\*"I want to have the freedom to create my own world without being condemned to follow certain ideals that may not correspond to my values and my way of perceiving the magic of life."*

*"The stereotype of fairy tales is that you need princes and children to be happy. However, life is more complex and diverse. Each person's happiness is different and can be antagonistic or paradoxical."*

*"For a long time now I've felt a need to live life differently. But I haven't known how to make the difference happen. Yesterday I came to think that maybe it's not not knowing, but a block in imagination accompanied by a lack of courage."*

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From the very beginning of the creation of physical material, we sensed that we move within **two levels**. We see a **specific group of 8 young women who share their physical presence and authenticity with each other and at the same time through them we discover certain more universal roles, stereotypes and also fantasy worlds that remind us of something from familiar fairy tales and social narratives**. These two levels indicated the dynamics of the entire process, and it was necessary to constantly balance them. The aim was to **ultimately cross these two poles and create our own independent world** – to be inspired by the past but to become who you want to be here and now, blurring the line between authentic and stereotypical, between fantasy and reality – move freely between these worlds.



With the help of scenographic objects, costumes and original music, we searched together with the dancers for the stylization of movement expression and physical characters through fairy-tale symbols and characters. It was important for us to bend these characters through the uniqueness of each of the performers to new fantasy levels and thus create a world of new beings and communities that will carry a wide and ambiguous palette of emotions and meanings. And thus, to reflect and support the variety of opinions not only of today's women, but of all people within their own ideas about their "happy endings". An important motif in the work was the topic of **stereotypes and labelling, which we still encounter as women**. As part of the process, we deliberately cast female performers into reference characters and roles so that, despite the form given to them from the outside (by the directors, in the figurative sense also "society / family"), **they seek freedom and a unique approach to the given character**. The stereotypes that we brought to the surface are embodied in the performance through well-known fairy-tale situations, or so-called "happy endings", which we sometimes even ritualistically deformed into "new beginnings".



Another theme naturally emerged through our work and was strongly present throughout the creation, namely the **theme of childhood**. Childhood as a period in which parents and society impose patterns of behaviour and roles on us, with which we try to come to terms over time as part of our adolescence (and often throughout our whole lives) and are part of the formation of our identity.

This moment is related to another of the sources of inspiration that strongly influenced (not only) the visual identity of the show – **the worlds of Disney fairy tales**, which had a huge influence on the formation of our generation. Perhaps that is why it is precisely this aesthetic that we needed to appropriate and transform in *Fairy Tales* and the characters from these tales that we wanted to come to terms with. In the worlds of Disney, there are often very sharp contours of good and evil. Our effort

was to blur these contours and at the same time present our fairy tales in all their complexity, including many dark places and with a dose of absurdity, exaggeration, and humour. Other inspirations related to the issue of the view of women in cultural and social manifestations that go deeper into the past were also reflected in the performance, such as Tchaikovsky's composition from *Sleeping Beauty* (rearrangement of which is directly present in the live musical component of the performance) or women's folk dances.

An integral part of the whole process was also a **live musical performance by singer and musician Sára Vondrášková and musician Lukáš Palán**, which - like the entire performance - has many levels.

Working with the massiveness of the sound, the music did not strive for emotional pressure, but rather to connect with the audience and dancers through energy, dynamics, and the mass of vibrations. **Strong alto voice of Sára Vondrášková, is the dominant of the music. It is very experimental, limitless and animalistic in some parts, and gentle and fragile in the others**, thereby supporting the space for the expression of a wide range of emotions of anger, tenderness, kindness, defencelessness, audacity as well as clarity and transparency. The same thing happens **within the penetrating guitar lines of Lukáš Palán and in the overall work with the modular and synthesizers**. The music also **deals with meaninglessness, absurdity and surreal soundscapes, genre extremes and their placement in unexpected contexts and surprising sequences**.



For us, *Fairy Tales* is thus a celebration of free female creativity. A ceremony that carries all the strong and fragile qualities of women and shows the importance and contribution of femininity to the present world. A place where everyone can feel that identity is not something given and rigid, but that it is a rich variety of experiences that constantly transform us, and that all of this - whether we call it fantasy or reality - can be experienced in an environment that does not judge us, but on the contrary - it supports.

## ♣ ABSTRACT ♣

*Fairy Tales* is a dance performance with strong visual identity for 8 female dancers and 2 musicians. Inside the themes of womanhood and the values that femininity brings to our world we are coming back to places of our childhood to reveal the processes of becoming oneself. We are trying on and off different roles, as if it was just another game or another dress. Roles we all know from well-known fairy tales or real-life figures. We are creating new fantasies for ourselves, reimagining our identities and the way we see our happy endings.

## ♥ TEAM / CREDITS ♥

choreography, direction: Sabina Bočková & Johana Pocková

creation and performance: Aneta Bočková, Jitka Čechová, Michaela Dzurovčínová, Karolina Graca, Tereza Holubová, Tereza Krejčová, Eva Mora González, Monika Szpunar

live music: Lukáš Palán, Sára Vondrášková (Never Sol)

dramaturgy: Viktor Černický

choreographic coaching: Peter Šavel

set design and costumes: Vendula Tomšů

light design: Eliška Kociánová

technical support: Jan Tomšů

production manager 2023: David Ostružár

production manager: Nela Frauenbergová

booking: Anna Gazdíková

graphic design: Pavel Holomek

produced by: POCKETART collective

co-produced by: Big Pulse Dance Alliance – TANEC PRAHA festival (CZ), Julidans (NL), Sísmograf festival (ESP), CODA - Oslo International Dance Festival (NO), with support of the Creative Europe Programme

Project is supported by: Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, Next Generation EU – National Recovery Plan, State Culture Fund, Prague City Hall, SE.S.TA. – centre for choreographic development – associated artist Johana Pocková, REZI.DANCE Komařice

## ⇔ TOUR ⇔

duration: 60 minutes

people on stage: 10

people on tour: 15

set up: pre set-up the day before, set-up the day of the show

ideal stage dimensions: w/d/h – 12m/16m/6m (adaptations can be made)

tech rider: see [HERE](#)

## ♥ PHOTO / VIDEO ♥

photos: [https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1z9O-d0t3ePAw3335gze5f0mOVv-RT1Qp?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1z9O-d0t3ePAw3335gze5f0mOVv-RT1Qp?usp=share_link) © Vojtěch Brtnický

trailer: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SIEjHxyxmMAQSblo-l\\_Mlh2ubsskjS9V/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1SIEjHxyxmMAQSblo-l_Mlh2ubsskjS9V/view)

full video: <https://e.pcloud.link/publink/show?code=MSdotalk>



## ◆ REVIEWS ◆

*"Pocková and Bočková do not present any flattened or banal idea of femininity, but a multi-layered work full of thoughts, impressions and feelings, which are at the same time so abstract that they open up the possibility of a wide interpretation. Most of all, they show that there is no rigid definition of femininity. And that the search for your femininity can be playful and fairy tale-like ...Fairy Tales works significantly with symbolism... in its original essence I perceive a sisterly alliance without "queen bees". Such a sisterhood is currently being (re)discovered by some contemporary feminists who are attempting to get rid of long-held patterns of rivalry and internalized misogyny."*

Clara Zanga, Dance Context / Taneční aktuality (written from the pre-premiere at 7.11.2023, in PONEC - dance venue).

Whole article (in Czech) [HERE](#).

*"But the work culminated all the more intensely in its conclusion, when the dancers threw everything they considered to be the residual layers of their authentic selves into one pile in an imaginary fire and spun in mutual interconnection in a whirling wheel. Fairy Tales is a powerfully visual work that will set your imagination spinning. The atmosphere is fittingly completed by the lively music, in which the haunting voice of Never Sol stands out. (...)."*

Daniela Machová, Dance Context / Taneční aktuality (written from the premiere at 4.6.2024, during festival TANEC PRAHA in PONEC - dance venue).

Whole article (in Czech) [HERE](#).

*"It was a psychedelic plunge into the female persona, which can have a sweet facade, pink, full of fluffy ruffles, airy veils, softness and glitter and sparkle of jewels, and yet pulsate with rather wild blood, animal instincts. (...) The three-legged monster clacks its green heels and the mermaid approaches on a mirror wave. Beautiful as the witch from Gogol's The Howling, when in the body of a young beauty she rose from her coffin on the first evening. Phantoms in seductive beauty. (...) One expressive woman next to another, each in her naturalness and in her individual register of movements and expressions is her own, it is difficult to single out any of the protagonists, although some may have a natural inclination to communicate with the viewer with open defiance and perhaps even hidden aggression, while another has no trace of such energy and moves with delicate delicacy. The discovery of her feminine nature, which is individual, is at the heart of this choreography."*

Lucie Kocourková, Opera Plus, 6.6.2024

[Whole article \(in Czech\) HERE](#).





## ☆ ABOUT POCKETART COLLECTIVE ☆

POCKETART collective is an **internationally recognized team of creators working in the field of contemporary dance and physical theatre**, led by choreographers Sabina Bočková and Johana Pocková. As part of its projects, the collective brings together artists from the fields of dance, music, scenography, visual arts, and lighting design. The collective's performances have been presented in

many countries in Europe, Africa, and South America in the past and their work has been also selected for the European platform **Aerowaves Twenty21 and Twenty22** and presented at various festivals, including **Tanzmesse 2022**. With their performances, they became part of the international European projects such as *Shape It!* and *Big Pulse Dance Alliance*.

The creation of the collective is characterized by **tackling topics that go beyond the personal experience of the individual and touch on societal problems** such as media manipulation, global environmental threats, stress in a competitive environment and the position of an individual in the corporate work system. The creators try to approach these topics comprehensively by means of **detailed work with all theatrical components**. For each of their works, **they are always looking for a new stylization of physical expression specific to the given topic and creating dance images from specific bodily references**. The performances of the collective tries to convey a spiritual experience and bring the audience to reflect on the society through its **distinctive poetics, visual purity and strong original music**.

In 2018, the collective introduced their first performance *Warehouses Full of Emotions*, inspired by intergenerational views of femininity and the authentic memories of an older lady. Under the choreographic direction of Johana Pocková, four dancers collaborated on this work, as well as 89-year-old grandmother and an 8-year-old girl. This performance was later transformed into the dance film *Folds of Touch*. In 2019, POCKETART introduced performance of Johana Pocková *Onto the Scale!* - duet with the central theme of stress in a competitive environment.

In 2019, having previously collaborated on several projects, Sabina Bočková and Johana Pocková created a performance *The Lion's Den*, a duet pondering the themes of **media manipulation and political populism**. The work was selected for the **Czech Dance Platform 2020**, and included in **Top 20 of the choreographic platform AerowavesTwenty21**. The duet was performed at the festivals TANEC PRAHA (CR) in 2020 and 2021, Kenya International Theater Festival (KEN), New Baltic Dance Festival (LT), B.motion (IT), Danca Im Transito (BR), Krakow Dance Festival (PL), Malá Inventura, Flora festival in Olomouc and many more. In the following years, the performance *Lion's Den* was transformed into two other projects. One of them is the outdoor performance *The Lion's Den UNLIMITED*, which involves groups of professional and non-professional dancers, who together create and subsequently perform choreography based on the original duet. This project was part of the festivals TANEC PRAHA in years 2021 and 2022, Dni Tanca (SK) and others and was **shortlisted for the European platform Big Pulse Dance Alliance**. *The Lion's Den* was also included in the international project *Shape It!* which gives artists an opportunity to **collaborate with children and adapt their already existing work for young audiences**. The partners of *Shape It!* are The Place London, Comune di Bassano del Grappa, Tanec Praha, and Annantalo.

In 2020, the collective premiered performance *Treatment of Remembering*, a work created by Sabina Bočková, Johana Pocková, and Inga Zotova-Mikshina. It touches upon the topics of the **global threat to the environment and the disappearance of nature from our world**. This piece won the **International Jury Award and the Audience Award at Czech Dance Platform 2021**, as well as being included in **Aerowaves Twenty22**. In 2021 POCKETART produced a solo performance of Johana Pocková – *To the Madonna with Rust*, which was nominated for **Czech Dance Platform 2022** and performed during TANEC PRAHA festival in 2022. In 2022 POCKETART introduced a new performance *Bodies*

[Together](#), a collective creation of 7 performers under direction of slovak choreographer Jaro Viňarský and dramaturge Lucia Kašiarová, which deals with the impact of corporation structures on our lives.

In 2024 Sabina Bočková and Johana Pocková premiered their newest creation [Fairy Tales](#) – a performance for 8 female dancers and 2 musicians exploring the topics of womanhood and female fantasies which is an a part of an Upscaling programme of an international project Big Pulse Dance Alliance.

The creative team is financially supported by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic, Prague City Hall, State Cultural Fund and Prague 3 City District. POCKETART's performances are regularly performed on Prague stages such as PONEC – dance venue, Venuše ve Švehlovce, Studio ALTA, as well as in various venues and festivals around the Czech Republic and abroad.



**Sabina Bočková** (\*1995) is a choreographer and dancer based in Brno. After studying classical ballet and modern dance and a three-year engagement in ballet companies (Ballet of the South Bohemia's Theatre, Prague Chamber Ballet), she gradually changed her view of dance and decided to work as an independent artist. Since 2019, she has been creating original works as part of the POCKETART collective. In 2019, together with Johana Pocková, she co-created the duet "*The Lion's Den*", which was selected for the 26th edition of the Czech Dance Platform and became a part of the prestigious Aerowaves Twenty21 selection. (The performance is inspired by media manipulation and political populism.) In the same year, in collaboration with Slovak performer Tomáš Janyška, she created another duet "*songlines: expedition 97/18*", which is dedicated to the loss of a loved one. Together

with Johana Pocková and Inga Zotová-Mikshina, she co-created another full-length performance under the name "*Treatment of Remembering*", which touches on the theme of the threat to nature. This performance won the International Jury Award and the Spectator Award at the 27th edition of the Czech Dance Platform and was part of the selection of the European Aerowaves Twenty22 platform. In 2022 she was part of the European project *Shape It!* for young viewers with the duet "*The Lion's Den*". In the same year, together with the dancer and choreographer Jazmína Piktorová, she co-created the duet "*Microworlds*", which won the International Jury Award and the Spectator Award at the 29th edition of the Czech Dance Platform and was picked for the selection of Aerowaves Twenty24.

In addition to her original work, she has been collaborating as a performer with the groups Tantehorse (O: Family Therapy, Vivisectic), with the collective tYhle and choreographer Marie Gourdian (LEGORytmus, Meduza, Mu---Tation), with Milan Tomášik (POKRM) and recently also with new circus company Cirk La Putyka.

Fascinated by simple and everyday body language, she transforms movement through choreographic structures and at the same time speaks through topics that resonate with social and cultural issues.

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**Johana Pocková (\*1992)** is a choreographer, dancer and co-founder of the POCKETART collective, under which she has been creating her authorial works since 2018. She graduated from the Duncan Centre Dance Conservatory in Prague, completed a six-month internship at the Peridance Capezio Centre in New York and two years at the SEAD (Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance). Now she is working as an active choreographer of her authorial works. In 2017 she won the Jarmila Jeřábková Award for her choreography "*Murder! A Little Comic History*". After her studies she presented works "*Why not now?*", "*Onto the Scale!*", "*Warehouses Full of Emotions*" and a dance film "*Folds of Touch*".

Together with Sabina Bočková she is a co-author of the performance "*The Lion's Den*", which was selected for the Czech Dance Platform 2020 and shortlisted for the prestigious European platform Aerowaves Twenty21. In 2020, together with Sabina Bočková and Inga Zotova-Mikshina, she presented a project "*Treatment of Remembering*", which won the International Jury Award and an Audience Award at the Czech Dance Platform 2021 and was selected for Aerowaves Twenty22. Her work was supported by the Big Pulse Dance Alliance and in 2022 she was part of the European project *Shape It!* for young audiences with the performance "*The Lion's Den*". In 2020 she was awarded

the 1st Dance News Award for her contribution to the dance scene. As a performer, she has also collaborated with companies as Tantehorse (O: Family Therapy, Vivisectic), tYhle (Suitcaseboarding, Seismic) and other independent artists.

In her work, Pocková is interested in social and cultural themes that transcend personal experience, as well as the inner spiritual places of the individual. She then searches for a specific physical and visual identity for the subject of the work. In her artistic practice, she seeks themes and performative treatments that are stepping out of the stage and reaching into the social sphere in collaboration with different age groups. She is also interested in connecting dance with other art forms such as classical singing, acting, scenography and visual arts.



