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HOUSE OF CIRCUS



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DOSSIER &
TECHNICAL SHEET
ENGLISH

OBLIVIOUS

TENT •
HOUSE OF CIRCUS
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CONTACT

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CREDITS

CREATION & PERFORMANCE : Nick van der Heyden • Germain Charlat
DRAMATURGICAL ADVICE : Loulou Sjerps
PRODUCER : TENT House for contemporary circus
CO-PRODUCER : De Landing/Schouwburg Amstelveen
SUPPORTED BY : Performing Arts Fund NL

SUMMARY

AGE : 16+
DURATION : ± 65 min
SETUP : Frontal (270° in consideration)
PLAYING AREA : Minimal 8x8 m • minimal height 6m beyond grid
TOURING PERIOD : February 2027 – February 2028
LANGUAGE : Language no problem





OBLIVIOUS

Oblivious is a radical revelation of the forces that shape us into who we are. But what if you yourself also participate in the script that is keeping you captive?

In House of circus' new performance, Hayden and Iconnee find themselves in a psychologically charged arena. They seduce, shine and play their roles with precision. With circus, drag & humour, a mindgame unfolds in which nothing is what it seems. On a stage shaped by social codes, every crack in the mask becomes visible. The audience is watching. Or is there more to it?

With the use of costumes, scenography and confrontations, HoC shows how identity is not simply a choice from a clothes rack, but an ongoing negotiation to be claimed with a self-written script.



ABOUT OBLIVIOUS

We are influenced and manipulated on a daily basis, often without even realising it. The endless social media feed, news framing, billboards and pop-ups constantly push us in a certain direction. From a young age, we are conditioned: rewarded when we behave "appropriately" and met with disapproval when we don't. But identity is not a choice from a clothes rack. The dominant social norm doesn't fit us. Being queer means breaking with the cis norm and dismantling imposed identities and gender roles. After all, the norm is a social construct that benefits only a small group. In this performance, Hayden and Iconnee take off their masks, and House of Circus makes it clear that the norm is a construct. *Oblivious* is at once a theatrical psychological experiment and a humorous call to take destiny into our own hands.

Social codes also apply on Hayden and Iconnee's stage. The drag artists move with flair, presenting a vibrant palette of circus arts and clowning. They seduce and provoke, balancing between play and conflict while manipulating public opinion. The performance offers plenty of room for beauty and poetry: breathtaking circus acts alternate with moving drag performances. Their play comes alive in a well-thought-out aesthetic in which make-up, costumes, scenography and drag seamlessly merge. Through psychological manipulation and unexpected confrontations, the performers hold up a mirror to each other and to the audience. Layer by layer, the social construct is peeled back. Particular attention is paid to what causes friction: the clumsiness, the painful self-awareness, the trial and error that every search for the self entails. House of Circus thus approaches difficult themes of identity and becoming with humor and lightness, inviting the audience to reflect on the question: Who are you? With *Oblivious*, House of Circus shows that identity is not a choice from a clothes rack, but an ongoing negotiation you can claim with a self-written script.





ABOUT TENT & HOUSE OF CIRCUS

TENT is the house for contemporary circus in the Netherlands and co-producer of the show. Since its foundation in 2010, it has supported makers in various stages of their artistic development and creative processes by offering different trajectories. In doing so, they invest in a high-quality and diverse circus scene in the Netherlands.

House of Circus is a TENT maker from 2025 onwards and receives support at both the artistic and production levels, as well as in business matters. In 2025, they received the Subsidy New Maker from the Performing Arts Fund. The company consists of Nick van der Heyden (NL, 1990) and Germain Charlat (FR, 1997), both trained as circus artists at Fontys Circus, specialising in hand balancing (Nick) and trapeze (Germain). They focus their practice entirely on circus and drag. In drag, they discovered the potential to tell stories and their talent for make-up and costume design. With the name House of Circus, they give a nod to the Houses from the drag scene.

House of Circus combines circus elements such as trapeze, hand balancing and clowning with drag, acting and performance art to create atmospheres and characters on stage. The connection with the audience, costumes, make-up and decor play an important role. They bring glamour back to the circus, combine humour and social themes, and actively involve the audience in what is happening on stage. The strength of their House lies in the contrast between vulnerability and the show: they share their stories and give space to those of others. Their mission: to bring drag and circus together and make them accessible to everyone, regardless of gender, age or language. Their motto: "Be who you want to be, wear what you want to wear and love who you want to love." Since 2021, they have been bringing the house down at festivals including Festival Circolo, Circusstad Festival, Lowlands, Oerol, Down the Rabbit Hole, Karavaan, Cape Town, Berlin Circus Festival, This is not a circus and in theatres including Korzo, Maaspodium and Theater de Nieuwe Vorst.

CIRCUS & DRAG

Circus and drag are both undergoing an emancipation as art forms. Both art forms have a history as a refuge for people who are different and balance on the margins of society, and they unite multiple artistic disciplines. Through the circus, House of Circus creates a safe space in the theatre. They believe that the combination of circus and drag can bridge the gap between both disciplines, making them more accessible to a wider audience. With their performances, they want to contribute to greater acceptance and safety for the queer community. They find in the combination a stage on which they can celebrate diversity and contribute to a future in which every individual is embraced for who they are. In recent years, they have worked on three major projects in which they explored how circus and drag come together. These are the indoor performance *Spotlight* (with Korzo) about the creation and evolution of their drag characters Hayden and Iconnee (60 min), *Fitness*, an interactive street performance about body positivity and self-love (30 min), and *Carnivale Royale* (75 min), a circus cabaret and celebration of activism and diversity.

"With some exaggerated clashes and theatrical showmanship, the duo turns it into a full-fledged queer show."
— NRC

"Their two characters are constantly at odds with each other, utilising the specialities of their creators [...] which allows the makers to perform breathtaking acrobatic tricks alongside all the verbal banter."
— Theaterkrant

"You can leave it to them to push the boundaries."
— Parool





TECHNICAL RIDER & CONDITIONS

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT OBLIVIOUS

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PERFORMANCE

Oblivious is a theatrical circus performance designed for black box theatres or closed tents, though an open tent at dusk is also possible. The audience is seated in the stands.

Scenography plays a key role: a modular steel construction, combined with light, sound, and special effects, forms the heart of the performance.

Oblivious is an accessible, language-no-problem show: a mix of drag and circus for young adults, recommended for ages 16+ but open to audiences from 12 and up. English is spoken, but understanding the language is not necessary to understand the performance.

The show is performed by House of Circus, together with one or two additional artists. The production is being developed under the wings of TENT, house for contemporary circus, in co-production with Theater de Landing in Amstelveen. The premiere is scheduled for January 2027, during the festival *This is not a circus* in Amsterdam.

OBLIVIOUS COMES WITH

3/4 artists • 1 technician

DURATION

The performance lasts approximately 65 minutes.

DEMANDS PERFORMANCE AREA

The setup is frontal with a minimum floor space of 8x8m². The floor must be flat and even, covered with a clean black ballet floor. The minimum clearance height under the grid, across the entire playing surface, is 6m. Please consult us if this is not the case, as it is sometimes possible to work around a grid. There is a black backdrop and the sides can also be screened off with curtains if necessary. The performance area must be ready at least one hour before the start and accessible to the performers.





SETUP & TEARDOWN & PARKING PERMIT

Time is needed to set up and tear down the set. The time required depends on the situation, but we estimate a minimum of 6 hours for setup and approximately 1 hour for teardown. Setup time includes setting up the lighting. In the last hour of the set-up time, the floor is needed for the performers to warm up. The set-up must be completed by then. We require one additional technician from the organisation to set up the lighting and soundcheck the audio.

TRANSPORT & PARKING PERMIT

We will arrive with one minibus and one or two cars. Reservations are required for parking spaces and/or parking permits near the changing rooms and/or playing location. Any parking fees will be paid by the organisation.

DRESSING ROOM, CATERING, AND ACCOMMODATION

Oblivious requires a dressing room close to the performance area. The dressing room should contain a table, chairs, mirror, coat rack, sink with running water and, if possible, a shower. During our stay, we expect at least one meal to be provided by the organisation, which could be lunch or dinner depending on the start time of the show. The number and type of meals may vary per location, depending on how many times we perform in a day. It would also be nice if tea, coffee, juice, water and small snacks were available for five people, with a vegetarian option (no meat, no fish). When performances take place on several consecutive days at a location that is too far to travel back and forth to home, we expect the organisation to arrange accommodation. Room allocation is then 5 single rooms. If we play several days in a row, the costumes must be washed daily. We will then need a washmachine.

