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Ressort: Kunst, Kultur und Musik

Hyeji Nam ? Manshin

ImpulsTanz Festival, 09.08.2026 [ENA]

In a summer where South Korea is ImpulsTanz's guest of honour, Vienna-based Seoul native Hyeji Nam delivered the festival's most quietly transfixing hour. MANSHIN is a solo built as a three-part gut for the post-digital age: sixty minutes of ceremony, glitch and unshakeable focus in the mumok Hofstallung. Rigorously composed, generous with silence, and unafraid of ecstasy, MANSHIN is a rare thing.

It is a genuinely spiritual work about artificial intelligence — and one of ImpulsTanz 2026's finest debuts on the main circuit. Part I opens in searing white light and near-silence, salt sifting onto the floor, Nam's breath filling the void as glitch-masked heads overwrite gender, age and species and dissolve — shrine and sci-fi lab held in the same frame. Part II projects her 3-D avatar into the fog until it hovers as a hologram, while a single water drop, then many, strikes a drum and lights a thirty-metre green LED strip that leads us onward. Part III falls into darkness: joined by electronic musician Markus Steinkellner, Nam summons the trance state of the Korean gut through pure body, sound and rhythm.

What lingers, days later, is Nam's discipline as a performer. Where lesser artists mistake technology for spectacle, she treats projections, avatars and LED cues as fellow ritual objects — no more and no less important than the salt, the drum, or the breath. Her body is never illustrated by the digital layer; it converses with it, sometimes yielding to the hologram, sometimes overwriting it in return. That equal footing is exactly what the Brut Wien commissioning text promised — "performance, music and visual art as equivalent artistic means" — and Nam is one of the very few Vienna-based artists of her generation who actually delivers on that trilingual grammar.

Trained between Korea University and the Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien, she carries both lineages without hierarchy: the Confucian precision of the gut and the cool conceptualism of Viennese post-media art meet in a single, unruffled performing presence. It is that presence, more than any effect, that turns MANSHIN from an intriguing hybrid into a genuine ceremony — and marks Hyeji Nam as one of the most singular voices to have emerged from the city's performance scene in years.

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