

Dark Mofo: Hermann Nitsch's bull slaughter show gets mixed reviews

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PHOTO The performance climaxed with a mock fight over the entrails.

SUPPLIED: DARK MOFO/LUSY PRODUCTIONS

Spectators have spoken of a highly emotional and intense experience as they emerged from Dark Mofo's bull carcass performance, but not all were impressed.

WARNING: this story contains graphic content

The one-off show, 150.Action by Austrian artist Hermann Nitsch, promoted as a "bloody sacrificial ritual" began slowly, with performers stripped naked and bound to crude stretchers and wooden crosses.

Some were doused with blood and milk.

About halfway into the three-hour show, a bull carcass was brought in and hung on a wooden structure.

The show was accompanied by live instrumentation and an orchestral score — with the performance at times resembling the calls of wild animals.

More than 2,500 people registered for the free show held at Macquarie Point in Hobart, although only a few hundred stayed for the full performance.

The show's shock value fell flat with one patron, who walked out within an hour of it starting and complained of the drawn-out wait to be admitted.

Tabitha from Brisbane was one of the first to leave, describing it as "two and half hours of her life that she would never get back".

"Two hours of waiting and then it was just arty boringness, boring, with another layer of boring," she said.

No photography or recording was permitted inside the venue.

'David Walsh has a lot to answer for'



PHOTO The show was Austrian artist Hermann Nitsch's first performance in Australia.

SUPPLIED: WWW.NITSCH.ORG

Patrick Versace from Sydney wasn't impressed.

"I wonder if it's some indulgent performance that satisfies the artist, not any of the people watching it," he said.



"There's a lot of blood and it smells bad."

A Hobart man who declined to give his name also left early.

"I think David Walsh has a lot to answer to on this," he said.

"I'd like to think that life has more to offer than this crap."

'Heartbreaking and amazing'

Other spectators took a different view, including overseas visitor Melissa Hernandez.

"It's intense but that's the freedom of art and I respect them for that," she said.

"You can either like it or dislike it."

Debra from Melbourne said the performance was "mesmerising".



"It was emotional and intense. The significance of ripping apart a bull was heartbreaking and amazing and in the end, I felt relieved," she said.

Roland Irwin from Brisbane agreed.

"It was engaging, interesting, hard to ignore," he said.

"It's repetitive imagery."

A number of audience members leaving the event commented they needed time to process their thoughts around what they had just witnessed.

Comments were also made about difficulties viewing the performance.

"It was really difficult to see — they've packed everyone in there, everyone crowded around the performance and you can't see over," Paul de Boer from Hobart said.

Prior to the show, [animal rights groups protested against the slaughter of a bull in the name of art.](#)



PHOTO [A promotional image for Nitsch's Dark Mofo show.](#)
SUPPLIED: GEORG SOULEK/HERMANN NITSCH/DARK MOFO

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