



*The Runner*, from the series *Safe & Sound Evolutions*, 2015  
MDF, aluminium, fluorescent lights, 140 x 55 x 174 cm

Alona Rodeh

"The Runner (LIVE)"

KOENIG2 by\_robbygreif

19.10. – 25.11.2017

In the centre of the small gallery space, an MDF automaton with a box for a torso and two crude legs rumbled back and forth to an obscurely defined logic; its metaphorical starter's gun seemed, somehow, linked to my entrance. To the right of this figure, a row of slight Plexiglas works hung at head height, depicting geometric sections of what looked like various kinds of uniforms and sporting paraphernalia, close-up and pushed to the point of abstraction. Fluorescent strip lights flickered on and off in sync with a stuttering drum solo that induced a state of perpetual anticipation. Was something about to happen, or was this foreboding the point?

Titled *The Runner (Live)* (2017), this installation was part of "Safe and Sound (Evolutions)", an ongoing series of site-specific works by Alona Rodeh (\*1979). Much like its precursors, it seemed to emphasize the link to the viewer, their body purportedly triggering the mechanism behind its condensed schema of light, sculpture and music. The work was apparently related to the story of the African American athlete Jesse Owens's victory at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, but it was difficult to understand it as a testament to human achievement. Lots happened, but nothing changed: any possible fulfilment was interminably postponed, echoing the Sisyphean, neoliberal imperative of 24/7 productivity. Like running on the spot, this was motion for motion's sake. The body – both the titular runner's and my own – appeared administered by rhythms neither fully perceptible nor benign.

Rebecca O'Dwyer