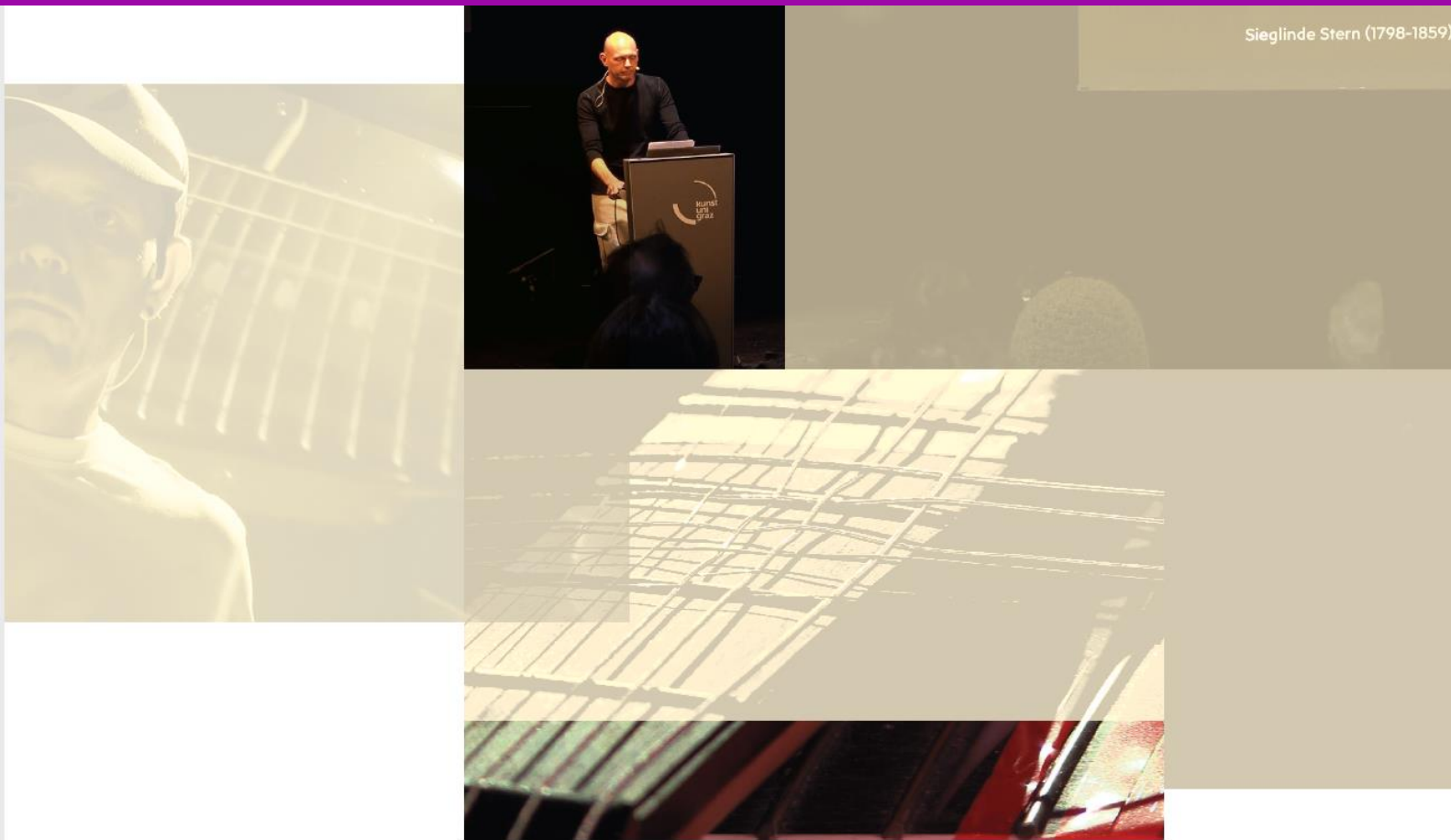


# WHY FRETS? 2083

by Marko Ciciliani

Book (64p) with integrated USB-Stick with audiovisual works



*“In 1833, Sieglinde Stern, a professional weaver and amateur engineer, invented the first electromagnetic pickup and thus the first electrically amplified stringed instrument. One hundred years later, in 1933, her invention enabled the production of the first electric guitar, which became one of the most popular and widely played instruments in the history of Western music. Yet today, another 150 years later, no one plays this instrument anymore! What led to the rise and fall of the electric guitar? What is it about this instrument that had its suppressed origins in the craft of weaving and that in its final evolution mutated back into a loom? And who was its inventor Sieglinde Stern, erased from history and only resurrected as David Bowie’s Ziggy Stardust?”*

Why Frets? consists of three works – an audiovisual performance, a mixed-media installation and a performance-lecture – that illuminate different aspects of this fictional history of the electric guitar from various angles. The story is based on speculative fabulation – a deliberate reinvention of the past.

Rather than pursuing the idea of creating novelties as an envisaging of the future, speculative fabulation and the rewriting of history proceed from an examination of the conditions under which society and culture arrived at their present state. In this way, the three individual works Why Frets? – Downtown 1983, Why Frets? – Tombstone and Why Frets? – Requiem for the Electric Guitar – complement each other in the sense of transmedia storytelling: Each is a self-contained entity, but taken as a whole, the three works shed different lights on the electric guitar, focusing on aspects such as technocultural developments, inscriptions of gender, and social values.