

Jun 10 – Okt 1 2017

Skulptur Projekte Münster

Münster, 23 June 2015

PRESS RELEASE

From 10 June to 1 October 2017, the Skulptur Projekte Münster are taking place for the fifth time. On Tuesday (23 June), the curatorial team of the Skulptur Projekte – hosted and sponsored by the Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe (LWL) and the city of Münster – introduced their initial conceptual deliberations. There is no exhibition quite like the Skulptur Projekte Münster anywhere in the world: at regular ten-year intervals, artists from many countries investigate the relationship between art, the public realm and the urban environment, and develop new, place-specific works. Within this context, the town itself plays a leading role as the point of departure for the artistic explorations. At the same time, the Projekte point far beyond the actual Münster city limits: the participating artists address topics of relevance to the global present and reflect on contemporary concepts of sculpture, while also considering the relationship between the public and private realms in times of increasing digitalization.

The artistic director of the Skulptur Projekte Münster is Prof Kasper König; the curators are Britta Peters, a free-lance curator from Hamburg, and Dr Marianne Wagner, curator of contemporary art at the LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur. Imke Itzen, who was already on the Skulptur Projekte team in 2007, is the project manager. The principal sponsor is the German Federal Culture Foundation, which is contributing one million Euros to the Skulptur Projekte. Promising negotiations are moreover presently in progress with the State of North Rhine – Westphalia.

“With the Skulptur Projekte, the LWL is bringing the world to Westphalia and presenting an international show comparable to the documenta in Kassel”, observed LWL director Matthias Löb. “The former state museum was the nucleus in which the idea for this unique exhibition format germinated in 1977. With the new LWL museum building, the Skulptur Projekte Münster is gaining a new ‘base camp’ that will serve as a venue for events and as the starting point for tours to the artworks.”

“For about one hundred days, Münster transforms into an international art centre that attracts visitors from all over the world”, commented Mayor Markus Lewe. He pointed out that, with the Skulptur Projekte, Münster has acquired a reputation unparalleled in the art world. “When the exhibition opens in June 2017, the artists will have spent two years acquainting themselves with life in Münster, with the city’s history and what makes it unique, and integrated their findings into a global context. I can’t wait to see the results.”

Veranstalter

LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur
Direktor Dr. Hermann Arnhold

Träger

LWL

 **MÜNSTER**

Jun 10 – Okt 1 2017

Skulptur Projekte Muenster

Initial contact has been made to artists, a number of whom have already visited Münster. Among those under consideration are, for example, the Romanian artist Alexandra Pirici and the French dancer and choreographer Xavier Le Roy, whose works are devoted to the relationship between the body, sculpture and the city. With this focus, we will not only reflect on the specific characteristics of the performing arts, but also on the new meaning attributed to the body in our day and age. Yet we are also inviting artists who work more in the sculptural context, for example Santiago Sierra, who integrates the theme of globalization in his political approach to sculpture, or Ayse Erkmen, who already took part in the Skulptur Projekte in 1997. Aram Bartholl, who links modern technology with the archaic image of the campfire, and Andreas Bunte, who conceives of mobile terminal devices as projection machinery, concern themselves with explicit issues of digitality and communication. Some thirty new artistic productions are to be presented in 2017.

“To inscribe oneself directly into cultural, political and urban-planning contexts existing in the public realm - to comment on them, contradict them, or open up entirely new spaces - that is where I see the great potential of art outside its traditional protective zones”, curator Britta Peters explained. “The challenge for 2017 will consist in holding one’s ground in the present-day ‘art-as-lifestyle’ atmosphere in terms of content - and by that I mean not only political content, but also contentuality in terms of aesthetics.”

Dr Marianne Wagner has been the curator of contemporary art at the museum since June 2015 and emphasizes the close ties: “The Skulptur Projekte have always been closely linked with the Westfälisches Landesmuseum, now called the LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur. In the past, this connection has led to many a stimulating discussion - about the relationship between the institution and the public realm.” The productive intermeshing of the Skulptur Projekte and the museum above and beyond the ten-year interval is particularly important, Wagner added, “on the one hand through the collection of works in the area of contemporary art, and on the other hand through the extensive Skulptur Projekte archive, which is now being established as a research centre within the museum”.

“The realization of the exhibition already conveys a political message per se by attempting to be as independent as possible from the economic point of view”, said Kasper König, who has been involved in the Skulptur Projekte since their inception and is now accompanying them for the fifth time. “As an old stager I’m throwing my hat into the ring one more time to prevent the planned transition to a five-year interval for the Skulptur Projekte. Ten years are perfect: Westphalian and laid back, campfire instead of beacon.”

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Jun 10 – Okt 1 2017

Skulptur Projekte Münster

S K U L P T U R P R O J E K T E M Ü N S T E R

The history of the Skulptur Projekte Münster is closely linked with the idea of creating a public not just with but also for art. This runs contrary to many projects presented in the public realm since the late 1990s, in which the main focus has frequently been on matters related to the city's social and economic development. Fully conscious of the difficulties of defining "public" in connection with the term "art in the public realm", for the 2017 Skulptur Projekte we are as convinced as ever that art in the urban realm is capable of activating historical, architectural, social, political and aesthetic contexts. We see its great potential not in the occupation, but rather in the creation, of spaces.

The realization of the exhibition already conveys a political message *per se*: with the aid of public funds, the Skulptur Projekte point out the significance of the public space as a heterogeneous sphere that is indispensable for socio-cultural coexistence and cannot be subordinated to economic interests. The support of the project by the Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe, the LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur, the city of Münster, the German Federal Cultural Foundation and further partners is being provided with full respect for this fundamental autonomy.

A ROUGH SKETCH OF THE INITIAL SITUATION

Klaus Bussmann, then curator and later director of the Westfälisches Landesmuseum, initiated the Skulptur Projekte in 1977 with Kasper König, who has shared the responsibility for every edition of the show since then with changing team constellations. The founding of the decennial had been preceded by a public controversy over Three Rotary Squares by George Rickey, a kinetic sculpture that had been erected in Münster. In resistance to the city's predominant voices, the Skulptur Projekte offered an aesthetic self-awareness programme that was to allow a broad public to acquaint itself with modern sculpture on an everyday basis. Even if the relationship eventually reversed and, by 1997 at the latest, the city discovered the exhibition as a unique selling point for Münster, the Skulptur Projekte still bear the stamp of these origins. From the very start, in addition to great receptiveness for experimental art forms, there has always been a preference for artworks that take on a distinct and independent form – in some cases involving their permanent stay in the city. Both the word "projects" and the word "sculpture" in the title are accordingly still justified to this day.

The generous rhythm of the show's realization – at ten-year intervals – distinguishes the Skulptur Projekte clearly from other major international exhibitions. From the curatorial point of view, the renown of this decennial, which has grown continually over the decades, goes hand in hand with

Jun 10 – Okt 1 2017

Skulptur Projekte Muenster

great responsibility, but also with unusually great freedom: the exhibition's broad impact and the unchanging spatial context – the city of Münster as the venue but also as an experienced cooperation partner – permit uncompromised drilling into the depths.

MÜNSTER AS A DRILLING PLATFORM

In developing the exhibition, it is our confidence in the themes addressed by the participating artists that serves us as a basis. The proven practice of inviting interesting artists for visits in advance, and only later asking them to submit concrete project proposals, has been maintained. It guarantees the artists' intense assessment of the urban fabric as well as the social circumstances of the place. Entirely as a matter of course, these local circumstances also encompass the projects of all previous exhibitions, which, as an exhibition specificity, form a special context, depending on whether they are still visibly present in the city or meanwhile exist only in the form of stories and documents.

At the same time, we are concerned with the question of how the world in 2017 differs from the world in 2007, and how life in a prosperous town like Münster, with deep historical roots, relates to life in other parts of the world. The reduction to the image of a "drilling platform" and its internal structure thus inevitably poses the question of the ocean that surrounds and thus demarcates it.

For the past decade, rapidly increasing digitalization can be considered the single most decisive change permeating every area of society: the years 2004 and 2006 saw the launching of Facebook and Twitter, both of which (among other things) played a decisive role in communication during the "Arab Spring". By 2013 at the latest, the NSA affair ensured the loss of every last morsel of naivety concerning the use of existing tracking and interception methods. Global networking can serve to raise an awareness of history, present self-conceptions and injustice all over the world, just as it can accelerate global economic transactions, regardless of local conditions. Algorithmically calculated predictions of the future have catapulted finance into the realm of pure speculation once and for all, and in criminalistics and the health system, the principle of dragnet investigation has produced new inclusions and exclusions. In view of political networks and data storage as well as the user-generated economies of the social media – including the monitoring and evaluation of those media for marketing purposes – a shift of public and private spheres is taking place to a degree nothing short of dramatic. Virtual and non-virtual realms of experience have merged to such an extent that the only viable term for the phenomenon is a "hybrid mesh". There is no boundary between the "analogue" and the "digital" world.

REAR WINDOW

In any good detective story, there is always an underlying theme accompanying the brilliantly staged plot; let us cite, by way of example, Hitch-

Jun 10 – Okt 1 2017

Skulptur Projekte Muenster

cock's *Rear Window* of 1954, which is devoted to the subject of voyeurism. Similarly, what holds the fifth edition of the Skulptur Projekte together on a second, underlying level is the issue of the mechanisms, manifestations and impacts of digitalization and globalization. And it is this issue that serves us as an imaginary guideline for our curatorial decisions.

We have accordingly entered into discussions with a number of artists such as the French dancer and choreographer Xavier Le Roy, whose works investigate the relationship between body, sculpture and city, or the Romanian artist Alexandra Pirici. With this focus, we will not only reflect on the specific characteristics of the "performing arts", but also on the new meaning attributed to the body in our day and age. The exhibition will thus grant the performance medium a status equal to that of its less ephemeral installations, and the performative works are to remain experienceable for the duration of the show.

Of the approximately thirty new artistic productions, the time-based formats will account for one third at most. Initial contacts have already been established with artists who merit classification more in the sculptural context: for example Santiago Sierra, who integrates the theme of globalization in his political approach to sculpture, or Ayse Erkmen, who already took part in the Skulptur Projekte in 1997. Nicole Eisenman has proposed building a fountain that would provide the city with a new public meeting place.

Other artists devote themselves directly to issues of digitality and communication, either by linking modern technology with the archaic image of the campfire, like Aram Bartholl, or by conceiving of mobile, web-enabled devices as wide-scoped film projection machinery, as in the case of Andreas Bunte.

THE CODE SPINS THE THREADS

Overall, we have chosen this orientation with the aim of providing in-depth insights into the differences between digitally transmitted/calculated experiences and personal, in some cases even physical, ones. We are pursuing these curatorial deliberations even to the extent that they will determine our own communication, for which we were able to obtain the services of the Swiss designers Urs Lehni and Lex Trueb. Lehni and Trueb take as their point of departure the realization that, regardless of whether one's publications are analogue or digital, the production process behind them is primarily digital. On that basis, they propose collecting all information of importance to the public in a central database. With the aid of software developed by Donald E. Knuth in the 1970s (around the time of the first Skulptur Projekte), this database will not only store contents but also be capable of formatting them. The distribution of information to the various media will take place here in spider-web-like manner. The chief protagonists - for example the catalogue and the website, both bilingual - will to the greatest possible extent be conceived jointly from the start, and fed from the same source.

Jun 10 – Okt 1 2017

Skulptur Projekte Muenster

NETWORKS AND PARTNERSHIPS

We are presently discussing the question of whether and how a meaningful exchange between the city of Münster and structurally comparable cities on other continents might be realized within the framework of the Skulptur Projekte 2017. We are examining various models and researching possible partners. In the broader sense, the idea of incorporating artists' books and fanzines - two less institutionalized and less internationally widespread forms of art - into the public realm can be included in this context. For the mediation of the show on site in Münster, we plan to work closely with members of all 165 nationalities represented in the town population.

To enable the broad public to take part in the process of the show's development, we will be cooperating with the Münster art academy, where we will offer lectures and seminars beginning in the summer semester 2015. Starting in May 2016, we plan to publish our joint deliberations in a series of independent magazines that for distribution purposes will supplement the frieze d/e art newspaper. Further cooperation projects are also in planning for 2016.

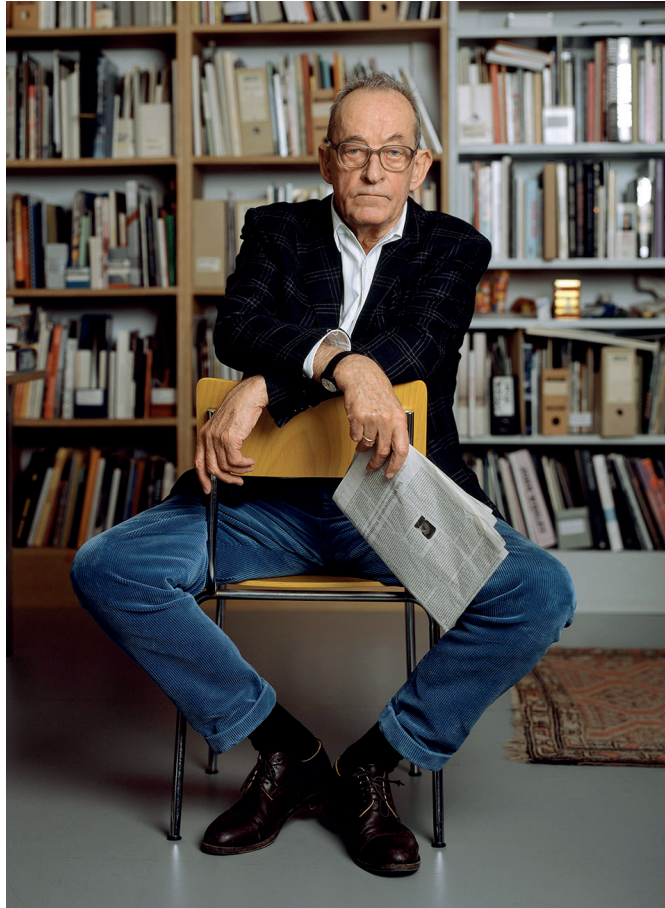
TEAM

The artistic director of the fifth edition of the Skulptur Projekte Münster is Kasper König. The exhibition concept is being developed in close cooperation with its curators Britta Peters and Marianne Wagner. Britta Peters is a freelance curator who has hitherto been active in the public realm and for various Kunstvereine (art associations), including those in Hamburg and Frankfurt. Marianne Wagner has held the position of curator of contemporary art at the LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur in Münster since June 2015, and in addition to curating the performance projects for the Skulptur Projekte will serve as the interface between the exhibition and the institution. Roughly speaking, the team constellation comprises three generations and is new for everyone involved. Imke Itzen, who was on the staff of the Skulptur Projekte 2007 as a curatorial assistant, is acting as project manager and is responsible for the exhibition's realization.

Jun 10 – Okt 1 2017

Skulptur Projekte Muenster

Artistic Director Skulptur Projekte 2017



PROF. KASPER KÖNIG

Prof Kasper König (b. in Mettingen, Westphalia in 1943) already organized numerous exhibitions during his student years, among them a Claes Oldenburg show in Stockholm in 1966. Following a lengthy stay in New York and teaching positions in Halifax and Düsseldorf, he was appointed professor at the Frankfurt Städelschule in 1988; the following year he assumed the position of rector there. In 1977 he and Klaus Bussmann jointly initiated the Skulptur Projekte Münster, which have been taking place every ten years since then with his involvement. He has moreover curated several large-scale exhibitions, for example “Westkunst” (1981), “Der zerbrochene Spiegel” (1993) and, most recently, the Manifesta 10 in St. Petersburg. From 2000 to 2012, Kasper König directed the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. In January 2015 he was appointed artistic director of the Skulptur Projekte

Jun 10 – Okt 1 2017

Skulptur Projekte Muenster

Curator Skulptur Projekte 2017



BRITTA PETERS

Britta Peters (b. in Birkenfeld an der Nahe in 1967) received her education in cultural studies at the Universität Lüneburg and now works as an art critic and free-lance curator. In 2007 she curated the “Wilhelmsburger Freitag”, an art project in the public realm in Hamburg, and from 2008 to 2011 she served as artistic director of the Kunstverein Harburger Bahnhof. In 2012 she curated the exhibition “Demonstrationen. Vom Werden normativer Ordnungen” at the Frankfurt Kunstverein in collaboration with the “Normative Orders” Cluster of Excellence at Frankfurt’s Goethe-Universität; the exhibition project “Illness as Metaphor: Madness in the Garden of the Species”, initiated by Peters, followed in 2014. She has published extensively on art in the public realm and held various teaching positions - recently, for example, at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste Hamburg. She assumed the position of curator for the Skulptur Projekte 2017 in January 2015.

Jun 10 – Okt 1 2017

Skulptur Projekte Muenster

Curator Skulptur Projekte 2017



MARIANNE WAGNER

Dr Marianne Wagner (b. in Schlieren/Zürich, CH in 1978) studied art history and sociology at the universities of Siegen, Karlsruhe and Bern. For her dissertation on “Lecture Performance. Sprechakte als Aufführungskunst seit 1950” she was awarded the prestigious Joseph Beuys Research Prize in 2014. In addition to realizing numerous exhibition projects, for example in the capacity of curatorial assistant and curator at the Aargauer Kunsthhaus (CH), Wagner has published on developments in art since the 1960s, above all on performance art, the sociology of art, and artistic production as a form of institutional critique. She has been curator of contemporary art at the LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur and the Skulptur Projekte 2017 in Münster since June 2015.

Jun 10 – Okt 1 2017

Skulptur Projekte Muenster

SYNOPSIS

The internationally oriented Skulptur Projekte Münster have been taking place at regular ten-year intervals since 1977. The artists participating in the Skulptur Projekte develop site-specific works in various media – sculpture in the classical sense, with its traditional materials, but also installations and performances – with which they inscribe themselves into the structural, historical and social contexts of the city of Münster. At the same time, the Skulptur Projekte point far beyond the boundaries of the specific place: themes pertaining to the global present and reflections on contemporary concepts of sculpture, but also considerations of the relationship between the public and the private realms in times of increasing digitalization are all integral elements of the artistic investigations. The show's significance is comparable to that of the documenta in Kassel. The next Skulptur Projekte will take place from 10 June to 1 October 2017.

TEAM

Artistic Director.....	Prof. Kasper König
Curators.....	Britta Peters, Dr. Marianne Wagner
Managing Director.....	Imke Itzen
Curatorial Assistance.....	Clara Napp, Sophia Trollmann
Head of Communication.....	Claudia Miklis
Online Communication Manager.....	Judith Frey
Education.....	Ingrid Fisch
Design Concept.....	Urs Lehni und Lex Trüb

Host: LWL-Museum für Kunst und Kultur,
Director Dr. Hermann Arnhold

Institution: Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe, Stadt Münster
Hauptförderer: Kulturstiftung des Bundes

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