

Press Release Berlin, September 26, 2017

Press Contact

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KW Institute for Contemporary Art announces *REALTY*—an attempt to get the better of gentrification.

The long-term project *REALTY* focuses on the role of contemporary art in the recent history of gentrification. Rather than illustrate art's failures once again, the project asks how contemporary art can be used to better effect. *REALTY* insists on long-term strategies and goals as a basis for concrete proposals—whether this takes the form of an educational blueprint, a legal proposal, or a pooling of resources into some new structure altogether. Whatever the result, contemporary art's appetite for subtlety should make way for a collective shot at solutions, however vague or naive.

To be clear, “gentrification” does not only imply upgrading neighborhoods. It refers to the kind of investment that leads to new and more moneyed residents replacing others. Contemporary art has played an active role within this dynamic. Although this role may not be essential to global economies as a whole, art has been a useful pawn, at best, and an eager profiteer at worst. Within the field of art, finding an effective response to said role has become something of a holy grail, and has met with little success. One artist, one venue, one model after another has been unmasked as contributing to the problem.

Berlin itself is an iconic example of gentrification, and of citizens' resistance to it. For their part, KW Institute for Contemporary Art and the Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art (to name but two examples) are known as the beating hearts of a post-gentrified Berlin-Mitte neighborhood. But *REALTY* is much more interested in taking advantage of what contemporary art can do that nothing else can. Imagine that the field were regulated somehow, somehow. What might we stand to gain from all the labor power, the money, the infrastructure, the brains, the mystique, the know-how, the network, and the strategic sweet spots?

Berlin-Mitte aside, gentrification can be observed in Bandung, Bern, Tehran, and elsewhere. The patterns are surprisingly predictable. And this predictability points to possibilities of preempting, even outsmarting these given mechanisms. In other words, an international alliance is not only a matter of solidarity. It also brings the hope of broad coalitions that can gain a good measure of traction. So tackling gentrification may not be some clever KW discovery, but what *REALTY* lacks in originality, it could make up for in common ground.

From 2017 to 2019, *REALTY* will host a series of public events, research fellowships, and commissions by several Berlin-based artists. The project kicks off in October with contributions by Dellbrügge & de Moll, Tashy Endres, Linda Goode Bryant and Laura Poitras, and fellows of the Sommerakademie Paul Klee Bern, namely Johanna Bruckner, Crystal Z Campbell, Luiza

Crosman, Alexandros Kyriakatos, Alexis Mitchell, Bahar Noorizadeh, Heather M. O'Brien, and Jonathan Takahashi.

The inaugural events of *REALTY* will take place at KW from October 3 to 5, 2017. For further information on each event visit our website at www.kw-berlin.de/en/realty.

Senate Department
for Culture and Europe



REALTY is commissioned by KW Institute for Contemporary Art and the Sommerakademie Paul Klee Bern and is funded by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin and organized by Tirdad Zolghadr, Associate Curator at KW.

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KW Institute for Contemporary Art

KUNST-WERKE BERLIN e. V.

Auguststraße 69

10117 Berlin

Opening Hours

Wednesday–Monday 11 am–7 pm

Thursday 11 am–9 pm

Closed on Tuesday

Admission

8 €, reduced 6 €

Admission free on Thursday evening from 6–9 pm

Combined Dayticket KW Institute for Contemporary Art / me Collectors Room Berlin

10 €, reduced 8 €

Free Guided Tours

KW offers free guided tours through the exhibitions during regular opening hours.

For further information on tours for large groups (over 10 people) please contact Katja Zeidler at press@kw-berlin.de.

Titles and exhibition dates are subject to change.