

# Press Release

## Berlin, May 26, 2020



Krist Gruijthuijsen, Berlin 2020, Photo: Frank Sperling

### **Director Krist Gruijthuijsen's contract extended until 2024**

Krist Gruijthuijsen will continue as Director of KW Institute for Contemporary Art until 2024, which was decided unanimously by the KUNST-WERKE BERLIN e. V. board:

“The board decided unanimously to prolong Krist Gruijthuijsen's contract as Artistic Director; a decision which is supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin. Krist's engagement and programming over the past four years has culminated in not only sharp investigations into various urgent subject matters, but also an investment in local, national, and international contexts. The positive increase in visitor numbers, as well as professional institutional collaborations that have seen the production of unprecedented exhibitions which have traveled internationally, are just two indicators of his success both locally and beyond Berlin. We are very much looking forward to seeing how his program unfolds in the coming years and we are convinced that Krist is best equipped to create and develop platforms for cultural exchange, dialog, and interaction that connect people in times where sociability, compassion, empathy, solidarity, and a greater sense of responsibility are increasingly important,” Chairman Ólafur Elíasson explains on behalf of the board of KUNST-WERKE BERLIN e. V.

Curator and Art Critic Krist Gruijthuijsen has been Director of KW Institute for Contemporary Art since July 1, 2016. Since its inauguration in 1991, KW has aimed to critically examine current tendencies within society through the production, display, and discourse of contemporary art. Over the past years, KW has expanded its artistic team in order to present plural visions and provide space and time to investigate various urgent subject matters, as well as explore different forms of temporalities within local, national, and international contexts. Under his direction, the

focus has deliberately been *artist-driven*, as a way to reflect on social and political issues. KW thereby continues its commitment to forming a social space in which contemplation and exchange between various protagonists and cultures can manifest, and where its audience is repeatedly challenged.

In collaboration with his curatorial team, Krist Gruijthuijsen developed a multi-layered program encompassing groundbreaking exhibitions and projects featuring emerging, overlooked, and non-Western voices such as those of Hiwa K (2017), Beatriz González (2018/2019), Anna Daučíková (2019), Hassan Sharif (2020), and José Leonilson (2020/2021). The program likewise promoted strong and daring positions, emphasizing concepts of the “body” in conjunction with politics, technology, and architecture in exhibitions such as Lynn Hershman Leeson (2018), David Wojnarowicz (2019), and *The Making of Husbands: Christina Ramberg in Dialogue* (2019/2020), among others. Gruijthuijsen also launched a number of successful long-term projects including REALTY and STATISTA, which developed critical investigations into the city of Berlin, as well as exhibitions by protagonists who play pivotal roles within the city’s artistic community, such as Willem de Rooij (2017/2018), Judith Hopf (2018), Heike-Karin Föll (2019), Frank Wagner (2019), and Amelie von Wulffen (2020/2021). The reinstatement of the Pogo Bar in KW’s basement turned into an immensely popular laboratory for the various communities within Berlin’s vast cultural landscape.

Since Gruijthuijsen began in 2016, KW has experienced a 40% increase in visitors, primarily due to an elaborate, politically engaged outreach and educational program. With the kind support of the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin, Gruijthuijsen, together with his Head of Administration, increased the institutional budget by 40% over the course of his tenure, and in doing so, has opened up positions for new employees which has helped to stabilize staff working conditions and improve wages. Furthermore, with the kind support of the Stiftung Deutsche Klassenlotterie Berlin (Lotto Foundation), he has overseen extensive renovation and refurbishment work of KW’s historic building with the aim of providing complete access, and are scheduled to be finalized by the end of 2020.

As for events in the near future, KW will hold a series of celebrations throughout 2021 for its 30th anniversary, including: the release of a publication which is the first to be based on the institution’s history; new commissions in and around the building with a communal street party on Auguststraße as well as ambitious exhibitions and public programming events with Peter Friedl, Renée Green, Iman Issa, Michele Rizzo, Michael Stevenson, and Oraib Toukan, among others.

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