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As of October 1, 2019 / Subject to change

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Press Release

Berlin, August 19, 2018

KW Institute for Contemporary Art announces Fall program 2019

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is pleased to announce its final season of the year, which is guided by the work of American artist **Christina Ramberg**. Operating under the influences of Surrealism, KW continues its investigation on the understanding of time and the body as an environment in traction with representations of time, narrative, and gender politics.

Pause: Every Ocean Hughes

Help the Dead

(After Ian White)

August 24–25, 2019

Curator: **Mason Leaver-Yap**

Stockholm-based artist **Every Ocean Hughes** presents *Help the Dead*—a new live art project that addresses self-determination, accountability, and the fantasy of continuity. Part concert, part theatre, *Help the Dead* draws inspiration from a series of workshops the artist attended in the last two years, where Every Ocean Hughes was learning how to be a death doula, care for dead bodies, and perform home funerals. Performed by **Colin Self** and **Geo Wyeth**.

Help the Dead is the final installment of a three-part *Pause* series dedicated to **Ian White** (1971–2013). An artist, performer, curator, teacher and writer based in London and Berlin, White's work responded critically to the role institutional infrastructures play in the production of art.

Help the Dead is a co-production with Volt, Bergen (NO), with the support of Konstnärnsnämnden, Stockholm, DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program, and The Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (US).

The Making of Husbands: Christina Ramberg in Dialogue

September 14, 2019 – January 5, 2020

Opening: September 13, 2019, 7 pm

Curator: **Anna Gritz**

Alexandra Bircken, Rachal Bradley, Sara Deraedt, Gaylen Gerber, Frieda Toranzo Jaeger, Konrad Klapheck, Ghislaine Leung, Hans-Christian Lotz, Senga Nengudi, Ana Pellicer, Christina Ramberg, Richard Rezac, Diane Simpson, Terre Thaemlitz, Kathleen White

“Containing, restraining, reforming, hurting, compressing, binding, transforming a lumpy shape into a clean smooth line, [...]” is how American artist **Christina Ramberg** (1946–1995) once described the drawings of corsets in her sketchbooks. Ramberg was one of the most intriguing painters to emerge within a generation of Chicago Imagists. She left a significant body of comic, formally elegant, erotically sinister paintings. Operating under the influences of Surrealism, her cropped torsos, sharply delineated and bound in bizarre variations explore the body in traction with its environment which is shaped by corsets, hairdos as well as conventions and summons an analysis of conduct that externally and internally determine our behavior. A selection of paintings and drawings by Ramberg will form the core of the exhibition, alongside of which other artistic positions will expand the conversation and extend the understanding of the type of framing devices that can be identified as having an impact on and condition performance, behavior, and physical expression.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a substantial publication with existing and commissioned writing by art historians and theorists as well as facsimile reprints of Ramberg's unique collection of photographic slides.

The exhibition is produced by KW, in collaboration with 49 Nord 6 Est – Frac Lorraine, Metz (FR) and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (GB), where it will be presented in 2020. The opening takes place in conjunction with Berlin Art Week 2019.

Hreinn Friðfinnsson

To Catch a Fish with a Song: 1964–Today

September 28, 2019 – January 5, 2020

Opening: September 27, 2019, 7 pm

Curators: Krist Gruijthuijsen, Andrea Bellini

As one of Iceland's leading artists, **Hreinn Friðfinnsson** (born in 1943, Bær Dölum, IS) is celebrated for his inspirational and poetic use of everyday objects. His vocabulary, underscored by a delicate sense of humor, playfully implements storytelling and perceptual ploys.

Friðfinnsson's work could be characterized as conceptual; it investigates our understanding of time and the world around us. He is truly a natural storyteller; hence most of his works often ask for a narrative, or the fabrication of a story, even if there isn't one. With subtle gestures, Friðfinnsson uses the exhibition space as a stage upon which to transform time, space, objects, the rational, and the irrational into captivating yet humble miracles.

To Catch a Fish with a Song: 1964–Today is organized in partnership with Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève (CH). The exhibition celebrates Friðfinnsson's extraordinary practice with a comprehensive retrospective spanning over half a century of work. A catalogue raisonné accompanies the exhibition.

STATISTA

September 12–16, 2019

Opening: September 11, 2019, 7 pm

Venue: Haus der Statistik, Karl-Marx-Allee 1, 10178 Berlin

Curators: Tirdad Zolghadr (KW), Matthias Einhoff, Philip Horst, Harry Sachs (ZK/U)

In September 2015, the *Allianz bedrohter Berliner Atelierhäuser* proclaimed the establishment of a center for sociocultural activities on a banner positioned on the facade of the Haus der Statistik near Alexanderplatz in Berlin-Mitte. Since then, the art intervention has become urban policy. A collaboration between ZK/U – Center for Art and Urbanistics and KW entitled STATISTA is testing whether working in the spirit of the Commons is an option even within today's context of city development. The results of these artistic working processes will be made publicly visible during the STATISTA presentation week in September, including a crypto currency based on the wellbeing of bee-populations, ecologically inclusive facade designs, interfaces for neighborhood participation and an international conference in the Fall. Partners include, among others, **Campus in Camps, Cercle d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise, Chto Delat, Economic Space Agency, ExRotaprint, The Hiveeyes Project, image-shift with Steffen Schuhmann, Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, KUNSTrePUBLIK, Labor k3000, MACAO, Moabees, Nachbarschaftsakademie Prinzessinnengärten, openBerlin, Penny Rafferty and Nascent, PlanBude, raumlaborberlin with Bernadette La Hengst, ruangrupa.**

KW Production Series 2019: Andrea Büttner and Rachel O'Reilly

Fall 2019

Curator: Mason Leaver-Yap

For its second year of commissioning, *KW Production Series* engages the work by two Berlin-based artists: **Andrea Büttner** and **Rachel O'Reilly**. Already in development, these new moving image works will premiere in the Fall of 2019.

The exhibition *The Making of Husbands: Christina Ramberg in Dialogue* is made possible through support from the Capital Cultural Fund and Terra Foundation for American Art.

The exhibition *To Catch a Fish with a Song: 1964–Today* by Hreinn Friðfinnsson is supported by the Mondriaan Fonds. STATISTA is a cooperation between ZK/U – Center for Art and Urbanistics and KW Institute for Contemporary Art. STATISTA is funded by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin. In 2019, *Pause* takes places in collaboration with curator Kirsty

Bell and the Estate of Ian White, Arsenal Institute for Film and Video Art as well as DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program. *KW Production Series* is organized in collaboration with the JULIA STOSCHEK FOUNDATION and OUTSET Germany_Switzerland.

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is institutionally supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin.

The Making of Husbands: Christina Ramberg in Dialogue September 14, 2019 – January 5, 2020

Opening: September 13, 2019, 7 pm

Alexandra Bircken, Rachal Bradley, Sara Deraedt, Gaylen Gerber, Frieda Toranzo Jaeger, Konrad Klapheck, Ghislaine Leung, Hans-Christian Lotz, Senga Nengudi, Ana Pellicer, Christina Ramberg, Richard Rezac, Diane Simpson, Terre Thaemlitz, Kathleen White

“Containing, restraining, reforming, hurting, compressing, binding, transforming a lumpy shape into a clean smooth line,” is how American artist **Christina Ramberg** (1946–1995, US) once described the drawings of corsets in her sketchbooks. Ramberg was one of the most intriguing painters to emerge within a generation of Chicago Imagists. She left behind a significant body of comic, formally elegant, erotically sinister paintings. Her cropped torsos, sharply delineated and bound in bizarre variations, explore the body in traction with its environment, shaped by corsets and hairstyles, as well as behavioral conventions. A selection of paintings and drawings by Ramberg form the core of the exhibition at KW Institute for Contemporary Art. Shown alongside are works by further artists in order to expand the understanding of the type of framing devices that construct identity— physically, psychologically, and metaphorically.

The exhibition *title The Making of Husbands* stems from a BBC documentary that traced the making of John Cassavetes’ 1970 film *Husbands*, picking up on Cassavetes’ interest in the construction of semi-improvised behavioral and gender performances and complicating these through the meta-level of the documentary, which attempts to record the supposed “natural” behavior behind the scenes on set. By doing so, however, it reveals the artificiality of stereotypical roles such as “the husband,” the complexities of “acting natural,” and the constructed nature of gender itself.

Artist and educator Christina Ramberg was a dynamic presence in the Chicago creative community from the 1960s up until her death in 1995. Through a plethora of small obsessive drawings, studies in sketchbooks, and a number of highly finished paintings in acrylic on Masonite, Ramberg observed the human body in various forms of modulation and metamorphosis. For her, this pictorial investigation doubled as an inquiry into larger questions concerning power dynamics, hierarchies, gender construction, desire, fetishism, and the increasing standardization thereof. From the early small-scale depictions of women in a state of undress to the later torso paintings, Ramberg’s surfaces and structural devices gradually merge with the body and become an androgynous prosthetic, a cyborg half-being.

Ramberg’s extraordinarily rich and eccentric personal reference collection of 35 mm photographic research slides (parts of which are reproduced in the exhibition catalogue) reveals a wide range of visual influences on her painting including printed advertisements, fashion layouts, medical illustrations, S/M bondage, hosiery, comic books, folklore and self-taught art, costume history, and quilting. The slides delineate a specific way of looking at the world, at the then contemporary everyday and at canonized visual culture alike. Equally, her collection of collages made from

comic books expresses an interest in social conventions and how they are preprogrammed and perpetually re-inscribed through everyday visuals.

Ramberg's investigation of the body as a kinetic site in reciprocity with its environment is further explored in the accompanying group exhibition. The artistic positions articulate a relation of interdependence between the body and everyday objects, built constructions and infrastructure. They expand our understanding of how governing principles are at work and how they leave imprints on personal expression and social interaction.

Marking the thresholds of the exhibition, **Ghislaine Leung's** (born 1980, SE) new commission *GATES* makes spatial circulation and questions of accessibility apparent and relatable, while her work *SHROOMS* highlights what is often overlooked or deemed neutral within an institutional body. Similarly accentuating KW's infrastructure, **Gaylen Gerber's** (born 1955, US) *Backdrop*, fabricated from gray commercial photographic background paper and fitted to cover the gallery walls, draws attention to what is presented and how it is presented, both physically in the space and metaphorically by the institution. In close proximity **Sara Deraedt's** (born 1984, BE) photographs span a covert dynamic between desire, household objects and bodies.

Kathleen White's (1960–2014, US) video documentation of her performance *The Spark Between L and D* alludes to the complex position of women within the narrative of the AIDS crisis and its biased commemoration. The body as a site that is overly programmed through historical, social, and technological mechanisms is further articulated in the multi-media-based practice of **Terre Thaemlitz** (born 1968, US). Thaemlitz brings to the fore how the existence of humankind at all times has been grounded by all-defining organizational structures.

The sexualized gaze of **Konrad Klapheck** (born 1935, DE) onto the objects that we produce, such as technical equipment, machines, and everyday tools epitomizes Ramberg's call for a reassessment of our built environment and its effect on the body. Similarly interested in a surrealistic, excessive take on everyday objects surrounding us, between 1978 and 1986 **Ana Pellicer** (born 1946, MX) created a series of oversized copper jewelry pieces to fit the Statue of Liberty in New York City for its centenary.

A contemporary of Ramberg, **Diane Simpson's** (born 1935, US) sculptures are abstractions of salient gendered garments that make the regulations and liberties that fashion and clothing leave to the body ever more apparent. Associated with a subsequent generation of Chicago artists, **Richard Rezac's** (born 1952, US) objects are masterfully balanced structures of contrasting forms, substances, and functions that raise questions about structural and aesthetical integrity. Their inversion of an object's qualities is akin to Ramberg's formal transpositions.

Alexandra Bircken (born 1967, DE) explores in her sculptures the boundaries between inside and outside, fragility and protection, visibility and concealment. Bircken's mechanical and industrial-looking shells become an interface where the body and the world come together, coalesce, and clash. In a similar negotiation between an inner and outer sphere, the painterly installation by **Frieda Toranzo Jaeger** (born 1988, MX) reconsiders the gendering of the car as an archetypically masculine machine. She repositions the interiors of contemporary, soundless, electric vehicles made by imperialistic manufacturers as intimate, female spaces, in order to question the autonomy of the individual body within a world increasingly characterized by automated control. Embodying this notion of automatization against the autonomy of the artwork, **Hans-Christian Lotz's** (born 1980, DE) electric readymade sliding door suggests on the other hand a reading of aesthetic space as something intrinsically transmitted and mediated—it traces the viewer's movement as they step in and out of its realm of attention.

While articulating yet another structural tension—that of technical devices taken apart, as well as nylon tights reminiscent of skin—*A.C.Q. /* by **Senga Nengudi** (born 1943, US) outlines the brinks of a potentially performative space, referring to Nengudi's ongoing involvement with acts of embodiment and ritualistic environments as sites for political negotiation.

Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a substantial publication that brings together newly commissioned writing on Ramberg by art historians and theorists including Anna Gritz, Larne Abse Gogarty, and Judith Russi Kirshner, alongside experimental fiction texts by Jen George and Dodie Bellamy.

Title: The Making of Husbands: Christina Ramberg in Dialogue

Editor: KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Anna Gritz

ISBN: 978-3-96098-696-6

Price: 29,80 €

Price for media representatives: 14,90 €

Colophon

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Biographies

Christina Ramberg (1946–1995, US) was one of the key figures of the Chicago art scene, both as a visual artist and as a faculty member at the Art Institute of Chicago (US), where she also earned her Fine Arts degrees herself. Moreover Ramberg was an ardent collector. In addition to her sketches and handwritten notes, she archived excerpts from scrapbooks and inventoried pictures into thematic groups. These archive journals show the artist's interest in formal experiments, in particular with hair and the human body. In Ramberg's paintings, serial images of fragments of women's heads and bodies painted with acrylic and felt-tip pens or ballpoint pens reflect these typological trends. An example of these recurring shapes in Ramberg's work is the female torso, which is often shown bound by tight undergarment and fabric parts in diverse compositions. Seen within the context of so-called „second-wave feminism“ in the 1960's, Ramberg's depictions illustrate the artist's complex and ambivalent feelings about the commercialization of femininity and women's bodies.

In recent years the work of Christina Ramberg has been shown in solo and group exhibitions at David Nolan, New York, the Jewish Museum, New York (US), the Tate Liverpool (GB), and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston (US). Ramberg's works are represented in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; the Smithsonian American Art Museum; Washington DC and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.

Rachal Bradley (*1979 in Blackpool, GB) is based in London. The work of the artist explores infrastructural and constitutional theory through a strategy of the erotic, and investigates this intersection through artistic practice. This approach reconsiders how the body can find agency within social organizations. Recent solo presentations include, *Of Sex*, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Frieze, London; *Foreign Press*, Galerie Gregor Staiger, Zurich; and *Only for Loving Medium*, Present Future, Artissima, Turin, selected by Fatima Hellberg.

In her work **Alexandra Bircken** (born 1967 in Cologne, DE) combines diverse materials such as wood, wool, leather, metal, plaster, stone, and everyday objects. With these combinations and juxtapositions, Bircken speaks to a surplus economy of materials and their connotations, and pushes her objects to a state of becoming 'auratically charged'. In the realm of materials and bodies in flux, the artist explores boundaries between inside and outside, fragility and protection, visibility and concealment. Clothing is perceived as a second skin; it becomes the interface where the body and the world come together, coalesce, and clash. Bircken's works have been shown in numerous galleries and museums, including Studio Voltaire, London (UK); Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (NL); Kunstverein in Hamburg, Hamburg (DE), and Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf (DE). Since 2018, Alexandra Bircken has held a professorship at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich (DE).

Sara Deraedt (born 1984 in Asse, BE) works with found images as well as her own photographs, which she edits and reformats by partially deleting and omitting information. This approach creates references to enigmatic actions that could take place in areas that seem both strange and familiar, in functional or artistic contexts. Her works have been shown at White Columns, New York, (US); S.M.A.K., Ghent (BE) and WIELS, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Brussels.

Gaylen Gerber's (born 1955 in Texas, US) work addresses a seemingly simple ambition: to see clearly. Gerber's work frames this impulse to differentiate, and in doing so it often incorporates the work of other makers. Gerber's intention with these works is to keep narrative in tension by constantly renewing the relation between what is presented and how it is presented. Gaylen Gerber has exhibited widely including monographic and cooperative projects at Kunsthau Bregenz (AU); Whitney Museum of American Art, New York (US); Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean, Luxembourg (LX); The Art Institute of Chicago (US); Kunsthalle Bern (CH); the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, and The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago (US).

Konrad Klapheck (born 1935 in Düsseldorf, DE) combines traditional painting with mechanical motifs. For Klapheck, typewriters and sewing machines, telephones and irons reflect the human being in a psychical state. In the course of the painting process, construction details are transformed into attributive characteristics that reveal the ambiguities of male and female beliefs. In 1964 he took part in Documenta III in Kassel (DE), and two years later the Kestnergesellschaft in Hannover (DE) organized his first retrospective. Between 1997 and 2002 he held a professorship for free painting at the Düsseldorf Art Academy (DE). In 2006 a large solo exhibition of the artist took place at the Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen (DE). Purchases and retrospectives by renowned museums honor Klapheck's work.

Ghislaine Leung's (born 1980 in Stockholm) work shows a strong attempt at structural and material equality between the parts that constitute both the exhibition and the artwork. Leung's work, in relation to Christina Ramberg, is positioned where infrastructure intersects with the body, made palpable, made erotic. Her recent solo projects include: *Power Relations* at ESSEX STREET, New York City (US); *CONSTITUTION* at Chisenhale Gallery, London; *The Moves* at Cell Project Space, London (2017); *078746844* at WIELS, Centre d'Art Contemporain, Brussels. Leung is also a member of PUBLIKATIONEN + EDITIONEN. Her first collection of writings, *Partners*, was published by Cell Project Space in 2018. In 2019 she will have a solo exhibition in Künstlerhaus Stuttgart (DE) and in Marquise, Lisbon.

The works by **Hans-Christian Lotz** (born 1980 in Hamburg, DE) are primarily about „intelligent creatures and commodities” ranging from pigs to machines that function autonomously, to devices with motion detectors that seem to be aware of their surroundings. At the same time, Lotz's flat, fixed panels suggest a loose relationship towards painting. No matter which traces of processing can be found in his work, they can hardly be traced back to their origin. Lotz's works have been shown in numerous solo exhibitions, most recently at David Lewis, New York (US), Midway Contemporary Art, Minneapolis (US), Diana Lambert, Vienna, and Lars Friedrich, Berlin.

The work by **Senga Nengudi** (born in 1943 in Chicago, US) makes you feel jolted, nearly physically affected by the nylon tights knotted, tied, and weighted down with sand and juxtaposed with the structural rigidity offered by an AC machine and a refrigerator taken apart. As much as pantyhose is a piece of cloth to keep women's bodies in place, in the work of Senga Nengudi it functions as an affirmative sign to stress ephemerality and the flexibility of the elastic (female) body, but of artistic media, too. Her recent solo exhibitions include *Topologies*, Lenbachhaus Munich (DE), *Performances, 1976–81*, Thomas Erben Gallery, New York (US) (2013); *Lov U*, Warehouse Gallery, Syracuse University, (US) (2012); among others.

Between 1978 and 1986 **Ana Pellicer** (born 1946 in Mexico City) created a series of oversized jewelry pieces in copper, including the ring ANILLO LILIPUTENSE, PRODUCTO DE EXPORTACIÓN that carries the English title THE BROBDINGNAG RING, on the occasion of the centenary of the Statue of Liberty: she made a jewelry set to fit the statue. She established an important artistic colony and school, the Adolfo Best Maugard School of Arts and Crafts, dedicated to the promotion of traditional coppersmith techniques in Santa Clara del Cobre, Michoacan (MX), in 1973. Her works have been shown at Gaga, Mexico City (MX), Galerie Francesca Pía, Zürich (CH), Museo de Arte Moderno, Mexico City, and MoMA PS1, New York (US).

Shaped within the traditions of minimalism and post-minimalism, the sculptures by **Richard Rezac** (*1952 in Lincoln, US) are brought to life through varying materials such as wood, cast iron, bronze, aluminum, and silk. Rezac works with his first intuition as well as through given mathematically grounded propositions. His work is therefore usually conceived through geometric drawings. His art has been shown internationally, among others at DePaul Art Museum, Chicago (US), the James Harris Gallery, Seattle (US), Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin (DE) and Marc Foxx, Los Angeles (US). Rezac has received scholarships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Joan Mitchell Foundation, and the Tiffany Foundation. He is an associate professor at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Diane Simpson (born 1935 in Joliet, Illinois, US) creates sculptures and drawings from a variety of sources, including clothing, tools, and architecture. The compositions of the clothing forms have continuously shaped her work, exploring functional and sociological roles and the influence of design and architecture. In 2010, a retrospective of her life work took place at the Chicago Cultural Center (US). Recent exhibitions including her work took place at the Whitney Museum, New York (US); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (US); and Herald St, London. Simpson's works are in permanent collections at the Art Institute of Chicago (US), the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (US); and the Kadist Art Foundation, Paris. Simpson's fellowships and awards include the Illinois Arts Council IAS-Project Grant and Walter M. Campana and E. Garrison Prizes of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Terre Thaemlitz (born 1968 in Saint Paul, US) is an essayistic audio and multi-media producer, also known as DJ Sprinkles, whose sound-based practice digs into the limitations and boundaries of systems, structures, and traditions he encounters. Thaemlitz ontologically questions the body, behavior, identity, and modes of thinking as sites that have been overly programmed through historical, social, and technological mechanisms. She has released over 15 solo albums, as well as numerous 12-inch singles and video works. His writings on music and culture have been published internationally in a number of books, academic journals and magazines. As a speaker and educator on issues of non-essentialist Transgenderism and Queerness, Thaemlitz has lectured and participated in panel discussions throughout Europe and Japan. Her work was among others part of documenta 14, Kassel (DE).

Sensuality, sexuality, and hybridization come to mind when following the smooth lines of the painterly installations by **Frieda Toranzo Jaeger** (born 1988 in Mexico City, MX). Even when the body is not depicted, its presence is implied and always in a passive way as if seducing a consumer. Toranzo Jaeger's exploration of mobility and the idea of autonomy is not limited to her subject matter. She also draws on art-historical forms, specifically the expandable triptych. By revisiting this particular format, she investigates how the freestanding painting may extend, unfold, and claim space. She completed her MFA degree at the Hamburg Kunst Akademie, and in 2017 had a solo exhibition at Reena Spaulings, New York (US). Recent group shows include Galerie Barbara Weiss, Berlin; Green Tea Gallery at Federico Vavassori, Milan (IT); Lerchenfeld I at Kunstverein Schwerin (DE), and Merlin at SORT, Vienna.

Kathleen White (1960–2014, US) was a multimedia artist. White became famous for her work commemorating her friends who fell victim of AIDS in New York during the 1980s and 1990s. Her intimate narratives take the form of drawings, paintings, sculptures, and performances. She used to work with her long-time partner, Rafael Sánchez, on projects such as Somewhat Portable Dolmen, alLuPiNiT, and Table. Martos Gallery, New York represents the estate of Kathleen White and the Sánchez-White Archive. Recent exhibitions took place in Martos Gallery; Pioneer Works; Socrates Sculpture Park, and Paul Kasmin Gallery, all in New York (US).

11/20

Public Program

... And yet we are becoming

Performance by Frieda Toranzo Jaeger

15 September 19, 5 pm and 6 pm

In English

Berlin Session: Elvia Wilk

Launch and Reading of Elvia Wilk's debut novel *Oval*, followed by a conversation

17 September 19, 7 pm

In English

Guided tour through the exhibition with Curator Anna Gritz

19 September 19, 6 pm

In German

Guided tour through the exhibition with Assistant Curator Léon Kruijswijk

25 October 19, 5 pm

In English

The Erotics of Infrastructure

A program of workshops, readings, and talks conceived by Rachal Bradley

28 October – 10 November 19

In English

The Erotics of Infrastructure is a series of workshops, readings, and talks conceived by artist **Rachal Bradley** (born 1979, GB) to constitute a discursive body on the notion of infrastructure—primarily in, but also outside of the arts. If infrastructure can be understood as obliquely involved in processes of conditioning and regulation, the program examines where and how the idea of the erotic might serve as an approach to sustain and regain agency within these structures. Over the course of the events, the discussions evolving at KW will explore how the pleasurable, the charged, and the circuitous might recalibrate infrastructure from a non-neutral to a negotiable framework underlying our perception and our behavior in manifold ways. As such, it is suggested as highly inter-dependent with the people and things inhabiting it. *The Erotics of Infrastructure* is the second, Berlin-specific iteration of an ongoing program that began at Gasworks, London, in 2017, and is curated by Kathrin Bentele.

Conversation between Julia Bryan-Wilson, University of California, Berkeley, and Eva Ehninger, Humboldt University of Berlin

21 November 19, 7 pm

In English

Guided tour through the exhibition with Assistant Curator Kathrin Bentele

5 December 19, 6 pm

In German

ALLER-RETOUR ET ALLER

A reading by Karolin Meunier in dialogue with a film, an actress, and a novel: Wanda, Barbara

Loden, Nathalie Léger

13 December 19, 7 pm

In German

Hreinn Friðfinnsson

To Catch a Fish with a Song: 1964–Today

28 September 19 – 5 January 20

Opening: 27 September 19, 7 pm

Icelandic artist Hreinn Friðfinnsson (born in 1943, Baer Dölum, IS) is celebrated for his lyrical and poetic use of everyday objects. His artistic vocabulary, underscored by a delicate sense of humor, playfully implements storytelling and perceptual ploys. Friðfinnsson's work could be characterized as conceptual and investigates our understanding of time and the world around us. As explained by the artist himself: "Notions of time are always compelling. I read what comes my way about physics and mathematics, but I read as one who is uninitiated. The feeling and the interest in the essence of time is serious, but my dealing with time is not knowledge-based; it is more exploratory and feeling-based."

He is truly a natural storyteller; most of his works beg a narrative, or the fabrication of a story, even when there isn't one. Friðfinnsson is not simply one of Iceland's leading conceptual artists—he himself can be considered a landscape, an atmosphere, a state of mind. He has been compared to artists working in romantic conceptual modes. Though his practice is grounded in the dematerialization of art, and also has strong links to landscape and natural phenomena, the artist has remained resolutely independent. Friðfinnsson's work does not incorporate a critical stance toward art, and the artist eschews strict protocols for the interpretation of his works; for him, making art has something compulsive about it. Friðfinnsson is a kind of idiosyncratic alchemist. With subtle gestures, he uses the exhibition space as a stage upon which to transform time, space, objects, the rational, and the irrational into captivating yet humble miracles. Although there is a consistency of theme and a common emotional thread running through Friðfinnsson's art production, the resulting works are remarkably varied in scale and substance. They include photographs, videos, and drawings as well as installations, texts, and ready-mades. Throughout the profusion of media and subjects he addresses, Friðfinnsson's practice maintains a unique character; his economy of means goes hand in hand with a poetic, elusive, and at times humorous language. His work has inspired younger generations of artists, such as Olafur Eliasson and Philippe Parreno, who have been involved in supporting his work throughout the years. Friðfinnsson is an artist's artist in the truest sense of the term—his work remains relatively unknown to the greater public. For this reason, the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève (CH) and KW Institute for Contemporary Art have joined forces to celebrate his extraordinary practice with a comprehensive retrospective spanning over half a century of work. The exhibition, titled *To Catch a Fish with a Song: 1964–Today*, is accompanied by a chronological catalogue raisonné that includes elaborate academic essays and an extensive bibliography. The exhibition is the artist's first institutional solo show in Switzerland and Germany.

The exhibition at KW begins with the very first pieces he produced: his *Self Portrait of 1964 and Dropping by at Jón Gunnar's* (1964), one of his first conceptual pieces. The works were part of the first exhibition by the SÚM group, an artist collective that initiated a space of the same name—Friðfinnsson was a founding member. The SÚM-group came into being in Reykjavík in the mid-1960s and remained active well into the 1970s. The group may be regarded as the first

consciously disruptive movement in Icelandic art, aiming its barbs at two local trends, landscape painting on the one hand and abstraction on the other. The SÚM artists themselves were a diverse group, many of them largely self-taught. SÚM's artistic expression was partly born out of the social and cultural turmoil of the late 1950s and early 1960s, not least the manifold challenges to the moral values of Western culture. A new generation of Icelandic artists were introduced to many of these ideas through Swiss-German artist Dieter Roth, who lived in Iceland for a time.

The first floor of the exhibition also contains works from the 1970s, including some of his more iconic work such as the infamous *First House* (1974), part of the *House Project* (1974 ongoing)—a work spanning the artist's career. Inspired by a book of Icelandic author Þórbergur Þórðarson from 1938, Friðfinnsson built a small house in the summer of 1974—a house in the same fashion as Sólon Guðmundsson, an old eccentric living in a fishing village in north-west Iceland, had intended to do about half a century ago; that is to say an 'inside-out house'. The existence of this house means that 'outside' has shrunk to the size of a closed space formed by the walls and the roof of the house. The rest has become 'inside'. The house harbours the whole world except itself. This 'inside-out house' is situated in an unpopulated area of Iceland, and in a place from which no other man-made objects can be seen. It poses questions about space and its boundaries.

Alongside the *House Project*, his other long-term project *I Collected Personal Secrets* (1972–2015) can be seen, in which Friðfinnsson collected secrets from people over 40 years. In the early 1970s, the artist placed an advert in a Dutch art magazine asking people to send him their personal secrets. By posing as a collector of personal secrets, the artist would, he thought, allay suspicions that he had any ulterior motive in using or revealing privileged information that might come his way. After 40 years, Friðfinnsson concluded his "secrets project" by shredding the accumulated unread secrets and using them as the base for a monochrome painting.

The second floor of the exhibition is a hybrid of subtle gestures in which the exhibition space becomes more of a stage, with objects and performative works at the center. Pieces such as *Point / Counterpoint* (2017), in which an arrow is being shot by a bow into the wall of the gallery, or *Beauty Marks* (2004), in which a fake beauty mark is placed on the face of the director of the institution and an enlargement of it positioned within the gallery, are playful and humorous. More subtle and poetic actions appear in *Atelier Sketch* (1990–ongoing), which literally captures spider webs from the various studios the artist has occupied to date, or *Placement* (1999–ongoing), where the artist dipped his thumb, index, and middle finger into red, yellow, and blue paint and then placed glass sheets onto the gallery wall, leaving colored fingerprints as the only evidence.

Friðfinnsson's unique understanding of origin, space, and time, in which absence and presence often play an important role, is what makes him a pioneer in our comprehension of ecology and existence.

Colophon

Curators: Krist Gruijthuijsen, Andrea Bellini

Assistant Curator: Cathrin Mayer

Public Program and Outreach: Sabrina Herrmann

Head of Production: Claire Spilker

Technical Management: Wilken Schade

Head of Installation, Media Technology: Markus Krieger

Installation Team: KW Installation Team

Registrar: Monika Grzymislawska

Press and Communication: Karoline Köber, Katja Zeidler

Texts and Editing: Krist Gruijthuijsen, Friederike Klapp, Karoline Köber

Interns: Nina Köppert, Adriana Quezada, Johanna Weiss

Biography

Hreinn Friðfinnsson was born in 1943 in Baer Dölum, Iceland, and studied at the Icelandic College of Arts and Crafts in Reykjavík. Since 1971 he has lived and worked mainly in Amsterdam. Friðfinnsson often draws his inspiration from found objects, where he tries to make as few changes as possible, and explores ideas about the self and time. In 1965 Friðfinnsson became known as a member of the Icelandic avant-garde after founding the group SÚM in Reykjavík together with other artists.

Hreinn Friðfinnsson has presented his works in solo exhibitions at the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève (CH), 2019; the Kunstverein Amsterdam, 2015; the Centre d'art contemporain du Domaine de Kerguéhennec, Bignan (FR), 2002; and the Kyoto Art Center (JP), 2002. He also represented Iceland at the 45th Venice Biennale (IT) and was awarded the Ars Fennica Prize in 2000. Friðfinnsson has participated in numerous renowned group exhibitions, including the Guggenheim Museum in New York.

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Public Program

Guided tours through the exhibition by Icelandic artists interpreting Hreinn Friðfinnsson's artistic practice:

Tour with Hrefna Hörn Leifsdóttir
17 October 19, 6 pm
In English

Tour with Egill Sæbjörnsson
31 October 19, 6 pm
In English

Tour with Styrmir Örn Guðmundsson
15 November 19, 6 pm
In English

red eye 1 & red eye 2

Performance with Liina Magnea and members of the ÍKB, including Sara Björg Bjarnadóttir, Leifur Eiríksson, Haraldur Þrastarson, and María Sólrún

29 November 19, 6 pm

1 2 December 19, 6 pm

Venue: in the exhibition, 1st and 2nd floor

Tours and performances are included in admission fee.

STATISTA

September 12–16, 2019

Opening: September 11, 2019, 7 pm
STATISTA Presentation week: September 12–16, 2019
STATISTA Conference: September 13–16, 2019, from 10 am
Venue: Haus der Statistik, Karl-Marx-Allee 1, 10178 Berlin

The Haus der Statistik (House of Statistics, HdS) was built near Alexanderplatz in 1968, a seat of central data administration for the GDR. After reunification, it briefly harbored the federal bureau of the Stasi documents (GDR Intelligence), among other uses. The building has been standing empty for over a decade.

In September 2015, a banner designed by the Allianz bedrohter Berliner Atelierhäuser (Berlin Alliance of Artist Studios Under Threat) announced the establishment of a center for socio-cultural purposes at the Haus der Statistik. An artistic intervention which has now turned into urban-political reality. Today, the HdS is a unique pilot project in which a broad coalition of urban actors are together developing a polyfunctional experiment. A good 100,000 square meters will be home to a space for culture, social work, education, affordable housing, a new town hall and administrative usage, in the very heart of the city.

STATISTA is one of many “Pioneer Usages” of the vast empty spaces of the Haus der Statistik. Funded by the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe, STATISTA is testing from May to December 2019 whether working in the spirit of the Commons is an option within today’s context of city development. The critical demand on the state became a public promotion of art. The visionary spirit of 2015 is situated as a “Statecraft” of the future, as an urban political cooperation far removed from the rivalry of the Creative City. Temporary usage, in this case, does not lead to gentrification, but to a form of urban renewal that is to the benefit of the users of the city.

The German term ‘Staatskunst’ means both ‘government-commissioned art’ and ‘statecraft.’ The two should be borne in mind together: the curators’ public mandate, and the decision-making processes that seek to influence management systems and the creation of value. Sure enough, art today can play a leading role in enhancing the value of a city. STATISTA’s intent, however, is to acknowledge the role of art within urban development schemes, while proposing better criteria for the value chains at play.

With the aid of twelve distinct playing fields, STATISTA generates artistic prototypes for a civil society built on collective principles. The first results of these long-term artistic working processes will be made publicly visible over the STATISTA Presentation Week from 11–16 September 2019, including a cryptocurrency based on the wellbeing of bees, a façade design built for ecological inclusivity, neighborhood initiatives, and an international conference.

To be clear, STATISTA is not only talking quality of life. Since we are faced with dire shortages of housing as well as fundamental natural resources, farsighted planning perspectives are vital demands, not electoral options here. Contemporary Art’s pattern of temporary usage to cultural ends must be superseded by a logic of stabilization and “Pioneer Usage”: goal-oriented experiments with stubborn ideological pointers. Pioneering vegetation typically needs very little to survive, and can successfully smooth the path for new forms of growth.

The STATISTA Presentation Week culminates in an international conference featuring collectives working in a comparable spirit of bottom-up development: **Campus in Camps**, **CATPC (Cercle**

d'Art des Travailleurs de Plantation Congolaise), Chto Delat, ExRotaprint, Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, MACAO, Nachbarschaftsakademie Prinzessinnengärten, PlanBude, and ruangrupa. Discussions revolve around long-term prospects for artistic-participatory interventions in public space as well as specific neighborhoods. How can an initially artistic gesture be transformed into a long-term perspective?

Participation in all events is free. Some events require registration via the website.

The complete program of events is available at <http://www.allesandersplatz.berlin>.

Artistic directors: Harry Sachs, Matthias Einhoff, Philip Horst (ZK/U – Center for Art and Urbanistics)

Curator: Tirdad Zolghadr (KW Institute for Contemporary Art)

STATISTA is a cooperation between ZK/U – Center for Art and Urbanistics and KW Institute for Contemporary Art. STATISTA is a Pioneer Usage at Haus der Statistik. STATISTA enjoys the generous support of the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe.

Press Contact

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Education and Art Mediation

KW Institute for Contemporary Art's education and art mediation program engages with the institution's wide-ranging exhibition and event program and develops ways to extend the topics raised within through the lenses of the broader public. Throughout the year, members of KW's education team collaborate with high schools, universities, artists, art mediators, researchers, educators, neighborhood coordinators, and representatives of different communities from all over Berlin in various formats such as workshops, guided tours, classes, reading groups, and long-term investigations. The aim is to create space in which different perspectives meet for critical exchange by using artistic, experimental and pedagogical methods and eventually build a common ground for action that appreciates diverse bodies of knowledge and experiences. In doing so, the educational projects add new questions to the program and re-contextualize it with an interdisciplinary approach.

Collaborations

KW's mediation program is driven by the needs generated through long-term collaborations with different stakeholders such as artists, art mediators, schools, universities as well as diverse communities from all over Berlin. This has meant moving beyond the institution's own context of ambitious exhibitions and events, and exploring aspects that are touched upon in these programs through educational settings. To enable such a process, KW organizes individual workshop and project settings with each collaborator.

Current collaborators include: **Alfred-Nobel-Schule**, Berlin-Neukölln; Netzwerk **Berlin Mondiale**; **Berlinische Galerie–Museum für Moderne Kunst**; **Europa-Universität Viadrina**, Frankfurt-Oder; **Heinz-Brandt-Schule**, Berlin-Weißensee; **Hemingway-Schule**, Berlin-Mitte; **Kreativhaus e.V.**, Berlin-Mitte; **Kulturagenten für kreative Schulen**; **Ruth-Cohn-Schule für Sozialwesen**, Berlin-Charlottenburg; **Universität der Künste Berlin**; **Young Arts Neukölln**, **Stammpunkt Begegnungsarchitektur**.

Free guided tours

Besides the outreach activities, visitors at KW can participate in short guided tours through the exhibitions and institution, conducted by the KW Guides. This format has been established with the reopening in 2017 and is free of charge for all visitors.

Individual guided tours

Group tours can be organized on request. A guided tour for a group up to 25 people (or class size for school classes) takes approx. 60 minutes and can be offered in German or English. Please contact Duygu Örs at do@kw-berlin.de or by phone at +49 30 243459 132.

Costs: regular 70 € / reduced 50 € / plus reduced entrance fee of 6 € per person

Contact

Katja Zeidler
kaz@kw-berlin.de

Duygu Örs
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19/20

General Information

KW Institute for Contemporary Art
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10117 Berlin
Tel. +49 30 243459-0
info@kw-berlin.de
kw-berlin.de

Opening hours

Wednesday–Monday 11 am–7 pm
Thursday 11 am–9 pm
Closed on Tuesday

Admission

8 € / reduced 6 €
Combined Day Ticket KW / me Collectors Room Berlin
10 € / reduced 8 €
berlinpass holder 4 €
Groups of 10 or more: Each person 6 €

Free admission to visitors under 18, holders of the KW Lover* card, members of the KW Freunde e. V., and on Thursday evenings from 6 to 9 pm

Reduction is valid for students, retirees, those in community service, welfare recipients, unemployed, and disabled persons (at least 50% "GdB") upon presentation of relevant identification.

Accessibility

Due to construction work, the barrier-free restroom is currently not accessible.

Please ring the designated door bell at the main entrance gate (underneath the door bell panel), our staff members will assist you while enter the building. All exhibitions are accessible by wheelchair. All floors can be reached by elevator. There is no barrier-free access to the KW Studio in our front building. The courtyard of KW consists of cobblestones.

Please contact our staff for further information on your visit at +49 30 243459-41.

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Partners

49 NORD
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FOUNDATION FOR AMERICAN ART

The exhibition *The Making of Husbands: Christina Ramberg in Dialogue* is produced by KW Institute for Contemporary Art, Berlin, in collaboration with 49 Nord 6 Est – Frac Lorraine, Metz (FR) and BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (GB), where it will be presented in 2020.

The exhibition is made possible through support from the Capital Cultural Fund and Terra Foundation for American Art.



Senate Department
for Culture and Europe



Pioniernutzung
HAUS
der Statistik

STATISTA is a collaboration between ZK/U – Center for Art and Urbanistics and KW Institute for Contemporary Art. The project enjoys the generous support of the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe.

BERLIN
ART 11—15 SEP 2019
WEEK

The presentation week of STATISTA and the opening of *The Making of Husbands: Christina Ramberg in Dialogue* takes place in conjunction with the Berlin Art Week 2019.

Centre
d'Art
Contemporain
Genève



The exhibition *To Catch a Fish with a Song: 1964–Today* by Hreinn Friðfinnsson is co-produced with the Centre d'Art Contemporain Genève (CH) and supported by the Mondriaan Fund.

Senate Department
for Culture and Europe



KW Institute for Contemporary Art is institutionally supported by the Senate Department for Culture and Europe, Berlin.

KW