

Jovana Reisinger David Polzin

30.08.20-14.02.21

OSNABRÜCK

DIE | FRIEDENSSTADT

Rosalie Schweiker



Niedersächsisches Ministerium
für Wissenschaft und Kultur

Mickey Yang

M
mondriaan
fund

30.08.20-14.02.21

Bis zum 14.02.2021

Stiftung
Niedersachsen

Aleksandra Domanović

Bis zum 14.02.2021

OIB
BANK



Freunde der Kunsthalle
Osnabrück e.V.

Ausstellungs- und
Vermittlungsprogramm/
Exhibition and Art
Mediation Programme
2020/21

Disappointment

TAUSCHUNG

The *Disappointment* is over!

Dear visitors,

there was so much we had planned for our first annual programme on the topic of *Disappointment* at the Kunsthalle Osnabrück. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, not all of it could be realized the way we had hoped. Disappointment was brought about by the times. Our challenge now is to let these current conditions make for new ways of thinking about cultural institutions, as well as about upcoming exhibitions and our art mediation programme.

Let's straightforwardly take stock of this six-month programme on *Disappointment*, which ended with a final workshop last Saturday: in August, we were still able to open the three solo exhibitions by Jovana Reisinger, Rosalie Schweiker and David Polzin. David Polzin was to be followed by Mickey Yang in November. With a slight delay due to a false positive COVID-19 test, she did build up her newly conceptualized installation *Upaya* during the start of the lockdown. However, despite a two-month extension, the exhibition never got to open. The new video production by Aleksandra Domanovic is postponed altogether and will be shown in the year 2022 in Osnabrück. The chickens from Rosalie Schweiker's exhibition had their own pandemic and had to go into lockdown from November on because of the rampant wild bird flu. Out of ten workshops planned by the art mediation team, only one was held in physical space. The rest was translated into digital formats. The Sunday walks through Mickey Yang's exhibition were presented digitally via Telegram chat. The live production of the talkshow-series *Men in Trouble* by Jovana Reisinger could still take place in front of an audience in the beginning, the second block of episodes however we shot during the lockdown, complying with all safety regulations. The six episodes were watched more than 4600 times on vimeo. Additionally, you could watch a different video from Jovana Reisinger's closed retrospective online every week. Eggs were given out to the neighborhood as greetings from the Kunsthalle. Materials from the exhibition were distributed to students as part of cooperative projects on home schooling. And the reader with contributions by Anke Stelling, Helen Pritchard, Loren Britton and Bini Adamczak was sent to bookstores nationwide for free take-away. Unfortunately though, currently, it is only available in bookstores in Berlin, where books count as the staff of life.

As with all art institutions, for us too it was a process of adjustments and reconceptualizations, while at the same time it seemed that the exhibitions inside the institution were at a stand still. Without an audience,

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would they remain dead exhibitions? Rosalie Schweiker's exhibition *Crisis Communication*, for example, revolved around the idea of a multifaceted invitation to mediators and visitors to participate, change and reinterpret her works. Positioning and appearances of her installed work should have transformed and grown. At the same time, all components of the exhibition eluded the conventional logic of commercialization of the art market – nothing was simply an object. The chicken-made eggs, straw and feed were sculptural giveaways for the chickens, the contributions of invited cultural producers could be bound as a publication and taken away, the printed blankets were intended as later gifts to the cooperation partners. As described earlier, we sought to develop new ways of mediation. At the same time, the Kunsthalle's internal structures and working processes have been inscribed in the exhibition. Renovations, office moves and cleanups have spilled into the showroom, which is both a historic cloister and an office hallway. In the meantime, sculptures – consisting of straw, paper, delivery cartons, papier-mâché objects or silk-screen prints – mingled with moving boxes, file folders or office chairs. Was that too pragmatic? Was that too much reality for art? We had the feeling that in those moments, the exhibition reflected exactly the reality that Rosalie Schweiker aims at with her institutional and socio-critical claim. Art institutions are spaces where we consider our working and living realities. They should not be impermeable containers. As long as they remain that, the much-discussed “threshold fear” will persist. We welcome the fact that the pandemic-related changes in planning have resulted in many facilities opening up in new ways.

At the same time, we think it should not be left at the hasty digital rededication of formats, rather we would like to take away the following approaches from the disappointment of the time of COVID-19: art institutions should not be islands; networking as a basis of curatorial practice should aim to create solidarity between cultural producers as well as between institutions. The most visible formats in the past months have been projects and results of the art mediation department. It is important to maintain digital programmes in post-pandemic times to provide diverse ways of access. At the same time, the field of art mediation must be strengthened and included in curatorial production right from the beginning. A further dissolution of the boundaries between curating and mediating makes it possible to design process-oriented formats in which visitors have the chance to witness developments. In addition to digital formats, it is also necessary to invest in more enhanced digital tools for cultural institutions to rethink production and presentation as one in a more transparent way. Thereby we must not confuse publicness with visibility. Art and culture make a fundamental contribution to the education sector and should not have to campaign for their relevance. Rather, it is necessary to critically re-examine how limited one's own ideas of the public sphere, participation and involvement were. Who did we not consider until now? Who suddenly was reached by digital programmes and should continue to be? These findings and observations will inform the upcoming programme *Accessibility*, which starts June 26, 2021.

But what remains most necessary is to allow time for reflection, to really take in new concepts and ideas. This coronavirus crisis wasn't a time to unwind for everyone. Artists and cultural producers have reached their limits, both financially and mentally. Fears of financial cuts in the coming years threaten to drive smaller and larger institutions apart even further. Competition and comparability should not be our driving forces. The mentality of more-more-more of the past centuries must not be encouraged anymore. Solidarity and transparency about the realities of work should now be the focus. And then, perhaps, it will be the gestures rather than the expectations that will drive us: this way, there won't be so many disappointments.

Anna Jehle and Juliane Schickedanz
Directors of the Kunsthalle Osnabrück