

„THE DREAM BEFORE“ – Andrea Pichl in KORN Kunstraum



Duration of the exhibition: 30 September - 7 November 2021

Opening: 30 September 2021, 6pm, outdoors

Admission: free

Location: Display window of the Heinrich-Böll-Bibliothek, Greifswalder Straße 87, 10409 Berlin

Images of the exhibition: The work is being created directly for the exhibition space – current press images will therefore only be available a few days before the opening. Please contact us in this regard.

artspring berlin

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The *artspring* art space in the display window of the Heinrich Böll Library, which has been in existence since early 2021, is curated this year by Dirk Teschner and shows works on the theme of NEULAND – change, demolition, reconsideration (Wandel, Abriss, Neubesinnung).

KORN Kunstraum – in the display window of the Heinrich Böll Library Greifswalder Straße 87, 10409 Berlin

The respective exhibition in the display window can be visited 24 hours a day. Organised in cooperation between artspring berlin and the Heinrich Böll Library.

The exhibition series NEULAND is supported by the Bezirksamt Pankow von Berlin.

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„THE DREAM BEFORE“ – Andrea Pichl in KORN Kunstraum



1. „THE DREAM BEFORE“ – Exhibition by Andrea Pichl

„The true image of the past flits by. The past can only be captured as an image that flashes up never-endingly at the moment of its recognizability.“ (Walter Benjamin, On the Concept of History)

In the exhibition „THE DREAM BEFORE“ in the KORN project space (Heinrich Böll Library), the artist Andrea Pichl takes up the special character of the space as a display window, as the setting for an installation that promotes a statement and, to this end, specifically attracts the attention of passers-by in order to influence their attitude, their behavior.

Goods exposed and displayed in shop windows as a special space present themselves like sensual magnets. Their pleasing, graceful, enticing appearance makes us forget, as if it were a matter of course, the question of their usefulness. Walter Benjamin saw in such displays a form of related ‚phantasmagoria‘ in which a consumer society produces an image of itself which it simultaneously disavows.

Andrea Pichl, however, bases her installation on typical shop window designs in the GDR. In its official self-image, the GDR was not supposed to be a capitalist consumer society and was therefore constantly confronted with the contradiction of operating an economy in which goods were exchanged for money. It was probably not only the increasingly palpable discrepancy in the 1970s and 1980s between the range of goods offered by the state-owned industry and the needs of buyers, but rather the awareness of this contradiction that put an end to the advertising of goods on television, which had taken place in the 1960s much like any Western consumer society. Most shop windows remained, but because their possible luring effect was neither sought nor cultivated, the goods on display sobered down to purely informative references to themselves: this is what you can buy here. In the 80s, they often became unintentionally comically sad representations of the absence of what potential customers would have liked to buy.

„THE DREAM BEFORE“ is built from used, privately purchased window curtains from GDR production and is shaped by their characteristic patterns. These patterns shaped the everyday look not only for many people in the GDR but also Western markets. Despite its slowly aging machinery, the GDR textile industry was able to deliver high quality products for a long time and supply many states of the Eastern Bloc. However, the collapse of East German industry after the introduction of the D-Mark and the unification of the German-German economic area inevitably included the textile industry. The patterns and fabrics appear today as artifacts from archaeological depths. Together with the words „We’re redecorating for you,“ held in the Arabella poster font common in the GDR, they form „an irretrievable image of the past that threatens to disappear with [the] present“ (Walter Benjamin).

„THE DREAM BEFORE“ borrows its title from a song by Laurie Anderson, in which she quotes Benjamin’s theses on the philosophy of history. One of his lines is „history is an angel being blown backwards into the future ...“

* Walter Benjamin, On the Concept of History, Thesis IX: „There is a picture by Klee called Angelus Novus. An angel is depicted in it, looking as if he is about to move away from something he is staring at. His eyes are open, his mouth is open, and his wings are stretched out. The angel of history must look like this. He has turned his face to the past. Where a chain of events appears before us, he sees a single catastrophe that ceaselessly heaps rubble upon rubble and hurls it at his feet. He would like to linger, to wake the dead and to put together what has been shattered. But a storm blows from paradise, which has caught in his wings and is so strong that the angel can no longer close them. This storm drives him inexorably towards the future, to which he turns his back, while the heap of ruins before him grows towards heaven. That which we call progress is this storm.“

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The artist Andrea Pichl, who grew up in East Berlin and is active internationally, deals in her works with design features of the public and private space of the GDR as well as with the processes of reconstruction after German reunification.

Exhibitions (selection): Kunsthalle Rostock (solo and permanent outdoor sculpture 2023), Schwartzsche Villa Berlin (solo, 2022), Kunstraum Kreuzberg (curator, 2022), Galerie Katharina Maria Raab, Berlin (2021), Kunsthalle Wilhelmshaven (2021), Die Balkone, Berlin (2021, 2020); Kunstraum Potsdam (2020); Kunsthalle Rostock; Werkleitz Festival, Dessau; Museum Dieselkraftwerk, Cottbus (2019); Kunstraum Kreuzberg, Berlin (2019, curator); Kunstverein am Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, Berlin (2017, 2015); Kunstmuseum Moritzburg, Halle; Ausstellungsraum der IG Metall/Haus am Lützowplatz, Berlin; M HKA, Museum for Contemporary Art, Antwerp (solo with Anne-Mie van Kerckhoven) 2014); Krome Gallery, Berlin (2013, 2012); Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (solo, 2011); Architektonika and Architektonika II, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2011-2013); National Gallery Tashkent (2010, solo); Mies van der Rohe Haus, Berlin (solo, 2010); stage design „Emotional Revolution“, Volksbühne, Berlin (2009); „Fluxus East“, exhibition architecture, CAC Contemporary Art Centre Vilnius, Lithuania (2007).

2. NEULAND – Change, Demolition, Reconsideration (Wandel, Abriss, Neubesinnung)

German unification took place over thirty years ago – it is still a vivid memory for many, but is no longer part of the present. Not only the time before, but also the first years of the far-reaching upheaval in the new „East Germany“ are far removed from life, attitudes, moods and have become archaeological layers of the collective unconscious. Here lie the forgotten imprints of vanished experiences, crises, ruptures and struggles over the return of market relations, the transformation of legal relations, the demolition of social institutions, the closure of industrial plants and the reconstruction of entire urban landscapes of the East.

The speed and depth of the transformation eliminated not only the obsolete but also the serviceable, and has produced not only productive renewal but also some strangely old-fashioned substitutions – not least in housing and urban development. Well-known examples are the Palace of the Republic, replaced by a copy of a Hohenzollern palace, the Maple Leaf, replaced by faceless architecture designed for investors, and the careful restoration of many house façades in the style of the Wilhelminian empire. At the same time, there is growing interest in parts of GDR architecture and its design.

In the exhibition series NEULAND, artists will deal with the „GDR modernity“ in architecture and design and its supporting collective dreams, utopias and illusions in installations, collages and photographs and present their view of the ongoing process of „gentrification“ and its urban consequences.

3. KORN

The name of the art space KORN refers both to the architect Roland Korn and to the name of the residential quarter in which the Heinrich Böll Library is located. Korn designed numerous re-presentation buildings in East Berlin e.g. the Staatsratsgebäude, the Hotel Stadt Berlin, the Berlin Marzahn housing estate and the development of the Mühlenviertel quarter in Prenzlauer Berg.

Korn also translates as “grain” a seed from which plants sprout: and now art is sprouting in an unusual urban quarter.

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4. The Curator 2021

Dirk Teschner is a curator and publicist. He has been co-operating with the exhibition space HAMMER-SCHMIDT + GLADIGAU in Erfurt since 2014. He has organised the exhibition series KUNST GEGEN RECHTS for four years and is active in the initiative DIE VIELEN.

5. *artspring berlin*

Every year in May, artspring berlin organises an art festival in the greater district of Pankow – a whole month of art actions, concerts, performances, readings, exhibitions, screenings, workshops and, most importantly, open studios. artspring grows a little further every year, initiates new ideas for the visibility of art and culture and creates cooperations and synergy effects.

In 2021, the hybrid edition of the artspring berlin art festival took place under the slogan SIGNALE! from 7 May to 6 June.

6. The Heinrich-Böll Library

is a classical library for people of all ages, regardless of status and origin, and is the district central library of Pankow. In addition to readings and exhibitions, concerts are organized there under the direction of Tim Schumann, and it was part of the Fête de la Musique.