

Press release for the exhibition

Annette Wehrmann: Gehirn und Geld / Annette Wehrmann: Brain and Money **November 6th, 2012 – January 4th, 2013**

Galerie der Gegenwart, Hamburger Kunsthalle
Glockengießerwall, 20095 Hamburg

Annette Wehrmann: Gehirn und Geld / Annette Wehrmann: Brain and Money

“Uhm, again the money theme, oh no. Too poor for the revolution! No adventure tourism and no tent camp on the weekend. Thinking is stupid. We watch TV because we can’t afford the revolution.”

Annette Wehrmann, *Luftschlangentexte* (paper streamer texts), entry 8.5.1999

On the occasion of the Edwin-Scharff Award Ceremony 2012 by the Hamburg Senate in honour of the artist Annette Wehrmann the association Ort des Gegen e.V. shows the exhibition *Annette Wehrmann: Brain and Money*. The exhibition was curated by Ort des Gegen e.V. and Dr. Brigitte Kölle of the Gallery of Contemporary Art at Kunsthalle Hamburg.

Annette Wehrmann (*June 10, 1961 in Hamburg; † May 2010), developed a strong artistic position, somewhere between sculpture and intervention. She took as starting points the methods of conceptual and action art, and combined them with the language of the Situationist International. Using cheap and ephemeral materials she assembled objects that explored critical tensions between the politics of society, theories of knowledge and important questions about art. Her work dealt with the themes of money, the brain, thinking, the state, television and language. From the outset, her work was set up to confront the world around it. The works in the exhibition build six groups with the following titles: Kugeln, Ort des Gegen, Luftschlangentexte, Mattscheiben, Ufos, and DSB.

kugeln (balls)

Seven massive balls made out of bricks in 1991 are an important early installation by Annette Wehrmann. In a performance in the early 90s she also played soccer with them. The brick balls form together with a video of the performance and the drawings and collages that were exhibited in 2011 under the title *Genau der Richtige Sport für mich* a group of work that with the engagement of the *Freunde der Hamburger Kunsthalle* e.V. is part of the collection of Kunsthalle Hamburg since 2012.

Ort des Gegen (COUNTER-PLACE)

In 2002 COUNTER-PLACE came into existence as a critical answer to the utopian city *Borg* of the artist Inga Svala Thorsdottir. With the project COUNTER-PLACE Annette Wehrmann was searching for voids in the thoroughly functionalised public space that she could occupy with versions of a personal resistance. In her own words she explains:

„The COUNTER-PLACE doesn't strictly speaking, maintain any space. It can come into existence at any place. The COUNTER-PLACE is constantly in motion. It can temporarily leave urban organism at the outskirts [...]. The condition for the COUNTER-PLACE is the standstill and the failure of coordinated processes and of urban functions. Apart from other aspects the COUNTER-PLACE is just the place where garbage has remained. The COUNTER-PLACE is the other side of utopia, the third dimension. It can come into existence at all non-definable or rather provisionally defined places at every corner of the town.

The functional standstill is partial, a temporarily and spatially limited breaking point (yet no predetermined breaking point) within the smooth and smart processes which can guarantee the endurance and the efficiency of the town [...]. There will be often a snack bar or the branch take-away of a big burger chain in the vicinity of the COUNTER-PLACE for reasons I am not able to measure at the moment, but that are yet compelling enough. One cannot doubt the efficiency and use of both these institutions.

The COUNTER-PLACE denotes a breaking point in favour of pure negation, especially in favour of the mere passing of time which is materialised in the incline/accumulation of garbage (hello broken-window-theory). It is somewhere between coming to a standstill and radical release. At the COUNTER-PLACE the inhabitants [...] can meet without any purpose and reservation, yet the contrary might come true or nothing might happen at all. At the COUNTER-PLACE as previously mentioned storages grow: storages of time and boredom, abundance and left-overs.“

Annette Wehrmann, *Ein Ort des Gegen*, 2002

Apart from the 28 gouaches and the 10 photographs of the COUNTER-PLACE group of works the exhibition also shows the foam sculptures „Parkplatz“ (parking place) and „Nein“ (No) as well as a banner that was carried at COUNTER-PLACE demonstrations in Hamburg, Stuttgart and Vienna.

Luftschlangentexte (paper streamer texts)

Annette Wehrmann's installations and lectures of texts written on paper streamers, in which observations of everyday life became intermingled with philosophical and aesthetic questions (1996-1998) created a kind of visual poetry in the third dimension, under the sign of art in the social context. The exhibition shows texts on paper streamers next to artists publications by Annette Wehrmann or collectively produced by friends like *Too Special*, *Touristenklasse* and *NEID* in which she published her paper streamer texts, performance photos and gouaches.

Mattscheiben (tv screens)

The *Mattscheiben* (1991) make references towards watching tv, screens, masks as well as a camera focus and a human eye focus. 18 grey cement screens and 12 drawings are untypically accurate, almost like construction drawings. There is an obvious contrast with the drawings and water color paintings of later periods like the ones from *COUNTER-PLACE* or *Ufo* series.

Ufos

“The ufos I build are forms of a utopian–imaginarian character, in between the moment of release and withdrawal of oneself on the one hand and the social utopia, the wish for a better, another life on the other hand (...)”

Annette Wehrmann, 'Text über Ufos', in *Shedhalle/Programm/99* (exhibition catalogue), Zurich, Shedhalle, 1999

Next to 30 Ufo gouaches the exhibition features one three-dimensional Ufos: The "Reading Ufo" from 1999. Inside the "Reading Ufo" are sci-fi-novels on the floor, next to pillows and blankets, inviting the viewer to spend some time inside. Annette Wehrmann explains:

"(...) [the ufos] offer the viewers the opportunity to talk about the novels they've read and to create further possibilities. How would it be... like with a lottery for the distribution of special nice and luxurious apartments? Other ufos form a closed, exclusive space without inhabitants, the viewer stays outside.

The science fiction authors who are introduced in this context share a sometimes clear, sometimes less clear attitudes of social critique, science critique, and feminist critique. Many of the presented novels are feminist science-fiction novels from the 70s (...)."

Among these authors are Joanna Russ, Octavia Butler, James Tiptree, Ursula Leguin, Elisabeth Vonarburg, Nancy Kress, Marge Piercy, Storm Constantine, Tricia Sullivan.

DSB

"The project 'DSB for the Future' is concerned with the introduction of a new currency, the shell-shaped cement money called DSB. The letters stand for "Deutscher Seifenbeton" (German Soap Cement), a term referring both to the shape (a shell shaped tablet of guest soap) and to the material of the money.

DSB differs in form and to the material from conventional money, which allows it to be more easily distinguished from the value hierarchies which regulate exchange via, let us say, the deutschmark. Every purchase made using DSB usually requires a new definition and determination of values, so it is advisable to perceive DSB as a unit of exchange within a hypothetical economic order whose laws are nonetheless not entirely clear and so necessitate practical definition. This process inevitably leads to new value hierarchies specific to the DSB system, but it has not yet been finalized. While still in the course of being invented, these value systems cannot be brought into line with already existing currencies. It is also impossible to convert DSB into another currency. Exceptions to this have only temporary validity of any exchange rates which have been issued for a restricted period of a few hours or days. (...)"

Annette Wehrmann, leaflet to DSB, 1994

In the exhibition several sales conversations that Annette Wehrmann made and recorded in order to define the value of DSB will be presented as audio stations. Next to it some original DSB's as well as leaflets and banners that were used in exchange offices that Wehrmann occupied in the context of certain exhibitions.

The curators of the exhibition *Annette Wehrmann: Brain and Money*

The exhibition was curated by Ort des Gegen e.V. and Dr. Brigitte Kölle of the Gallery of Contemporary Art at Kunsthalle Hamburg.

The Ort des Gegen e.V. was founded 2011 in Hamburg out of sheer necessity to recover the artistic estate of Annette Wehrmann (1961- 2010). By saving and conserving her works the association put the foundation in order to carry on her art and her thoughts. The members of the association are Erzsébet Ambrus, Hans-Christian Dany, Sabine Falk, Katharina Gerszewski, Jochen Möhle, Christoph Rauch, Holger Steen, Inga-Svala Thorsdottir, Laila Unger, Brigitte Wehrmann, Monika Wucher, Ina Wudtke. The artists and authors belong to the circle of friends of Annette Wehrmann and have worked with her in one way or another. Further Informations about the activities of the Ort des Gegen e.V.: www.annetwehrmann.de.

Dr. Brigitte Kölle has been director of the Gallery of Contemporary Art at Kunsthalle Hamburg since March 2012. In the role of curator and academic head of Portikus in Frankfurt am Main (1994–98), under the directorship of Prof. Kasper König, she devised and curated more than 25 exhibitions and publications. From 1999 to 2003 Kölle held the post of curator at the Institute of Visual Arts in Milwaukee (USA), where she mounted American debut exhibitions by European artists. Since then she has curated exhibition projects in many international art institutions: PS1 and Goethe-Haus, New York; Frankfurter Kunstverein; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; Venice Biennale; Lenbachhaus, Munich; Konrad Fischer Galerie, Düsseldorf; K21 Kunstsammlung NRW (Art collection of North Rhine-Westphalia), Düsseldorf.

Lectures & guided tours at Lichthof or in the exhibition in 2012:

- Wed. Nov. 7 12 a.m.: Brigitte Kölle lecture: Absolut der richtige Sport für mich!
Thur. Nov. 22 7 p.m.: Ina Wudtke (Ort des Gegen e.V. guided tour through the exhibition: The City, Ufos, Collective Art Practice.)
Sun. Nov. 25 11 a.m. - 12 a.m.: Hans-Christian Dany (Ort des Gegen e.V. guided tour through the exhibition)

Wed. Dez. 5 12 a.m.: Brigitte Kölle lecture: Blumensprengungen.

Additional dates for lectures and guided tours in 2013 will be announced on the website of Hamburger Kunsthalle.

Kontakt:

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