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›Wollust‹ the presence of absence

what

Group exhibition marking the new opening of Columbus Art Foundation in Leipzig. Curated by Jörg van den Berg and Tilo Schulz.

when

Opening: Thursday, 1 May 2008, 11 am – 21 pm
Exhibition dates: 2 May - 15 June 2008
Opening hours: Thu to Sun 12 noon – 18 pm

where

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Is not With the group exhibition ›Wollust – the presence of absence‹ we celebrate the opening of our new exhibition venue at HALLE 14, Spinnerei Leipzig. On view are works by 25 artists. ›Wollust – the presence of absence‹ is about the emancipatory presence of the artwork. It deals with the finding that something, which cannot be presented, nevertheless has a presence – an insight that is in equal measure irritating and fundamental. The title of the exhibition is borrowed from Roland Barthes's book ›The Pleasure of the Text‹, where he writes that "pleasure can be expressed (in words), but bliss [Wollust] cannot". In connection with our exhibition the metaphor "Wollust" stands for a moment of creative uncertainty, for the unfinished and for this very "non-expressible". It is about holes, voids, openings, gaps, blurs, breaches and/or changes of meaning. Hence, it is an exhibition that is more concerned with an "is not" than an "is". ›Wollust – the presence of absence‹ creates a visual realm of experience, which can be explored through notions that are based on absences.

On this note ›Wollust – the presence of absence‹ functions as the verso of last year's summer exhibition that carried the title "die Präsenzproduzenten" (the producers of presence). Just like "die Präsenzproduzenten", "Wollust" does not follow the traditional logic of a thematic group exhibition. Instead, it maps out an arrangement with open borders that comprises the various artistic positions, but does not force them into a determinate relation to each other. As "die Präsenzproduzenten", "Wollust" shows a consciously heterogeneous addition of outstanding solo works, each of which opens itself up to various potential relationships with the others. In doing so, they offer never-ending possibilities of reception and action. The visitor is constantly challenged to discover, to confirm or discard new connections of form or content within this open network. The balance between single artwork, exhibition and presentation shifts all the time and by this discloses a complex field of perception and communication. Both exhibitions will be compiled in the book "Die emanzipatorische Präsenz des Kunstwerks" (The Emancipatory Presence of the Artwork), which is going to be published in autumn by ›columbus books‹.

Leipzig The decision to choose Leipzig as second location for the Columbus Art Foundation has various reasons. An essential argument was the neighbourhood to the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst (HGB) in Leipzig, because for the last 12 years the centre of our activities has been a national advancement project for academy graduates. In our eyes, the spatial proximity to an educational institution of this quality conduces very much to the steady development of our advancement project. For this reason, we also conceive of the closeness to the "Universal Cube" – a project by HGB, class of Joachim Blank – on the second floor of HALLE 14 as windfall. Furthermore, the opportunity to be involved into the development of a unique institution like HALLE 14 was very tempting. Also, the Spinnerei is a location offering a virtually perfect mixture of art production, non-commercial art representation and commercial art procurement. We expect from this vicinity a lively exchange and see the new habitat as a place of learning for us.

We are looking forward to seeing you!

Jörg van den Berg, Columbus Art Foundation