

5th berlin biennial for contemporary art
April 5 – June 15, 2008
Announcement of venues

November 22, 2007

The 5th berlin biennial for contemporary art, curated by Adam Szymczyk and Elena Filipovic, will comprise two parts, **day and night**. During the day, artworks and specially commissioned projects will be on view at three main venues. During the night, the exhibition will continue in the form of diverse events held in widely different sites throughout the city every evening for the duration of the biennial. Thus expanding the spatial and temporal conditions of the typical exhibition, the 5th berlin biennial will bring together artists of different generations and from around the world and will aim to privilege in-depth dialogue with artists, new productions, and context responsive projects.

For the **day**, three very different locations were selected for their cultural significance as well as for their political and economic contexts – seen both historically and in the present state of Berlin. Just as importantly, each venue offers a very different type of exhibition space, with distinctive conditions and frameworks for the artists, artworks, and viewers.

KW Institute for Contemporary Art is the cradle and traditionally one of the main venues of the berlin biennial as well as its organizer. The institution, located in a former margarine factory, was founded in 1991 with the intention to create a new space for the presentation, production and mediation of contemporary art. From its very beginning KW participated in the dramatic process of urban transformation of former East Berlin and conceived itself as a laboratory without a permanent collection and enabled encounters with current developments in art and culture. Today it hosts an exhibition space and offers living and working space for artists. Both nationally and internationally KW has become one of the most renowned and visited venues for contemporary art in Berlin.

The **Neue Nationalgalerie**, built from 1962 to 1968 by Mies van der Rohe, remains one of the most important icons of post-war modernist architecture in Berlin. Situated in former West Berlin and strategically built close to the Berlin Wall, the Neue Nationalgalerie was long a contested symbol in the cultural war between the East and West Berlin and between their respective political ideologies. At present, it remains the most visited exhibition space for art in the capital. The 5th berlin biennial will use the upper level, 2,500 square meters of exhibition space laid out in a glass cube whose transparency disrupts distinctions in viewing between inside the building and outside and offers a counter to the neutral posture of conventional museum's white cubes.

Skulpturenpark Berlin_Zentrum, the third venue, although little like a typical 'venue', sits on approximately 60 vacant lots of downtown real estate. This urban void located in an area formerly occupied by the Berlin Wall, is both a symbol and victim of the ravages of speculative investment and is now overgrown with weeds and surrounded by bleak office and apartment buildings. The park was developed by five artists, KUNSTrePUBLIK e. V. who gave it the name Skulpturenpark Berlin_Zentrum and began working with the respective landowners to host various exhibitions and cultural activities. The empty lots, making up a section of the former death strip of the Berlin Wall and located between the historic districts of Mitte and Kreuzberg, are set precisely at the intersection between former East and West. Strangely, and – until recently – overlooked, the area appears like a blind spot in the city center, offering an unusual opportunity for artists to respond to its particular physical, historic, and contemporary conditions.

The **night** part of the exhibition is an open format that will erratically occupy the main venues and still other locations, each time using buildings or sites related to or best suited for a particular event. Lectures, performances, concerts, workshops, screenings, and other kinds of presentations will take place every night for the entire duration of the biennial, each performative event thematically extending or in dialogue with ideas and artworks presented in the day portion of the exhibition. The series aims to provide the opportunity for artists and thinkers from diverse fields to test out ideas without the limitations of the conventional exhibition space and time as they produce new or remake existing works, speak, or interpret pieces specifically for a live performance. The series will emphasize experimentation, improvisation, and gives free rein to curiosity-driven research, the results of which will be shared with the audience. The 62+ nights of idiosyncratic events in combination with the day part of the 5th berlin biennial will invite audiences to experience many different art forms as well as the city's special places and histories.

Curators: Adam Szymczyk and Elena Filipovic

Director: Gabriele Horn

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Further information:

Maike Cruse +49. 30. 24 34 59. 42 press@berlinbiennale.de www.berlinbiennale.de