



Skulpturenpark M – Visitor Center (Photo: Denis Lahner)



The Artist is Absent – Perform Yourself (Photo: Denis Lahner)

Hannes Egger

Skulpturenpark
Besucherzentrum
Visitor Center
THE ARTIST
IS ABSENT
–
PERFORM
YOURSELF

Ladies and gentlemen,*

this year, Berlin Marzahn-Hellersdorf is the venue of the IGA – the Internationale Gartenausstellung or international horticultural exhibition – the biggest garden show in all of Germany. It is on this occasion that, at the heart of Marzahn, the artist Hannes Egger re-negotiated the concept of plastic art and how it interacts with its audience, mounting a custom-made sculpture park along the boulevard known as Marzahner Promenade: the Skulpturenpark M.

Among the objects displayed are Michelangelo's „David“, Alberto Giacometti's „L'Homme qui marche I“ (The Striding Man I), Myron's „Discobolus“ and Auguste Rodin's „The Age of Bronze“, to name but a few – in other words, more than 20 outstanding sculptures that have had a deep impact on the history of art. And yet, the objects of Skulpturenpark M are not made from marble, bronze or concrete but rather from an intangible material: They consist of instructions which encourage passers-by to stop, strike the pose adopted by the original sculpture and turn into a work of art for a short moment. That way, Skulpturenpark M is reinvented and created anew over and over again – and each time only through participation.

Designed to be a living, animated context, it is in fact a sculpture park for the entire borough of Marzahn-Hellersdorf, its inhabitants and its guests: It is up to them to take centre stage and make the installation come alive.

In terms of material and space, the sculpture park takes a back seat: Limited to illustrations and instructions drawn on the floor, it leaves plenty of room for people to move into the focus point. Not the sculpture is at the centre but the person re-enacting it.



Opening (Photo: Denis Lahner)



Blackboard (Photo: Denis Lahner)



Opening (Photo: Denis Lahner)

In an open invitation: Anyone is welcome to participate – by themselves or in a group.

The original drawings and instructions can be found on the wall behind me, on the right-hand side.

Located on Marzahner Promenade, the premises of Galerie M on the other hand were converted into the sculpture park visitor centre. Much like the park itself, the artist dedicated the structure to the audience: It invites the spectator to step inside and participate or simply observe and reflect the role chosen by each and every one of us.

The visitor centre hosts a display of past projects in which the artist focuses on the audience: For the 2011 Venice Biennale, he created a direct line of sight from the Großvenediger peak in Austria all the way to Venice, paying tribute to an ancient mountaineering myth which claims that it is possible to see the city from the 3666 m summit. In the Austrian Pavilion, he installed a camera connecting the Biennale via satellite technology with the Kürsingerhütte mountain hut on Großvenediger – which roughly translates to Great Venetian –, where a room was reserved for visitors to enjoy the views of Venice, or rather of the Biennale audience exploring Markus Schinwald's Labyrinth. The video I saw you recollects impressions from the broadcast.

A paperback in the window of Galerie M documents the performance Public View at the 2014 La Muga Caula performance festival in Catalonia: From the stage, the artist talked about the audience's role and invited members of the audience to step onto the stage, shake his hand and take a photo. The book contains the snapshots taken and an account of the experience by one of the participants.

The 2013 work Perform Yourself – The artist is absent consists of a dance floor, spotlight, headphones, music and a banner inviting the audience to take part, claim the stage and dance in the spotlight to a range of genres from waltz and foxtrot all the way to funk and techno.

Sculpture Training is a photo series created for the latest exhibition with the help of the 1st VfL Fortuna Marzahn athletics club: Re-enacting the poses of the objects in Skulpturenpark M, the athletes were photographed in their training grounds at Allee der Kosmonauten.

At the heart of the exhibition, the Visitor Centre features an audio installation in which the artist prompts the visitor to follow his instructions to act around a black seating platform. The outcome is an in-depth reflection on the role of the audience: It intertwines typical attitudes adopted in exhibitions with the history of performance art, the technology of audio guides, the philosophy of Boris Groys and the début of „Offending the Audience“, the play by Peter Handke which premiered in Frankfurt in 1966, to form a whole new pattern of information and personal experiences.

And just like any other visitor centre, it also features an Information Desk that stocks leaflets on the sculpture park, information on the exhibition, the book „Sculpture – From Antiquity to the Present Day“ by Georges Duby and Jean-Luc Daval, and of course



Skulpturenpark M (Photo: Denis Lahner)



Perform Yourself (Photo: Andreas Graufeld)



Visitor Center (Photo: Denis Lahner)

a guest book, in which you, dear visitors, are kindly invited to leave your comments and impressions.

The piece in front of which I am now standing is an equally new work. It is called *Opening* and consists of a loudspeaker, a microphone, a music stand and the opening speech of Skulpturenpark M. Reading the speech re-inaugurates the installation over and over again, allowing the audience to adopt the role of curators and fill the room with their voice in announcing the works on display.

Blackboard, the final piece of the exhibition just behind the information desk, is more open than the others: It allows the visitors themselves to give instructions to others. Once a visitor has followed the instructions written on the blackboard by their predecessor, they can wipe them off and leave new ones – for future audiences. With this piece, the artist completely withdraws from his creation: He is no longer present and leaves the audience a room in which they can not only perform and stage their very bodily existence, but also invent their own concepts and reveal instructions and directives for others.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to see so many of you here today. I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to the artist, Hannes Egger, the art director of Galerie M, Karin Scheel, Lutz Beckmann and the construction team, Yasmine Hahnke and the 1st VfL Fortuna Marzahn athletics club, the photographer Denis Lahner, der Berlin Senate Department of Culture and Europe, the borough of Mar-

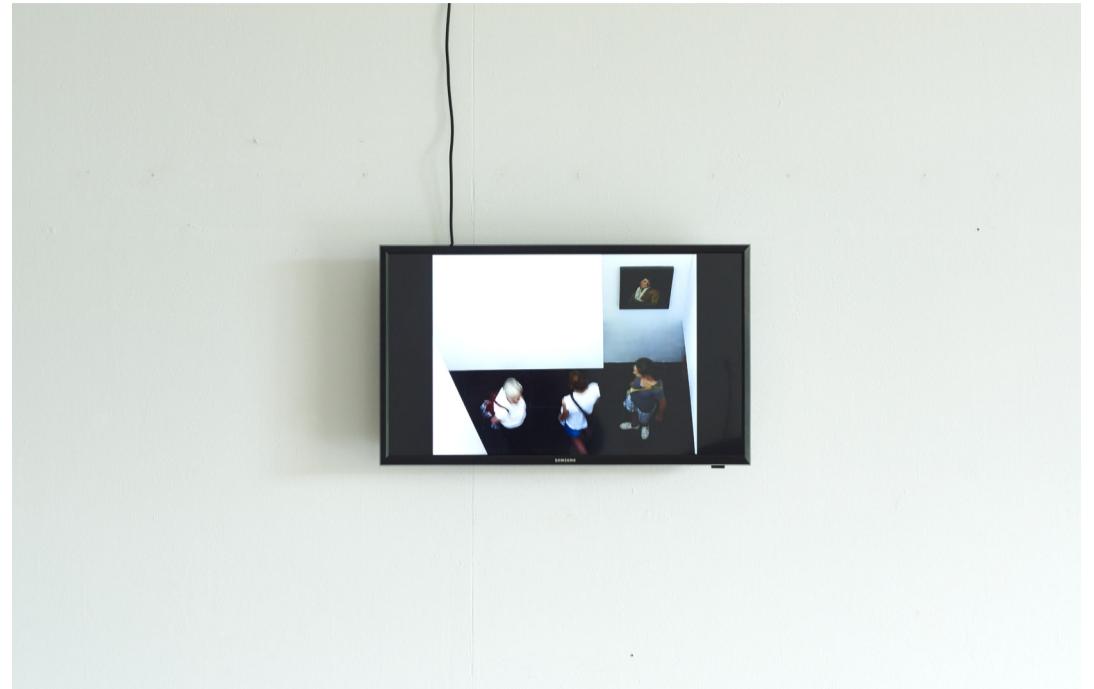


Sculptur Training (Photo: Denis Lahner)

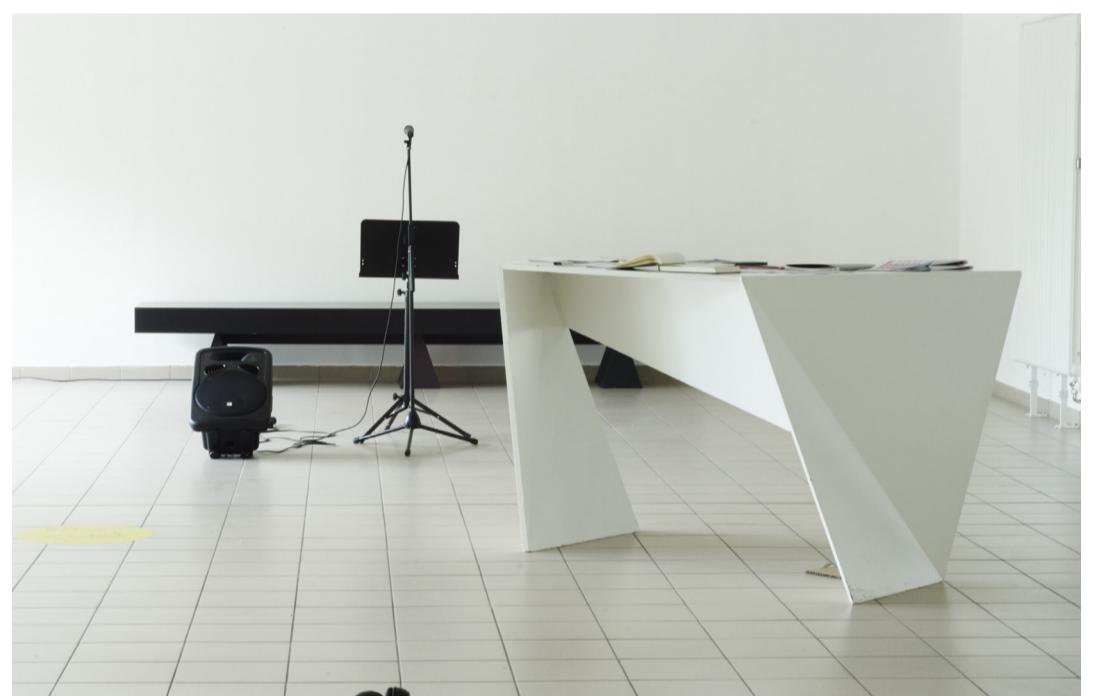
zahn-Hellersdorf and of course you, dear visitors, for contributing to creating and experiencing this exhibition.

I wish you all a wonderful and inspiring visit!

(applause)



I saw you (Photo: Denis Lahner)



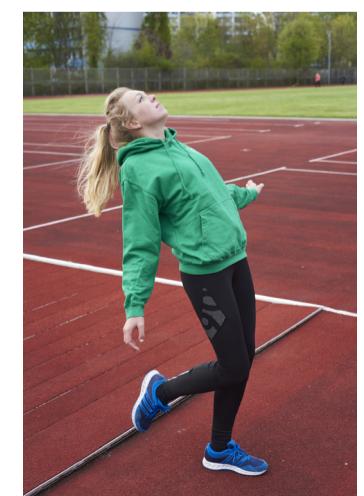
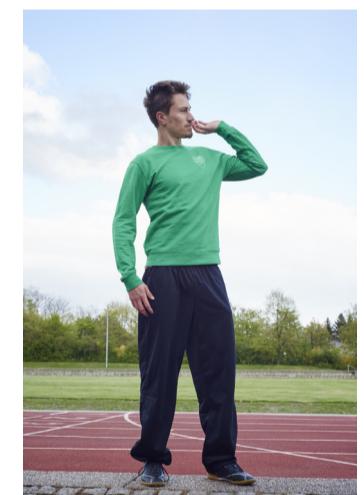
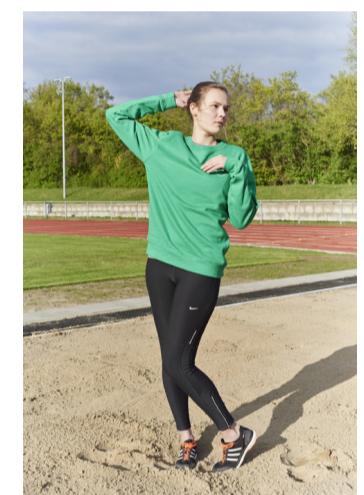
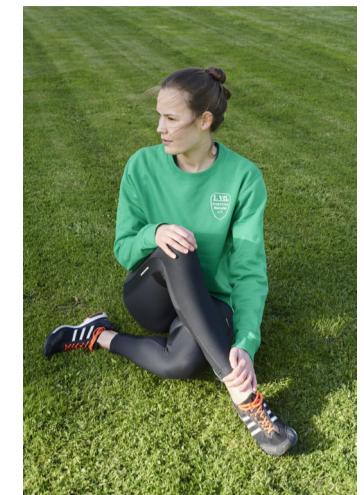
Information Desk (Photo: Denis Lahner)



Skulpturenpark M (Photo: Denis Lahner)



I saw you + Visitor Center (Photo: Denis Lahner)



Sculptur Training (Photo: Denis Lahner)



Public View (Photo: Denis Lahner)

Galerie M

Curator: Karin Scheel
Exhibition: 24.04.–09.06.2017

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