



Kunstraum und Ateliers e.V.
Gehestraße 8 · D-01127 Dresden



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Dates: 24.09. - 26.09. 2009



Welcome to the

Symposium

OUR HOUSE IS YOUR HOUSE

Self-organization in international comparison

The initiators: Artists from Dresden

The phenomenon: Self-organization

A bunch of Dresden artists came up with the idea to organize a symposium about self-organization within contemporary artists and art-spaces. Sharing several commons - as their residence Dresden, their activities in self-organized art-spaces and their interest in an interdisciplinary exchange about the phenomenon of „self-organization“ - Paul Elsner and Nilsson Samuelsson (artist run space and studio community geh8) together with Grit Ruhland (jointly responsible for the former so-called 7th floor) developed the concept for the symposium “OUR HOUSE IS YOUR HOUSE” and therefore to invite theorists as well as artists to report about their experiences in this issue and to discuss conditions, developments and improvements. The aim is to find out more about this key word, this leitmotif circulating through various disciplines and vital spaces of the 21st century. By entering into mutual dialogue, the main question will be how similar or different „self-organization“ can work or fail in the art scene as well as in other fields of work and research.

Artistic self-organization

Off spaces, artist-run spaces, project-spaces, artists' co-operatives, studio communities, art associations, artist-residencies...self-organized art-initiatives are booming worldwide. They offer mainly young artists some of the few opportunities to show their works in a self-chosen space and context. Depending on their own aims, they develop platforms and networks for their own or cooperative outreach. Providing critical contributions to discourses within the art field and society, they function either as conscious alternative or bridging to the art-market. Besides a high number in art capitals, artist-initiatives organize themselves also in urban peripheries and outskirts.

The dilemma:

Between On and Off, trend and criticism, teamwork and precarity

Self-organization of an artist-run space means much more than the own artistic work. Based on a non-institutional, non-hierarchic teamwork, their members have to organize the exhibitions, public relations, to prepare applications and care for solidarity networks nearby and abroad. Artists become curators, gallery-directors, project-managers and debaters at the same time - and therefore develop to equal negotiating partners, much more than only suppliers of art works. Their acting on low- or no-budgets is short-termed, flexible, interdisciplinary, team-based, 24-hours instead of nine-to-five and seams to fulfill exactly all those criteria which are recently discussed as role model by the so-called creative industries.

Artist-run spaces arise from need, not from wealth. The precarious existence of their organizers is symptomatic for many (cultural) professions in our society - their work is not standardized, insecure, statistically not as certainable, nearly unconsidered in funding- or reform-programs. Instead of dealing only with their own artistic work, these artists spend more time in the office than in the studio. They are organizing plenary meetings, filling out applications, updating mailing-lists, designing invitation-cards and websites, planning events - and have to earn their daily money at the same time. Quite a number of initiatives are threatened by burning out; suffering from lacks of funding, raising rents, lose their locations or team spirit. There is a fluid transition from fun to exhaustion, from an independent scope of actions to self-marketing without alternatives.

The symposium: OUR HOUSE IS YOUR HOUSE

Parallel to the exhibition OUR HOUSE IS YOUR HOUSE, which resulted from a co-operation with die Domagk-Studios Munich and ARSkontakt Prague/Brno, the artist-run space geh8 Kunstraum und Ateliers e.V. Dresden invites to the same-titled symposium. During May 2009 geh8 already organized the symposium ART FAN, which was set up to support the local dialogue between artist-run spaces and art-institutions with a broad effect. OUR HOUSE IS YOUR HOUSE now wants to extend this exchange to an international level. Selected actors of artist-run spaces and initiatives will introduce their projects. Experts of various disciplines will report about their analysis of the phenomenon of self-organization.

What is it about?

Status quo:

What characterizes the situation of artist-run spaces at present? What do they have in common, where are their differencies regarding structure, orientation and program? What role does their location and country play? How do they differ from galleries, museums and art societies? What are their assets and limitations? Are they comparable with other work- and live-areas? How can we define headwords like self-organization and autonomy in the recent context of society?

Outlook:

Which potentials offer the international exchange of experience and knowledge? How can co-operations and networks grow and are used? How can we require a wider audience for the existence, potentials and needs of artistic self-organization, as (maybe) symptomatic part of the current development of society?

The symposium is public and welcomes all interested guests:

Our House is your house!

Program:

- 24.09. - late afternoon/
- evening **Arrival - Meeting, joint dinner**
- 25.09. - 10 - 14h **Sight-seeing-tour - Visit of artist-run spaces in Dresden**
Starting point: geh8 Kunstraum und Ateliers,
Registration necessary: mail@geh8.de
(Paul Elsner, Nilsson Samuelsson)
- 16 -20h **Guest introductions**
Colm Clarke (ex-catalystarts, Bbeyond)
www.catalystarts.org.uk, www.bbeyondperformance.org,
Belfast, North-Ireland
Paul Elsner, Nilsson Samuelsson (geh8)
www.geh8.de, Dresden, Germany
Ludcia Khabibulina (body navigation)
www.bodynavigation.ru, St. Petersburg, Russia
Arman Tadevosyan (5th floor Gyumri)
www.rhiz.eu/institution-26632-en.html, Gyumri, Armenia
Gotlind Timmermanns (DomagkAteliers)
www.domagkateliers.de, Munich, Germany
Katka Tucková (ARSkontakt)
www.arskontakt.org, Prague, Czech Republic
- 20h **End - Dinner**
- 26.09. - 11 - 15h **Lectures of experts**
Carla Orthen (art historian, curator) „Artistic self-organization:
Artist-run spaces in Germany - precarity as a model of success?“
www.produzentenraum.de, Nuremberg
Matthias Artzt (Physicist, - Freie Forschungsgemeinschaft
Selbstorganisation FFGSO), “Self-organization of open artists spaces
- scientific and social conditions,” Berlin
Michael Stellmacher (sociologist, activist)
„Self-organization in history and political analysis,” Leipzig
Birgit Effinger (Goldrausch Kuenstlerinnen-Projekt art IT)
www.goldrausch-kuenstlerinnen.de, Berlin
Johannes Burr (artist, artist-platform BERLINERPOOL)
www.berlinerpool.de, Berlin
- 16 - 18h **Panel discussion with all invited guests**
Summary, discussion, outlook
Moderation: Carla Orthen (art historian/ curator, Nuremberg)
- 19 - 20h **Open discussion**
Common feature, contrasts, development of characteristics for
successful courses of action, methods and procedures
- 20h **End**
Dinner, concert / performance / party

Lectures and discussions are held in English.

Further information can soon be found on our website: www.geh8.de