

KÜNSTLERHAUS STUTT GART

Come in, friends, the house is yours!

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"Come in, friends, the house is yours" is a collaborative project of the Badischer Kunstverein, Kinematik Karlsruhe and Künstlerhaus Stuttgart. Exhibitions, events, and a film series take place in both Karlsruhe and Stuttgart, and connect in a shared conceptual framework. The project thematizes processes of community building and democratic participation. In the center are the various methods and strategies that communicate social identification and participation. This includes concrete methods, such as participatory procedures, political adjustment processes, or pedagogic approaches, as well as visual forms or symbols which represent a community. The artistic media and formats range from drawings, photographs and films to spatial installations, sculptures, actions and workshops.

Through which images, symbols and rhetoric do individuals identify with a social, political, economic or cultural idea? How does contemporary society revert to a collective language and visual memory to construct a notion of community, and in turn which mechanisms of inclusion or exclusion determine this consensus? Above all, what new spaces of action grow out of an engagement with visual and linguistic limits of contemporary forms of society? The project starts from an assumption that communities constitute themselves through a shared visual and linguistic vocabulary. Institutions such as schools, universities, governments, as well as cultural institutions, play a decisive role, in that they practice normative visions and ideas. "Come in, friends, the house is yours!" reflects the ambivalent function of education and mediation and searches for the possibility of new productivity through conflict. According to the French philosopher Jacques Ranciere, only through a critical examination of the established "distribution of the sensible" is political action possible.

The contributions in the exhibitions and film program display the complexity of communal principles, their (conflicting) free spaces and possibilities, but also their governmental instrumentalization. Above all, the artists delve into the function of speech and image in these processes, especially in relation to the question of education and transfer of knowledge. While individual works discuss the function of educational institutions or the mechanisms of state, societal or market-oriented representations, others are dedicated to a more methodical examination of mediation through text and image. The film program adds to the discussion with its focus on 're-education films'. In post-war Germany, these films were the most important part of an image campaign by the Allies to spread a specific idea of democracy and free-market economy to the masses.

The title of the project alludes to a quote by the Brazilian playwright and educator Augusto Boal. The experimental forms of theater that he developed were meant to transcend traditional roles and were conceived as explicit forums for political debate. In their preoccupation with the enlightening potential of language, many of the artistic works in the exhibitions also make a formal allusion to theater – whether in the stage-like construction of installations and sculptures, through challenging the borders between documentation and fiction, or in the dramatic staging of image and text.

The forms of presentation in Künstlerhaus Stuttgart adopt this aspect of the project, in that the exhibition itself is conceived as a "stage" for discussions and interactions. Artistic presentations are shown amongst documentations or theoretical contributions and film screenings, and discuss questions of codetermination and participation with the background of pedagogy, urban planning, and political aesthetics. Additionally, various local initiatives in Stuttgart have been invited to use the rooms of the Künstlerhaus for their own activities and to set divergent focal points, to test out principles of participation.

The events program will be announced separately through our website and email list.

The exhibition is in cooperation with the Badischen Kunstverein, Karlsruhe, which opens on April 23rd. The film program is curated by Florian Wüst.