



Press Release

REQUIEM FOR A FAILED STATE

New exhibition from HALLE 14 deals with the present of the vanished state of the GDR

(Leipzig, March 14, 2018) On the occasion of the spring tour of the SpinnereiGalerien, HALLE 14 will open the new exhibition »Requiem for a Failed State« at 3 p.m. on April 14, 2018. From the perspective of young artists, the exhibition inquires into the aftermath of the GDR, as well as the political changes of 1989/90 and the post-unification period.

In 1989/90, the German Democratic Republic imploded once and for all. The impossible to reform »dictatorship of the working class« was in ruins. Citizens reclaimed the power of the people for themselves – the state apparatus was dissolved. But what remains when a state disappears? Which impacts can still be felt almost 30 years later? The exhibition focuses on works by fifteen young artists from former East and West. How do those born after 1980 look back on the end of the GDR, the results of the political changes and the decade of disorientation in the 1990s.

In autumn 2017, HALLE 14 announced a scholarship competition under the exhibition theme for which 60 artists from 29 countries applied. The three-member, independent jury of experts selected British artist Henry Bradley. Since the beginning of February, Bradley has been working in Leipzig on a new film on the role of education in socialist and capitalist societies. His new work will be presented to the public in the framework of the exhibition.

At the Leipzig Academy of Fine Arts, the seminar »Under the Ice« led by Anna Voswinckel and Carsten Möller has also been dealing with issues raised by the exhibition project since last autumn. Works from these seven students will also be presented at HALLE 14.

For his interactive singing project »Rehearsal for Lumumba«, exhibition artist Carsten Saeger is looking for Leipzigers enthusiastic about singing. Our Artist in Residence Henry Bradley is looking for actors for his new video. If you are interested in one or both of this, please contact HALLE 14 at 0341/492 42 02 or assistentz@halle14.org

We cordially invite you to the **press conference on Thursday, April 12, 2017, at 11 a.m.**, for a guided tour through the exhibition at HALLE 14.

FACTS

Title of the exhibition: Requiem for a Failed State

Artists: Nadja Buttendorf & Anne Baumann, Ariamna Contino & Alex Hernández, Susan Donath, Darsha Hewitt in Zusammenarbeit mit Sophia Gräfe, Tamami Iinuma, Sven Johne, KLOZIN (Wilhelm Klotzek & David Polzin), Henrike Naumann, Carsten Saeger, Malte Wandel, Katrin Winkler

Artist-in-Residence: Henry Bradley

Students from the seminar »Under the Ice«, led by Anna Voswinckel and Carsten Möller at the Academy of Fine Arts, Leipzig: Jane Beran, Katrin Esser, Eric Meier, Stefania T. Smolkina, Sarah Veith, Brenda M. Wald, Florian Weber

Opening: Saturday, April 14, 2018, 3:00 p.m.

Duration: April 14- August 5, 2018

Opening hours: Thur.-Sun., 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Entrance fee: 4 €, reduced 2 € (Free entry on Wednesdays)

Location: HALLE 14 – Zentrum für zeitgenössische Kunst

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Funded by:

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Gefördert durch die Kulturstiftung des Freistaates Sachsen.
Diese Maßnahme wird mitfinanziert durch Steuermittel auf
der Grundlage des von den Abgeordneten des Sächsischen
Landtags beschlossenen Haushaltes.

PRESS MATERIAL

Download in high resolution: www.halle14.org/presse.html



Susan Donath, Urn (work in progress), 2009
© VG Bild-Kunst Bonn, 2018

PRESS CONTACT

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT HALLE 14

As a non-commercial art centre, HALLE 14 is a space for the presentation of, reflection on and communication about contemporary art. It has been operating since 2002 in a listed historic industrial building on the grounds of the Leipziger Baumwollspinnerei (Cotton Spinning Mill). With the conscious intent of highlighting the »luxury of emptiness«, an initiative of art enthusiasts created unique spaces in the generous halls of this late 19th century industrial building. A multi-functional visitor centre offers 600m² for learning, reading, and lingering. The 2,400 m² exhibition hall is available as a presentation space for international group shows of contemporary art. Courses, workshops, and school projects take place regularly in an expansive room for art education. Additionally, there are 16 studios and seven workspaces for international and local artists. The dense artistic sociotope of the Spinnerei – with over a dozen galleries and project spaces, 130 artist studios, numerous other creative offices, a cinema, a café and more – combined with the countless off-spaces in the surrounding neighbourhood create an enriching environment.

EXHIBITION CONCEPT

In 1989/90, the German Democratic Republic imploded once and for all. The impossible to reform »dictatorship of the working class« was in ruins. Citizens reclaimed the power of the people for themselves. The state apparatus was dissolved, the two German states were united, and the traditional »state-run enterprises« were liquidated as bankruptcy assets to primarily West German investors. Long-sought-after freedom, the hope for a better life and for a non-aligned, peaceful world was in sight – and became a reality for many. But deindustrialisation also followed at a previously unseen pace and with it a major economic crisis. Massive unemployment, depopulation, high vacancy rates and neglect and dilapidation resulted. In hindsight, the 1990s appear as an anarchic »wild East« characterised by cultural escapism, economic adventurism and escalating xenophobia. The new freedom compelled every East German person to reorient themselves; it meant risks and caused personal, biographic and psychological crises. Having become »metaphysically homeless«, not a few yearned for redemptive images of the self and the world.

The judicial, journalistic and scholarly processing of this recent history began with little temporal distance. With each anniversary, the number of reference books and memoirs, mass-market educational programmes, films, novels and TV documentaries multiplied. Through various contextualisations, repetitions and re-enactments, a mediated patina lies over the limited material of historical records, sometimes veiling the view of gaps and rifts. Who is speaking off-screen and explaining the history of the images to us? Between the view of the GDR as a dictatorship and kitschy nostalgia for the East, nuances are often lacking in the popular discourse. To those affected, this professionalised coming to terms with the past often appears as an interpretive expropriation of one's biography. A chasm remains in the coming to terms.

Between the generation who functioned within the GDR system and their children, a remarkable – polemically spoken with reference to Hermann Lübbe – »communicative silence« rules. Vociferous debate between these generations – comparable to that in West Germany in the late 1960s – about individual, culpable entanglements with the system and their aftereffects today have been missing, until now. The path of Uwe Mundlos, Uwe Böhnhardt and Beate Zschäpe – who came of age during the political changes – to the so-called »National Socialist underground« as well as the »evening strolls« of Pegida (the ugly cousin of the Monday Demonstrations) are reason enough to question the present day repercussions of German experiences of dictatorship, the permanent paternalism, closed world views, militarism and rigid identities. Against this backdrop, the abandoned plazas in Berlin and Leipzig for »Monuments to Freedom and Unity« for the 25th

anniversary of the German re-unification appear perfectly symptomatic of an unresolved past. Despite political will, it was not possible to bring contemporary monument design and social acceptance into agreement.

The exhibition project »Requiem for a Failed State« focuses on the perspective of a young generation of artists. How do those born after 1980 look back on the end of the GDR, the results of the political changes and the decade of disorientation in the 1990s of which they have few or no individual memories? How long does a vanished state linger? Who says what about the past, and who doesn't? What questions do those born in the former East and West ask? Which facets of these historical events interest young artists from around the world? What connections do they draw to our present, and what do they discover?