

OUTLOOK

Landscape-Related Art Projects in Lüneburg Heath

Opening Saturday, 6 September 2003, at 3.00 p.m.

4.00 - 8.00 p.m. Tractor shuttle service to the new outdoor sculptures

4.00 - 6.00 p.m. Coffee and cake at Meyer Farm, Drögenbostel from 6.00 p.m. Summer party with the "Oklahoma Ranch Rebels" (Hamburg/Berlin), Schröers-Hof, Neuenkirchen

With OUTLOOK, the ART-LANDSCAPE project in Neuenkirchen has been considerably expanded and supplemented by outdoor sculptures by Michael Asher (USA), Dragset & Elmgreen (N & DK), Anna Gudjonsdottir (IS), Stefan Kern (D), Job Koelewijn (NL), Rupprecht Matthies (D) and Peter Pommerer (D).

Their works are located in an area northwest of the town of Neuenkirchen, including the hamlets of Drögenbostel, Rutenmühle and Hartböhn. After being invited to review the local situation, the artists took it as the point of departure in developing individual approaches to their projects in the landscape space.

OUTLOOK continues a long tradition. Ever since 1967, international artists have been invited to create landscape-related works in and around Neuenkirchen. In the meantime, the ART-LANDSCAPE project with its approximately thirty outdoor installations counts among the leading landscape-art projects in Europe. The link between art and open, cultivated countryside, the reciprocal effects between rural environment and works, and the successive development of the overall ensemble, constitute the special appeal of this "open museum".

The situation faced by participants in OUTLOOK has continually changed since the ART-LANDSCAPE project began. The transformation of traditional farming into industrialized agriculture, but also a search for alternatives, the expansion of village areas and improvements in transportation, have all left clear traces on the environment. These are only some of the complex factors involved in a profound change of orientation and structure, whose consequences are by no means limited to rural areas.

Still, the Lüneburger Heide (Lüneburg Heath), has remained a focus of national pride, a romantic, even idyllic landscape. This is an important image factor for tourism, yet it is also at the heart of the self-image of the region and the way it presents itself to others.

Considering that most people increasingly perceive landscapes as aesthetic scenery, and first-hand experiences of nature are being replaced by media-disseminated images, a great range of

points of departure offered themselves to the artists participating in OUTLOOK. The resulting works create situations for the viewer that suggest various interpretations of art and landscape, shed light on unexpected relationships, and unfold a range of individual yet interrelated points of view.

The Circuit

A signposted circuit route, conceived by the artist Rupprecht Matthies, leads by way of narrow roads and paths from work to work. The circuit is about 20 km long. It begins at Springhornhof, continues through Behningen, Drögenbostel, Rutenmühle, Hartbörn, Tewel and Brochdorf, then leads back to Neuenkirchen.

A new bridge and path leading to the sculpture by Tony Cragg in Tewel, in the direction of Brochdorf, have shortened the distance cyclists need ride along Federal Highway 71.

Rental bicycles, and tips for visitors who prefer to walk or drive, are available at Springhornhof.

Reconstruction

For the opening of OUTLOOK, the ART-LANDSCAPE ensemble has been historically supplemented by a reconstruction of the following outdoor objects from previous years:

Timm Ulrichs's "Egocentric Stone Circle" (1977); Rudolf Wachter's sculpture "Space Nodes" (1978); Peter Könitz's enterable installation "Ways" (1980); Horst Lerche's series of architectonic sculptures with "Blue House" (1987); Horst Hellinger's "Eye Grazer" (1988) and Claus Bury's "Blink of an Eye" (1989); and Valeriy Bugrov's mirror installation "Heaven and Earth" (1991).

Sponsors

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European Community, Bureau for Agrarian Structure, Verden
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Community of Neuenkirchen
BEB Erdöl und Erdgas GmbH
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We wish to thank EWE, Rotenburg-Land Water Supply Association, and Schneverdingen City Works for their support for the project by Michael Asher.

OUTLOOK is curated by Bettina von Dziembowski
Following the opening, a catalogue will be published by revolver. - Archiv für aktuelle Kunst, Frankfurt

Artists and Projects

Dragset & Elmgreen

Ingar Dragset, *1969 in Trondheim, Norway; lives in Berlin
Michael Elmgreen, *1961 in Copenhagen, Denmark; lives in Berlin

Park for Unwanted Sculptures

The artist team Dragset & Elmgreen have created an open space for outdoor sculptures in which the conventional criteria for judging and evaluating art in the public domain have been rendered invalid. In the Neuenkirchen district of Tewel, they built a white fence around a public lot and put up an illuminated sign declaring it a "Park for Unwanted Sculptures." Artists and owners of outdoor sculptures who, for whatever reason, have found no suitable site for them, may contribute their works to this sculpture garden.

Anna Gudjonsdottir

*1961 in Reykjavik; lives in Hamburg

Seven Views of a Meadow with Plum Tree

Historical and current notions of art, nature and landscape are the theme of Anna Gudjonsdottir's work. On a meadow dotted with trees near Drögenbostel, she has supplemented the natural vegetation with a bronze casting of an old plum tree.

The second part of the work consists of a panorama oil painting of the scene, located in the attic of a nearby farmhouse. Viewers of the landscape, "tree implant" and painting experience a fascinating interplay between natural model and artistic depiction.

Stefan Kern

*1966 in Hamburg; lives in Hamburg

Stairway

In Stefan Kern's work, art penetrates into mundane reality and vice versa in a subtle way. His metal object, which extends over a ditch at the edge of a field, recalls a stairway, bridge or ladder, and provides a raised vantage point for two persons. Yet thanks to its symmetrical abstract form, the piece also possesses an autonomous sculptural value.

Job Koelewijn

*1962 in Spakenburg, Netherlands; lives in Amsterdam and New York

Shutter Piece (working title)

Job Koelewijn alters spaces and objects using very precise means. "Experience" is a key concept in his work. His pieces generally present a range of perceptual possibilities which make viewers aware of their relationship to the work and its environment.

Koelewijn's freestanding, booth-like space with its four walls consisting of metal roll shutters that continually move slowly up and down, initially gives the impression of being part of the adjacent gas supply plant. When you enter the piece, it gradually grows dark as the shutters fall, then a view of the surroundings is revealed as they open again. This automatic opening and shutting of the eyes, as it were, helps to heighten awareness of our own perception.

Rupprecht Matthies

*1959 in Hamburg; lives in Hamburg
ankommen & bleiben

When travelers coming from Soltau approach the Neuenkirchen town limits, they are greeted by a highly visible sculpted word at the side of the road, reading *ankommen* (arrive). As they leave, a *bleiben* (stay) shines out against the background of a small wood, a vain appeal to those headed for points beyond.

Matthies's word-objects invariably have the character of commentaries on their environment - whether pointed, contradictory or ambiguous. The impossibility of reducing visual perceptions to a definitive statement proves productive in many respects.

As a further contribution to OUTLOOK, the artist has conceived an approx. 20-km-long bicycle circuit leading to the outdoor sculptures in and around Neuenkirchen, and designed the signage for it.

Peter Pommerer

*1968 in Stuttgart; lives in Stuttgart
The Captured Drawing

Inviting Peter Pommerer, a draughtsman, to do an outdoor piece was an unusual step. His ornamental, abstract and objective visual signs, graphic abbreviations and marks proliferate over walls and floors, evoke narrative plots, and create a dense interweave of legible and cryptic processes.

Pommerer's piece for OUTLOOK is his first sculpture. It consists of a multipartite structure that fragmentarily quotes the drinking trough and a section of the entry area to the elephant enclosure at the Vienna Zoo. Integrated in it is a pane of glass with translucent sand-blasted ornaments and elephant depictions. As we look through the glass, Pommerer's drawing appears superimposed on the landscape behind it. The unequal relationship between art and nature seldom becomes so clear as in the architecture of zoos. The aesthetic of these buildings is of course not addressed to the animals that must live in them, but to the human beings who come to see them - and ultimately see themselves mirrored in the architecture.

Michael Asher

*1943 in Los Angeles, Calif., USA; lives in Los Angeles
untitled

During an extended stay in Neuenkirchen, Michael Asher collected information about the energy supply and infrastructure of the region. From the abundance of material he was able to consult at the Schneverdingen City Works, EWE Power and the Rotenburg-Land Water Supply Association, Asher developed three sets of technical drawings devoted to the fields of water, electricity and gas. Each set consists of folded reproductions of blueprints and maps of graduated scales, of the kind used by employees of the energy and utilities companies.

The largest-scale maps show the distribution area with the main supply lines. Depicted on the next level is distribution in the region, then in the center of Neuenkirchen. The smallest unit comprises map sheets indicating the house connections at Springhornhof. A brochure explains the meaning of the technical signs and symbols used in the maps. Visitors may peruse this material at Springhornhof, or acquire it in the form of a boxed edition, at a modest price.

References to ecological relationships play a key role in Asher's work. But he is also concerned with the accessibility of information and the depiction of circulation processes that go on under the surface of the landscape.