

Fri, June 19 – Sun, September 27, 2015

## The City is the Star – Art at the Construction Site

From “K.” by the Staatstheater to Marktplatz

Fascinating works of art are being presented in Karlsruhe’s city centre under the artistic direction of the ZKM. Stadtmarketing Karlsruhe GmbH realised the project together with KASIG: To celebrate the city’s birthday, impressive large-scale sculptures by international famous artists are being installed and performances and interventions are being carried out that provide unique selfie motifs. Companies from the marketing board of Stadtmarketing Karlsruhe GmbH, FIDUCIA IT AG, Sparkasse Karlsruhe Ettlingen, Volksbank Karlsruhe, INIT AG, Ernst Wohlfeil GmbH and other companies have been acquired as partners for the project. All art events are a gift to the city which takes centre stage during construction site times: It is the star along with its citizens and visitors! The aim of this art project in a public space is to extend the aesthetics of everyday life and so-called lowly materials, a modern art innovation, to the construction site and therefore change the perception of construction sites. The opening takes place on 19 June at 5.30 p.m.

During the summer festival, Karlsruhe’s city centre looks like one monumentally huge construction site. The invited artists intervene in the dynamic process of construction work with their installations, sculptures and performances. They artistically process the construction sites. The machinery and materials for the construction work are partly reflected in the works of art. Resulting in the questions: Is it an artistic installation or construction site, an artistic intervention or construction work? Is it art or work? Are the people you see on the construction site artists or workers? The result is a new genre: not art at the building site, but in the process of building, construction site art.

### Spectacular large-scale installation

On the Marktplatz, the heart of the former residential city, the Argentinean artist **Leandro Erlich** amazes passers-by and residents with a spectacular large-scale installation. *Pulled by the Roots* is the title of the work that gives a construction crane an unusually heavy load to carry: There are not any construction materials, containers or machines hanging on the “art crane’s” steel cables – in total contrast to the other cranes in the city. An entire house floats at a lofty height above the construction site. Architecturally modelled on a historical building by Friedrich Weinbrenner, the building literally appears to have been ripped out of one of the neighbouring roads by its roots.

#### Press release

May 2015

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Marktplatz Karlsruhe

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EINE KOOPERATION VON:

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Construction sites are seen as a burden, if not a catastrophe, by many residents. The construction process over many years is also made more difficult by unforeseeable interruptions and incidents. Resulting time and time again in images of an urban situation where you don't know whether they have come about intentionally or unintentionally, whether it's the result of a coincidence or accident. The *Truck* by **Erwin Wurm**, whose truck bed is bent and whose rear wheels are on the wall instead of on the ground – was it accidentally squashed by an excavator or crane? Was it thrown against the wall by a storm? Or is it one of the cars of the future, which can also reverse up the wall?

Similar thoughts apply to the *Car Building* by **Hans Hollein**, which is situated near the „K.“ building at the interface between public and private transport. These old VW Beetles towered vertically on top of one another, are they the result of an exploded gas pipe that blew them up into the air from the car park to then randomly land in this spot? The stacked old VW Beetles are an appropriate image for a city that accepts time and cost intensive rebuilding in return for an improved transport network.

*Heaven's Carousel* by **Tim Otto Roth**, which can be seen in the evening on Friedrichsplatz, provides distraction from construction site noise. Anyone lying under the crane with rotating sound and light spheres, will have a visual and audio experience far removed from everyday life. The spherical sounds that come from the work of art are exclusively based on pure sine tones and are visualised by the globes' colour.

### Performances and installations in dialogue with citizens

The performance by **Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset** appears to work like a kind of apology for the construction sites, which make the residents' and visitors' life that little bit more difficult throughout the entire city centre during the city's anniversary. With *It's Never too Late to Say Sorry* a man makes his way to a public glass showcase every day at precisely midday, he takes out the megaphone and shouts out to passers-by that it is never too late to say sorry.

The **artist duo Wermke/Leinkauf** takes the safety regulations associated with the construction work as the starting point for urban interventions with its *Safe in the City* art project in several parts. Yellow and red high visibility jackets as worn by construction workers for safety provide the material for unusual art events at the main train station and other public areas. A flag made from red and yellow high visibility jackets at the top of the castle tower ironically symbolises the takeover of the city by armies of construction workers: Karlsruhe is under siege by construction companies as it were.

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The performance artist **Johan Lorbeer** confuses wandering passers-by with his daily half-hour *Tarzan/Pillar* performance where he hovers bolt upright high upon a normal construction container. People strolling through the city internalise that construction containers and not army tents rule the city landscape and that one or two passers-by and construction workers may get lost during the construction site battles. Lorbeer therefore appears to have been struck by fate. Has he been forgotten? How did he get up there and why isn't he coming down?

Just as the construction sites move as construction work progresses, some of the works of art also change their locations during the exhibition. With the *Aposematic Jacket*, a jacket that is equipped with numerous webcams, **Shin Seung Back** and **Kim Yong Hun** wander around the city recording the impact of the construction work on everyday life. Their observations can be viewed online. Through this they broach the issue of the omnipresence of monitoring activities.

**Chantal Michel** and **Christian Falsnaes** meddle in everyday activities in public space with their artistic works *Hybrid Zones* and *A good reason is one that looks like one* and encourage passers-by to change their behaviour.

These performances expand the vocabulary of art in public space. Public art mainly consisted of sculptures, statues, objects that were for memorial purposes or are supposed to aesthetically accentuate public space. However, since the performative shift in art we can assume that public art can also be a type of action. Art in public space can therefore also be an action in public space, an ephemeral event, a demonstration, an intervention. This performing public art innovation is at the heart of **The City is the Star** project.

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