

Kunst Raum Mitte

DISLOCATIONS: ON THE SPOT

Artists:

Nadja Abt, Orawan Arunrak,
Wisrah C. V. da R. Celestino,
Paula Hoffmann, Raul Walch

13.9.–23.11.25

The exhibition *on the spot* marks the beginning of the third sequence of DISLOCATIONS. The program's protagonists are Auguststraße and the adjacent Scheunenviertel neighborhood in Berlin's Mitte district. Once considered a symbol of social decline and ongoing modernization in the GDR, the area surrounding Kunst Raum Mitte is now synonymous with luxuriously renovated buildings, rapid gentrification, and commercial galleries. These changes are explored directly – *on the spot* – as processes of exploitation and displacement that have shaped the urban space since the 1990s. How can a communal gallery tell the story of displacement and relocation as part of its own history? What artistic, performative, and political potentials are mobilized in the process? The works formulate contemporary positions and artistic strategies for resisting spatial forms of appropriation and structuring. They are placed in dialogue with archival material from the *galerie weisser elefant* – newspaper articles and flyers from the 1990s and 2000s that relate the transformation of the neighborhood to gallery events – to explore the speculations and fictions with which a place is charged.

Curated by Natalie Keppler & Agnieszka Roguski
Artistic Directors Kunst Raum Mitte

12.9.25, 6 – 9 pm
Exhibition Opening

1.11. & 2.11.25
Performance *moving together in time*
as part of *Festival of Future Nows 2025*: Raul Walch
Venue: Terrace Neue Nationalgalerie

21.–23.11.2025
Autumn School

Kunst Raum Mitte is a communal gallery of the Department of Art, Culture and History in the Mitte district office.

Design: Sibel Beyer

A Archive presentation *galerie weisser elefant*

Display design by Martha Schwindling

- 1a Nadja Abt
SÃO PAULO – Archive, Cine Arouche, 2018, acrylic paint on receipts
- 1b *Sex & The City – Ruhrpott Archive (II–XVII)*, 2022/23, gouache on paper, *Timing* courtesy of Ulrike Müller

Both humorous and analytical, Nadja Abt's gouache drawings focus on building facades and consumer offerings that evoke

a different era. The images are part of the series *Sex & The City – Ruhrpott Archive (II–XVII)*, created during an artist residency at Urbane Künste Ruhr. Referencing the iconic US television series *Sex & The City* – in which late 1990s Manhattan is the hub of gossip and dating – Abt focuses her visual observations on the interplay of everyday urban culture, its promises, and its tensions. Abt's interest in the creation of myths about public space emerges in surfaces, logotypes, and signs – or on receipts, where colorful acrylic paint overwrites the disappearance of places such as the Cine Arouche, a queer cinema in the old city center of São Paulo.

- 2a Paula Hoffmann
SPB_02 (Bauteilchen_05), 2024, aerated concrete block

SGW_03 (Bauteilchen_03), 2024, rock wool

- 2b *MKWPR_1*, 2022, papier-mâché, pigment, steel

Paula Hoffmann's works have cryptic titles that stand in stark contrast to the sensations they evoke. A pink, corrugated, sheet-metal-like sculpture and smileys made of rock wool and aerated concrete are named after an indexical system of building materials developed by Hoffmann. The artist turns her affectionate gaze to what is often the unseen foundation of the structures around us and deconstructs their materiality to test and enhance it, creating something disturbingly similar. Playing with contrasts such as lightness and stability, interior and exterior, visibility and concealment, surface

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and physicality is characteristic of Hoffmann's artistic practice. By inviting viewers to enter or see through them, the works enable experiences located in the present moment while simultaneously opening up spaces of memory.

- 3 Raul Walch
Should I Pay or Should I Go, 2025, textile installation, 3 flags on the facade of the building, workshops

Flags traditionally serve as signs of belonging and symbolically mark claims to a place. The flags designed by Raul Walch for Kunst Raum Mitte take on impressions of gentrification and translate them into three thematic spheres: cultural uniformity, displacement, and social division. The stylized tile pattern suggests craftsmanship and authenticity, while also drawing on the consumer-oriented, global style of digital nomads. The horseshoe motif, traditionally representing protection, prosperity, and luck in games, also refers to the logo of Deutsche Wohnen, Berlin's largest rental and real estate company. Another flag addresses the link between place of residence and access to educational opportunities. An index finger, raised to indicate a response, symbolizes the possibility of having a say and the desire to be heard. Walch develops these themes further in workshops and, together with young people from Berlin, designs choreographies, costumes, and concepts for reclaiming urban spaces.

On November 1 and 2, the resulting performance *moving together in time* (2025) will be presented as part of the Festival of Future Nows 2025 in the surrounding area of the Neue Nationalgalerie.

- 4 Orawan Arunrak
Berlin – Bangkok, 2023, *Clock* (0), 2023, custom-made analog clock
Broken key with poem, 2023, broken key belonging to the artist, accompanied by a poem
Berlin, 2023, transport roller with painted moving boxes

A key, a transport trolley, a clock – in Orawan Arunrak's series *Berlin – Bangkok*, seemingly mundane everyday objects reveal subtle shifts. Arunrak examines how symbols shape global spatial structures and translates them into condensed counter-images. In Bangkok, red and white represent the Thai postal service, while in Berlin, the same colors – seen, for example, in the form of barrier tape – mark temporary territorial boundaries. This dynamic creates spaces that expand but remain closed: a box that travels from place to place; a clock whose sequence of numbers

dissolves into a single zero; a broken apartment key accompanied by words that tell of failed self-localization. Arunrak uses these moments of dysfunctionality to connect Berlin and Bangkok – her two places of residence – with poetic attention.

- 5a Wisrah C. V. da R. Celestino
Belonging, 2022, A set of objects belonging to the institution, organization, gallery, or space where the work is presented
5b *Gift*, 2024, a set of native plants that are invasive elsewhere

Belonging presents constantly shifting constellations in which affiliations are dissolved and reassembled in response to context. Wisrah C. V. da R. Celestino highlights things that usually remain in the background while simultaneously serving as central actors in art institutions. At Kunst Raum Mitte, Celestino dismantles the archive

display into its individual parts and arranges them in an analytical yet open manner. The composition shows photographs in labeled protective covers – a reference to the site's visual memory and the attempt to organize, collect, and tell its history. At the same time, Celestino addresses the Western concept of (private) property and its decisive power in the art world, a colonial principle that also underpins Brazil and other countries. This examination continues in *Gift*: native plants that are classified as invasive elsewhere are placed in the staircase and other seemingly insignificant locations. The (unsolicited) gift to the building's visitors alludes to local, historical, and resistant continuities of power relations – and to their effect on the exhibition itself.

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