

„Kraft und Schönheit“ (Power and beauty)

Verena Issel in KORN Kunstraum



Duration of the exhibition: 25 November 2021 - 2 January 2022

Opening: 25 November 2021, 6pm, outdoors

Admission: free

Location: Display window of the Heinrich-Böll-Bibliothek, Greifswalder Straße 87, 10409 Berlin

Images of the exhibition: The work is being created directly for the exhibition space – current press images will therefore only be available a few days before the opening. Please contact us in this regard.

artspring berlin

Artistic direction: Julia Brodauf, Jan Gottschalk

Press contact: Kerstin Karge, 0163.3959215, presse@artspring.berlin

Website: www.artspring.berlin

The *artspring* art space in the display window of the Heinrich Böll Library, which has been in existence since early 2021, is curated this year by Dirk Teschner and shows works on the theme of NEULAND – change, demolition, reconsideration (Wandel, Abriss, Neubesinnung).

KORN Kunstraum – in the display window of the Heinrich Böll Library Greifswalder Straße 87, 10409 Berlin

The exhibition in the display window can be visited 24 hours a day.

Organised in cooperation between artspring berlin and the Heinrich Böll Library.

The exhibition series NEULAND is supported by the Bezirksamt Pankow von Berlin.

Detailed information:

1. „Kraft und Schönheit“ (Power and beauty) – exhibition by Verena Issel, press release
2. NEULAND – Change, Demolition, Reconsideration (Wandel, Abriss, Neubesinnung), press release
3. KORN
4. The Curator 2021
5. *artspring berlin*
6. The Heinrich Böll Library

„Kraft und Schönheit“ (Power and beauty) Verena Issel in KORN Kunstraum



1. „Kraft und Schönheit“ (Power and beauty) – Exhibition by Verena Issel

Verena Issel makes spatial installations, sculptures, films, drawings, collages and wall objects. The artist conjures up strange, prankish, dangerous, or humorous-looking, expansive scenarios whose socio-political references can on second glance unfold a striking seriousness. The contents of Verena Issel's works vary, but always converge into relevant contemporary discourses. Her themes, as well as the form and material of her spatial installations, react precisely to the specific exhibition environment.



Fig. from left to right: Verena Issel, FITNESS I-III, 2021, Photo: Robert Vanis; FITNESS I-III, 2020, Photo: Heleg Mundt

In her exhibition at KORN, Verena Issel addresses the possibilities of ideological implementations in the context of self-discovery and self-optimization practices. This is also reflected in the exhibition title - „Strength and Beauty“. This quotes the title of a life-reforming magazine with the same name, which can also be seen in the exhibition.

Acceleration, growth and the compression of innovation are some of the fundamental, structure-forming qualities of our contemporary Western-style society. As members of such a society, we are all subject to system-immanent imperatives that demand permanent activity, flexibility and self-optimization from us, as well as the constant accumulation of our capital - be it economic, cultural, social or physical. The „elevator effect“ observed in the 1980s can be seen less and less in neoliberalism. It has given way to multiform „slippery slopes“, to everyday competition. Today, in order to maintain the position we have achieved, we must continually improve, be even more innovative and creative, and always remain mobile and agile.

In reaction to this, there has been a boom in the use of such terms as performance enhancement, fitness and training on the one hand and deceleration, resilience and serenity on the other, as well as yoga and mindfulness courses. The fitness and esoteric industries also owe their success to this situation.

Behind these offered concepts is not infrequently a longing for another form of „being-in-the-world.“ In the process, however, different dogmas have been generated, such as: If you succeed in adopting the right attitude, the world can no longer harm you.

Precisely because many such practices promise a ‚better‘ life and are supposed to help us become more resilient, they surprisingly often fit too easily into a demand for us to optimise ourselves. They reproduce or manifest - only in a more mindfully smooth fashion - the demands on individuals. From the past to the

„Kraft und Schönheit“ (Power and beauty)

Verena Issel in KORN Kunstraum



present, it can be repeatedly observed how good intentions can also give rise to a dangerous, ideological potential - how esoteric life-help and conspiracy theories, hippiesque and right-wing nationalist ideas can get mixed up. Verena Issel traces these dynamics in her exhibition at KORN.

An installation of flattened steel fitness equipment is surrounded by soft fitness equipment and reading copies of the magazine „Strength and Beauty“.

Isa Maschewski

Verena Issel was born in 1982 and studied fine art at the HfbK Hamburg and classical philology at the University of Hamburg. Numerous travel grants and artist-in-residency programs have taken her to Russia, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Lithuania, and Papua New Guinea, among other places. In recent years, she has had solo presentations at the Volksbühne Berlin (DE), the ZARYA Center for Contemporary Art (RU), the Trafo Kunsthall (NOR), and the Westfälischer Kunstverein / LWL Museum Münster. In 2020 Verena Issel was visiting professor at the HfbK Hamburg.

2. NEULAND – Change, Demolition, Reconsideration (Wandel, Abriss, Neubesinnung)

German unification took place over thirty years ago – it is still a vivid memory for many, but is no longer part of the present. Not only the time before, but also the first years of the far-reaching upheaval in the new „East Germany“ are far removed from life, attitudes, moods and have become archaeological layers of the collective unconscious. Here lie the forgotten imprints of vanished experiences, crises, ruptures and struggles over the return of market relations, the transformation of legal relations, the demolition of social institutions, the closure of industrial plants and the reconstruction of entire urban landscapes of the East.

The speed and depth of the transformation eliminated not only the obsolete but also the serviceable, and has produced not only productive renewal but also some strangely old-fashioned substitutions – not least in housing and urban development. Well-known examples are the Palace of the Republic, replaced by a copy of a Hohenzollern palace, the Maple Leaf, replaced by faceless architecture designed for investors, and the careful restoration of many house façades in the style of the Wilhelminian empire. At the same time, there is growing interest in parts of GDR architecture and its design.

In the exhibition series NEULAND, artists will deal with the „GDR modernity“ in architecture and design and its supporting collective dreams, utopias and illusions in installations, collages and photographs and present their view of the ongoing process of „gentrification“ and its urban consequences.

3. KORN

The name of the art space KORN refers both to the architect Roland Korn and to the name of the residential quarter in which the Heinrich Böll Library is located. Korn designed numerous re-presentation buildings in East Berlin e.g. the Staatsratsgebäude, the Hotel Stadt Berlin, the Berlin Marzahn housing estate and the development of the Mühlenviertel quarter in Prenzlauer Berg.

Korn also translates as “grain” a seed from which plants sprout: and now art is sprouting in an unusual urban quarter.

„Kraft und Schönheit“ (Power and beauty)

Verena Issel in KORN Kunstraum



4. The curator 2021

Dirk Teschner is a curator and publicist. He has been co-operating with the exhibition space HAMMER-SCHMIDT + GLADIGAU in Erfurt since 2014. He has organised the exhibition series KUNST GEGEN RECHTS for four years and is active in the initiative DIE VIELEN.

5. artspring berlin

Every year in May, artspring berlin organises an art festival in the greater district of Pankow – a whole month of art actions, concerts, performances, readings, exhibitions, screenings, workshops and, most importantly, open studios. artspring grows a little further every year, initiates new ideas for the visibility of art and culture and creates cooperations and synergy effects.

In 2021, the hybrid edition of the artspring berlin art festival took place under the slogan SIGNALE! from 7 May to 6 June.

6. The Heinrich-Böll Library

is a classical library for people of all ages, regardless of status and origin, and is the district central library of Pankow. In addition to readings and exhibitions, concerts are organized there under the direction of Tim Schumann, and it was part of the Fête de la Musique.