



KUNSTRAUM RICHARD SORGE

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Vorwärts!

Shepard Fairey, Gert-Jan Akerboom, Peeter Allik, Art-Erhaltung, Heimatlose Volkskunst, Musk Ming, Jürgen Wittdorf

Duration: May 1–27, 2010, Wed–Fr: 1-6 pm, Sa: 2-6 pm, So: 3-7 pm. Closing reception: May 28, 7 pm.

From May 1, Kunstraum Richard Sorge presents the “Vorwärts“ exhibition on Socialism, viewing it from angles of idealism, ideology, sexuality and aesthetics. An international group of artists traces the aesthetic and sociological impact of (post) Socialism.



The masterful linocuts and paintings of Estonian artist **Peeter Allik** explore Europe's traditional values, murderous ideologies and not quite so innocent folklore. The work is traditional in appearance, refreshingly sarcastic in tone. Allik explores both communist *and* capitalist materialism: the collective loneliness of individualism that is reminiscent of Houellebecq's novels.

<http://www.artun.ee/~sips/PeeterAllik.html>

Chinese artist in Berlin, **Musk Ming** criticizes the lack of personal freedom and artistic expression of the Chinese LGBTQ community, which he traces back to colonial influences. Musk Ming propagates a return to Taoist values as a tolerant alternative. Beating the communists with their own aesthetics, he masterfully appropriates the saccharine Maoist calendar illustration style to explore the rich gay history of China.



Ming's painting of athletes, *Go West*, was chosen to take part in the official art exhibition accompanying the Olympic Games, but the artist was forced by the Chinese authorities to remove it from the show shortly before its opening.

Musk Ming stresses that sexual liberalism and tolerance are a historical part of Chinese culture, not a 'new capitalist idea' from the Western world.

<http://www.muskming.com/>



Shepard Fairey manages a unique balance of the political, counter-cultural and commercial, freely bending and deconstructing the aesthetics of propaganda and liberation in a ultimately very personal and morally sound way that irks both conservatives *and* PC liberals (always a good sign of innovation). The artist uses the graphic language of the subjects he may critique or celebrate, employing highly educated travesties of style, while investing them with subversive and irritating layers of meaning.

Misinterpreted surprisingly often, Fairey's works are, in the artist's words, "designed to start a dialogue about imagery absorption," the emotional use and mis-use of images. The oeuvre as a whole amounts to a stunning visual research into the history of ideology, either exposing its cynicism, or re-evaluating the validity of ideals along the way.

Fairey's work questions cultural ownership by boldly claiming the right to interact with many different cultural heritages, aligning itself with the progressive elements in all.

<http://obeygiant.com/>



The nationalist and totalitarian sites and symbols of commemoration are some of the more sinister objects and themes that inspire Dutch artist in Berlin **Gert-Jan Akerboom's** intuitive ink drawings. Akerboom is interested in the stylized way war and destruction are presented in popular media, like comics and computer graphics/games, researching the "transaesthetization" of violence, heroism, history and remembrance. The exhibition will present a series of Akerboom's flag drawings in which he uses his detailed drawing technique to research the morbidity of

national symbols like flags, home soil, monuments and fortifications, suggestive of the current discussions of national identity.

<http://www.gertjanakerboom.com/>

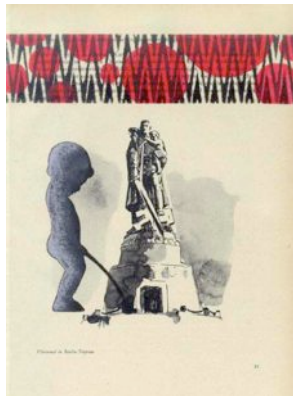
Within the confines of the early 1960s government-controlled art scene of the GDR, **Jürgen Wittdorf** was miraculously able to publicly develop a historically unique group of homoerotic socialist woodblock prints and linocuts.

Widely publicized and exhibited at the time, the *Zyklus Für die Jugend* (1960/61) works were



criticized and demonized as “westernized” by the authorities, because Wittdorf sympathetically portrayed rebellious youth, in the shape of jeans-clad youth and rockers (as in the 80’s he would portray punks) instead of idealized young socialist party members. Widespread public acclaim especially from young audiences was however able to silence the criticism.

In *Jugend und Sport* (1964) Wittdorf seems at first to placate his critics by putting his models in more familiar socialist poses, but subverts the heroics by a surprisingly blatant (and very witty) homoeroticism, proving either the naivety or openmindedness of the state patrons and audiences of the time.



The over painted GDR schoolbook pages by **Tulip Enterprises** are made using detailed stencils; they replace official ideological views of history by private obsession. The changes were made staying within the realm of the pages' red and black neo-constructivist design.

The figure of Manneken Pis is used in his original baroque meaning: as a symbol of playful respectlessness. Sensual imagery, often the target of censorship, is used in these works as a modifying, commentating tool on ideology itself. Both phenomena are less strange bedfellows as may be thought initially: Scholar D. Pipes has described the similarities between pornography and ideological conspiracy theories. Conspiracy theories - an important part of any ideology - are to him a form of philosophical pornography. Both phenomena appeared at the same time (1740s), are similarly distributed and consumed, and share an aura of secrecy and transgression.

http://www.tulip-enterprises.de/hb_gallery.htm

The exiled South-American artist who has been working for almost two decades under the label “**Heimatlose Volkskunst,**” uses the civilizational waste (often of GDR origin) found in the streets and abandoned buildings of Berlin as material for his art. Living as a squatter after the fall of the Berlin wall, the artist collected the cultural history of the GDR, as it was quite literally thrown out of the window, and uses it in his art, fusing it with the relics and symbols of other totalitarian ideologies and religions.



The artist has experienced both right wing and left wing dictatorships, having studied in Santiago de Chile and Havana, absorbing theater, art, religion, philosophy, and the literature and myths of South America. He views his art as “a melting point between the spiritual and material, articulating something spiritual in a material way”.

Intuitive, obsessive and spot-on, the oeuvre uses a collagist concept of working that encompasses sculpture, painting, mural, works on paper, combining all these techniques in ever-expanding large scale installations that

owe as much to Shamanism, Santeria and Catholicism as they do to Mad Max and Texas Chain Massacre.

<http://www.heimatlose-volkskunst.de/>



Art-Erhaltung (sine locus) is neither an artistic collaboration nor an art collective, but rather an agglomerate of creative minds keenly interested in presenting artworks with a conceptual outlook. They encourage a polemical and philosophical discourse that questions the art world's unwritten conventions.

Their "Nous-Art Ensembles" work group "Barbarus Hic Ego Sum - Here I Am The Barbarian" from 2002-2004 offers a humorous commentary on a society that has lost its sense of social values. It is important to Art-Erhaltung that under no circumstances shall their conceptual art serve socially unengaged elitism. Their philanthropic contractual agreements between patron and artist are a crucial part of each art work.



<http://www.art-erhaltung.de/>

About Kunstraum Richard Sorge:

Art space "Kunstraum Richard Sorge," located in the East-Berlin Friedrichshain district built after WWII in a heroic Russian kitsch style, is named after the communist spy (Ian Fleming's model for James Bond) that changed the course of WWII.

From its bountiful space situated in a vast, street-art covered romantically crumbling historic Berlin brewery that hosts many art spaces, Kunstraum Richard Sorge reaches a young, and international audience, but adventurous discerning art lovers as well.

Its exhibitions focus on confrontational crafts, club/vj/kinetic art, GLBTQ art and subcultures. Like its namesake, the initiative independently works from a marginal, yet cosmopolitan position to ultimately save the world.

The industrial buildings of the former George Patzenhofer brewery on Landsberger Allee, built in 1877, became a home for international artists and Studio spaces after it closed as a brewery in 1990. The galleries Styx and Kunstraum Richard Sorge have already made creative spaces there, exhibiting on a regular basis in this historic and impressive building. With the opening of the Gallery G11 on the 3rd floor the brewery, considered today as an oasis for friends of the arts, has won yet another attractive tenant. The impressive area of Friedrichshöhe (the brewery area) can be reached in approx. 10 minutes by Tram from Berlin – Alexanderplatz.

More info:

<http://www.kunstraumrichardsorge.org/>

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