

Christian Eisenberger.

Cola Bier Ente Herr Tee 9975-15413-32682

Curated by Dr. Nadia Ismail
Duration: 16.10. – 31.12.2020

Press conference

14.10.2020, 11 am
in the Kunsthalle Gießen
with Christian Eisenberger (artist) and Dr. Nadia Ismail (Director of the Kunsthalle)

Opening day

16.10.2020, 12 – 6 pm

Due to the current situation no opening reception will take place. Our art guides will be present during the opening day to answer your questions.

From 16.10. to 31.12.2020, the Kunsthalle Gießen presents works by the Austrian artist Christian Eisenberger in his first institutional solo exhibition in Germany to date. The exhibition *Cola Bier Ente Herr Tee 9975-15413-32682* features a selection of early and newly developed works and demonstrates the enormous diversity of the artist's interdisciplinary oeuvre.

Christian Eisenberger (*1978 in Semriach, Austria, lives in Vienna) is said to possess a certain obsession, a kind of hyper-productivity. He works in overflowing series, one painting is barely dry when another is painted in parallel. In so doing, he moves across a wide range of media and genres, from street art to land art, and uses painting and drawing, performance and sculpture all the way to installation and video.

Eisenberger first gained attention for his painted cardboard figures of social outsiders, such as migrants or homeless people, but also public figures, which he placed anonymously in urban space. The artist often uses comparably 'poor' materials and everyday objects in his works: used cardboard, pine cones, cobwebs – or himself and his own body, for instance when he rolled himself down a mountain accompanied by a hand held camera, or when he wrapped himself in adhesive tape and then presented the empty cocoon-like body covering.

Cola Bier Ente Herr Tee 9975-15413-32682 – Which at first sight seems to be some kind of military morse code, is instead better understood onomatopoeically. The title, that is phonetically read as *Kollabierende Herde* (Collapsing Herd), reveals the Austrian artist's subtle humour, which always accompanies his works, yet it can also be understood as a socio-political innuendo. The sequence of numbers, which is a fixed component of the title of his exhibition in a dynamic variation, carries a tongue in cheek biographical and artistic significance: he has installed a total of 9,975 cardboard figures, lived 15,413 days up to the opening day of his exhibition at Kunsthalle Gießen and has produced 32,682 sketches to date.

In the current exhibition, Christian Eisenberger looks decidedly at the American Land Art movement of the late 1960s and interprets it anew. Eisenberger brings flora and fauna into the exhibition space, dissolving the static separation between inside and outside, between saleable art and the ephemeral. Thus, flags bearing depictions of nature can be seen flying on the Berliner Platz in front of the Kunsthalle, which in turn can also be seen within the exhibition. By breaking down the separation between inside and outside, the solo show at the Kunsthalle extends into the urban environment.

Following in the footsteps of his historical predecessors, Eisenberger deliberately exploits new spaces in nature away from the classical art locations: the pigsty, where he collects cobwebs with a stick, or the forest, where his branch sculptures rotate. These remote areas serve as free spaces for the artist. Here he uses simple materials, whereby the natural environment becomes both the means and medium of his artistic creation. The resulting works often exist only for a limited period of time, be it when Eisenberger builds a melting ice sculpture or when he forms feather-weight dandelion seeds into the shape of a revolver, thus transforming the destructive power of the weapon into a childhood memory.

These Land Art projects are site-specific works and actions that only find their way into the exhibition space through the medium of video or photography, confronting it with references to the outside. The Kunsthalle also presents objects and installations constructed from natural materials, such as a 6 x 6 metre mosaic-like carpet made of fir cones or fetish-like objects made from cobwebs wrapped around sticks like candyfloss.

The artist repeatedly deals with socially relevant themes in his works, such as man and nature or life and death. However, the mechanisms of the art market and the way it deals with artists and their works are also a genuine component in his reflections. Thus the documentary *Eisenberger. Kunst muss schön sein, sagt der Frosch zur Fliege*, provides insights into events in the art market, the collectors and at the same time reveals the artists' conceptual approach.

However, the resonant seriousness in Eisenberger's work is often undermined with humour and a sometimes lapidary visual language, like when the artist makes toy figures climb up branch sculptures or when he casts a banana skin in aluminium. His works are characterised by an impression of being thrown together, of being flippant, crude; they possess an energy of speed and spontaneity, but also a certain fragility and a process driven quality.

The ephemeral has been a central theme in his work from the very beginning, be it when the painted cardboard figures in public spaces are finally taken away by rubbish collectors or passers-by, or when works in the landscape exist only for a short time before they are reabsorbed by nature's movements. As a result, the works have a certain life of their own, and are often left to their own devices and to the hustle and bustle of either nature or the city. The classical claim to the permanence of a rigid, auratically charged work of art is contrasted with the impression of the precariousness and the impermanence of playful experiments, gestures and interventions – and thus, art institutions are also challenged, for example, when the art work is not a permanently available and saleable object, or is not in the exhibition space at all, but in nature.

The artist repeatedly poses the question of authorship. Be it in the form of his early anonymous street art or when he sometimes involves the participation of animals in his artistic creation process. Eisenberger creates objects from sugar, which he allows ants to decompose, or uses spider webs as a material for his paintings. A series of paintings onto which fine cobwebs are placed can be seen in the current exhibition. With its fragile materiality and richness of detail, the intricate web becomes a part of a mysteriously appearing pictorial space. It is precisely the painting, which is tied particularly closely to the myth of the individual genius who creates from within themselves alone, that becomes a co-production of man and animal.

Often, at a certain point in his painting, the artist relinquishes control and integrates chance and the inherent dynamics of the materials into his process. For example, he uses smoke as an image-making process, pours paint which autonomously takes its own path, or works with imprints of adhesive tape and foil. The result of these working methods are surprising, multi-layered forms that move between the abstract and figurative, combining grid structures with free colour gradients. Christian Eisenberger's first German institutional solo exhibition at the Kunsthalle Gießen provides the visitors an insight into the artist's irrepressible desire to experiment and into the daring of an extraordinary oeuvre, which, with its own humour, openness and versatility, constantly allows for new approaches and interpretations.

Christian Eisenberger (*1978 in Semriach, Austria, lives in Vienna) studied transmedial art with Brigitte Kowanz at the University of Applied Arts, Vienna.

In addition to numerous solo and group gallery exhibitions, Christian Eisenberger's work has been shown in many institutional exhibitions such as at the Kunsthalle Krems, Künstlerhaus Wien, Museum Tinguely (Basel), Mumok Wien, Kunsthalle Wien or Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden.

This project was produced in collaboration with *Phileas. A Fund for Contemporary Art*

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Accompanying Programme

Plan B. Art Sounds Drinks

With DJ Homunkulus + guided tour by Sina Berger and Mara Unger at 8 pm
Sat 14.11.2020 8 pm
Registration: kunsthalle@giessen.de

Guided tour by the curator

With Dr. Nadia Ismail (Director of the Kunsthalle)
Fri 27.11.2020 5 – 6 pm
Registration: kunsthalle@giessen.de

Guided tours

Sat 3 – 4 pm: 24.10. + 07.11. + 28.11. + 12.12.
Registration: kunsthalle@giessen.de

Art education in individual conversations

Tue 2 – 4 pm: 20.10. + 27.10. + 03.11. + 10.11. + 24.11. + 01.12. + 08.12. + 15.12. + 29.12.
Sat 3 – 5 pm: 17.10. + 21.11. + 05.12. + 19.12.
English upon request.

Art and Coffee

With Fabian Stein and Ehrenamt e. V.
Fri 30.10. 3 pm + Wed 18.11. 3 pm + Tue 22.12. 3 pm
Registration: kunsthalle@giessen.de
Participation fee: 2,50 Euro

Subject to change.

You can find current information on the Kunsthalle website, Facebook and Instagram or via our newsletter.

Special opening times

Tue – Fri 2 – 6 pm
Sat + Sun 10 am – 6 pm

Closed

24.12. - 27.12.2020

Free entry.