

Antje Majewski & Paweł Freisler APPLE. AN INTRODUCTION. (OVER AND OVER AND ONCE AGAIN)

Galerie im Turm

30/8–20/10/2019

Opening 29/8 at 7pm

with Piotr Życieński and Anja Fiedler / Apfelschätze

as well as Eckart Brandt, Marco Clausen, Friederike Habermann, Maike Majewski, Konstantin Schroth, Kulturagenten für kreative Schulen, Carl-von-Linné-Schule, Fichtelgebirge Grundschule, Friedensburg-Oberschule, Fritz-Karsen-Schule, Kita Goethestraße, Heinrich-von-Stephan-Schule, Hector-Peterson-Schule and Rosa-Parks-Grundschule

Antje Majewski's artistic practice is sustained by long-term conversations with artists, cultural workers, researchers from the humanities and the natural sciences, activists and others. Through her formal language, which draws on artistic research as well as curatorial and documentary work, Majewski not only emphasises an ecology of aesthetic and social relations but also brings her process-based practice to a place, an occasion, but never to completion.

The dialogue between Antje Majewski and Paweł Freisler stretches back to 2010. At that time, Majewski was investigating the work of the Polish conceptual artist for the first time, through fictitious trips made in collaboration with Agnieszka Polska. In 2011/12, in her exhibition *Die Gimel-Welt. Wie man Objekte zum Sprechen bringt* ('The World of Gimel: How to Make Objects Talk'), Majewski presented Freisler's work *Standard-Ei* ('Standard Egg') within a highly complex conceptual frame. While the original object – a stainless steel form used to define the shape of the ideal chicken egg – was hidden away from exhibition viewers in a bank safe, Majewski buried a copy of the egg in her garden. In the ensuing correspondence with Freisler, Majewski admitted to and explained the reasons for this unauthorised action, retrospectively ob-

taining Freisler's understanding and consent. The next step for Majewski, as planned, was to plant an apple tree on the stainless-steel egg. The derivative versions of this plan resulted from an ongoing, philosophical-poetic email correspondence between Majewski and Freisler, who in 2013 detailed more about his own preoccupation with the apple, and agreed to make a shared exhibition project. In 2014/15, this exhibition became manifest as the first version of Apple. An Introduction. (Over and over again) at the Muzeum Sztuki in Łódź. Freisler made it a pre-condition that the exhibit should only be about apples, that the artists should never meet, and that 1,001 trees should follow the first apple tree planted in Majewski's garden. Apart from this, he gave Majewski total freedom. Der Apfel. Eine Einführung. (Immer und immer und immer wieder) was subsequently realised at the Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach, at Kunsthalle Lingen and at Kaleidoskop Worpswede.

The story of its development and its conceptual framing accompany the project at every exhibition site as a part of its DNA. Rather than being pared down, these elements are constantly further developed. With every iteration, new conversations are initiated, new apple trees are planted, elements are added or transform themselves. The project reacts to each new location, expanding or contracting; documentation and text materials arise, overlapping one another like sediments, building a humous, a nutrient-rich ground, which serves as a point of departure for research and enables new encounters to take place.

2019, however, is a peculiar year. And Berlin is a peculiar city. 2019 is a year in which people are beginning to describe climate change as a climate catastrophe, in which movements such as Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion are gaining influence, in which cities and states worldwide are acknowledging the climate's state of emergency, in which environmental political challenges are discussed with a new sense of urgency, in which political parties that, over previous decades, failed to realise a sensible climate policy, are now attempting to run election campaigns on the question. 2019 is a year in which we are talking about the death of forests, about bark beetle plagues and spruce tree monocultures, about deforestation and CO2 reservoirs. It is a year in which those forests that we call the lungs of the earth are burning. It is a year of humility.

The artistic gesture of tree-planting has a number of prominent antecedents. But in the light of current events, its meaning has shifted. Today, above all, what type of tree is planted is decisive. A cultivated apple tree, if it stays healthy and is well-looked after, can produce fruit for many generations. This makes it a key resource. But not every type of apple is resistant to the same degree against the changes in the micro-climate predicted for the coming decades. And each species has a preference for specific sites and soils. In a city such as Berlin, the search for a suitable, publicly accessible and stable site for the planting of a cultivated tree is no trivial matter. Public space is dense, and is often interlaced with conflicting interests and needs. Even planting a single tree is an important act. Every tree is a gift: not only in and of itself, but through the fact that it tests how we might structure urban resilience; how we might make our cities sustainable into the future. What priority do places of natureculture, or urban gardens, have in this context? What possibilities for action do we have as citizens to structure urban space, and how can we grow beyond our role as consumers in this task? Because the climate catastrophe and the ensuing ecological crisis demand of us not only conscious consumer decisions, but also an active engagement and concern for our environment, understood in a positive sense.

Alongside the central theme of the apple itself – and the planting of apple trees – questions of biodiversity and the maintenance of species also play a key role in the exhibition. In her series of paintings of ancient apple varieties, Antje Majewski took as a point of departure the photographic still lives of Eckart Brandt. The pomologist maintains an orchard of fruit trees in Helmstedt, Niedersachsen, where he already has gathered hundreds of different sorts of apple. Brandt also appears in Majewski's documentary film *Wilde Äpfel* ('Wild Apples'), which can be understood as a critique on the conditions of contemporary apple production. In conversation with producers, wholesalers and pomologists in China, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Poland and Germany, Majewski draws a sketch of which varieties are currently overrepresented on the market, and why it is simpler to market a smaller range, restricting biodiversity. In a comparison between large-scale apple plantations and smaller orchards, topics such as differing approaches to pesticides and herbicides are addressed. A broad spectrum is opened out between new, highly cultivated varieties and industrial production versus wild apples in – as far as is possible – untouched forest regions. Also addressed is the

question of how, in a context of advancing climate change, to provide adequate nutrition via – in the best case – sustainably produced food, while preserving ancient species of cultivated and wild apples at the same time.

EVENTS

3/9/19 | 7–9pm

Panel discussion | Commons

with Eckart Brandt, Marco Clausen and Friederike Habermann, moderated by Maïke Majewski. The event takes place at alte feuerwache – studiobühne as part of KGB-Kunstwoche

29/9 | 3/10 | 4/10/19 | each 11am–4pm

Harvesting with Apfelschätze on overgrown plantations in Potsdam-Grube

6/10/19 | 1–6pm

Apple Festival at Galerie im Turm

20/10/19 | 12–2pm

Apple tree planting and workshop for adoptive tree-parents

1/9–30/10/19

Apple tree plantings and programmes in schools, organized by Apfelschätze in collaboration with Kulturagenten für kreative Schulen

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