

Media information

Robert Kuśmirowski

„DUSTribute“

25 March – 29 May 2022

Press preview

Wednesday, 23 March 2022

Opening

Thursday, 24 March 2022

Download press images:

<https://www.kunstraumdornbirn.at/en/exhibition/robert-kusmirowski>

Preview

Kunst Raum Stadt: Eva Schlegel

Augmented Reality in Public Space

20 May – 21 August 2022

Monika Sosnowska

17 June – 30 October 2022

Contact

Director and Curator

Thomas Häusle

Press and Public Relations

Sina Wagner

T +43 660 687 04 58

sina.wagner@kunstraumdornbirn.at



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„DUSTribute“

25 March – 29 May 2022

For Kunstraum Dornbirn, Robert Kuśmirowski (born in 1973 in Łódź, Poland) has created a new site-specific environment entitled *DUSTribute*. In the former assembly hall of the Rüsck Works factory, he has developed a post-apocalyptic scenery that completely transforms the space. Visitors find themselves in a world whose appearance resembles a fictional journey through time. Historical, cinematic and narrative reference systems interweave to form a story of existential peril and eerie beauty.



The artist occupies the entire hall, which formerly served as a machine works' fitting shop and today functions as Kunstraum Dornbirn's exhibition space, eliminating the tall transom lattice windows and shutting out outside influences. Sand piled up into mounds covers the entire floor of the large hall. In addition to a small wooden shed, a human figure can be made out in this inhospitable world. Working tools, machines and wooden carts are now dysfunctional representatives of a bygone era.

Visually and atmospherically, Kuśmirowski's new work at Kunstraum Dornbirn is based on the film classic *Stalker* (1979) by Soviet director Andrei Tarkovsky. It is about an area known as the "Zone", which the military has sealed off after the occurrence of mysterious incidents. The nameless stalker (a local guide) leads customers into the forbidden region, helping them avoid the dangers lurking there. With his help and for different reasons, a professor and a writer seek to enter the "Room of Wishes", which legend says is a place where the most secret wishes come true.

At Kunstraum Dornbirn, Kuśmirowski places his protagonist in a reconstruction of the gloomy scenery of this room. The sandy ground and the diffuse light create a magical world in which the human figure ekes out an existence in harsh, lifeless surroundings by daily labour, in hope of a better future that never comes. Even worse, time seems to stand still. The oppressive, anxiety-filled mood is reinforced by the inscrutable beauty of this mysterious parallel world.

Kuśmirowski evokes the narrative potential contained in his works through the re-enactment and staging of past times. The historical references spring from collective and individual history and are mixed with fiction and imagination. The resulting image testifies to a handwritten, unique and independent way of artistically appropriating the concrete world. It draws visitors in and lays claim to all the senses. The confrontation with mystical, decayed or destroyed places guides our uneasiness through the experience of obvious abandonment, human absence, and the consternation induced by an apparently perfect staging of past time in the present. Fascination is fed by a sense of the uncanny.

Kuśmirowski's works are medially diverse and take the form of installations, environments, prints, objects, photographs, drawings and performances. His immersive spatial installations communicate an aura of decline, conveyed by the patina of detailed recreations of objects and sceneries. His staged doublings take up a deliberately ambivalent stance towards memory and the shaping of historical narratives.

A catalogue will be published to accompany the exhibition.



Illustrations: Robert Kuśmirowski's method consists in recreating and photographing situations in the context of workers' lives at the historical time. The photographs are then treated digitally and manually to produce the impression of visual ageing and harmonized with the aesthetics of the historical reproduction processes and labelling of documents.

Kunstraum Dornbirn

Kunstraum Dornbirn was founded in 1987 as a non-profit association with the aim of presenting and communicating contemporary art. Since 2003, the exhibitions have found ideal conditions for the showing of large-scale installations in the historic assembly hall of the former Rüscher-Werke, a machine factory in Dornbirn's Municipal Gardens (Stadtgarten). The quality of the architecture in its original, raw state offers space for the presentation of current trends in international art. We show established, internationally renowned artists and newer positions in about four exhibitions every year.

The exhibition history of Kunstraum Dornbirn is marked by international artists such as Tony Oursler (2021), Atelier Van Lishout and Claudia Comte (both 2020), Hans Op de Beek (2017, photo below), Nathalie Djurberg & Hans Berg (2016), Berlinde de Bruyckere (2015), Not Vital and Tue Greenford (both 2012), Jan Kopp (2010) and Mark Dion (2008), and Austrian artists such as Peter Sandbichler (2021), Bernd Oppl (2019), Thomas Feuerstein (2018) and Roman Signer (2008).



Location and infrastructure

Vorarlberg is located in the four-country region around Lake Constance, with fast routes to and a lively exchange with Germany, Switzerland and Liechtenstein as well as other parts of Austria. The region is not only scenically attractive for tourism but can also boast the further appeal of the most diverse institutions' dense and high-quality cultural activities in the performing and visual arts.

The large brick assembly hall was built on the grounds of the Rüscher-Werke in 1893. In 1999/2000, the area was redesigned as municipal gardens in an international landscape planning competition. The redesign preserved important buildings of the Rüscher-Werke such as the assembly hall and created an urban recreational and cultural site. With a length of 30 metres and a width of 14 metres, the hall measures a total area of 420 m².