

Sven Johne

Das sowjetische Hauptquartier

September 13 – December 16, 2023

Press release

Opening: Tuesday, September 12, 2023, 6–10 pm

Premiere of the film *Das sowjetische Hauptquartier* (2023): 6:30 pm

Press preview: Tuesday, September 12, 2023, 11 am

As part of Berlin Art Week 2023, Fluentum presents *Das sowjetische Hauptquartier* (The Soviet Headquarters), a solo exhibition by artist and filmmaker Sven Johne. The core of the exhibition is the titular film, produced by Fluentum and premiering there in September. The presentation is complemented by an installation of earlier video works by Johne—some of which are part of the Fluentum Collection—which continue the thematic strands in *Das sowjetische Hauptquartier*.

Johne's new 33-minute film *Das sowjetische Hauptquartier* (2023) is set on the now-abandoned premises of the former Haus der Offiziere (House of Officers) in Wünsdorf, Brandenburg. The palatial estate, built in the early-twentieth century in a neo-baroque style, served as a type of headquarters and cultural center for the Soviet troops stationed in East Germany until 1994. In Johne's new work, it becomes the setting for a real estate showing. The wordy Becker (Marc Zwinz), a real estate agent doomed to succeed, leads Katharina Baronn (Luise Helm), supposedly a prospective buyer, through the desolate facilities. As the narrative progresses, the film's focus shifts and Baronn's inner monologue takes over. When she was eight years old, Baronn witnessed the departure of the Soviet troops from the headquarters. Since then, a nostalgic "child's USSR" (in the words of Johne) has haunted her memories as an idealized alternative to actually existing capitalism. *Das sowjetische Hauptquartier* is about early imprints, the potency of ideologies, and the farewell to childhood.

The space where Fluentum shows exhibitions was built in the 1930s as an administrative facility for the Nazi Luftwaffe, later serving as headquarters for the US military in West-Berlin. As an ideological and historical counterpart to the Haus der Offiziere—one that has not fallen into neglect, but was architecturally restored in the wake of the premises' privatization in the 2010s—the film's presentation at Fluentum becomes an allegory on the enduring narratives of the post-Wende era: on alleged winners and losers, remembering and forgetting.

In Sven Johne's works, personal narratives are draped over the cornerstones of official history, ultimately retelling it through individual perspectives and moments of emotional upheaval. In his videos and photographic works, Johne appropriates documentary aesthetics, but subverts its claims to truth by infusing it with fictional elements. The result is a realism beyond authenticity and mimesis, one that amounts to more than the sum of its parts.

On the upper floor, an installation of five earlier video pieces by Johne demonstrates his long-standing engagement with the longing for change, the feeling of political stasis, and the present and past of East Germany. Similar to *Das sowjetische Hauptquartier*, these works employ the montage of voice-over, narrative, and the filmic image to showcase the entanglement of personal stories and political powers. In *On Vanishing* (2022) and *Meridian* (2020), it is the emotional irrationality of a child's perspective that guides the viewer. Works such as *Dear Vladimir Putin* (2017) and *A Sense of Warmth* (2015), which are part of the Fluentum Collection, tackle issues that remain controversial to this very day--like the search for ideological belonging. They also display the collection's special focus on art that considers historical material within a contemporary social context and questions media's transformation of storytelling.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalog designed by André Fuchs, to be published in December.

Press Preview

Tuesday, September 12, 11 am

Please confirm your participation to: press@fluentum.org

Press Material

<https://share.fluentum.org/s/qNg6wgpza2Qg5Bj>

Opening

Tuesday, September 12, from 6 to 10 pm

Duration

September 13 – December 16, 2023

General Information

Special opening hours on the occasion of Berlin Art Week 2023

Wednesday to Sunday, September 13 – 17, 11 am – 6 pm

Regular Opening Hours (starting September 22, 2023):
Friday, 11 am – 5 pm, Saturday, 11 am – 4 pm

Admission

Free Entry

About Fluentum

Fluentum is a nonprofit, privately run institution dedicated to exhibiting, producing, and collecting contemporary art, with a special focus on time-based media such as film and video. An initiative of Berlin-based entrepreneur and collector Markus Hannebauer, Fluentum opened its exhibition space in a former military complex in Berlin in 2019. Fluentum's exhibition space is located in the imposing main building of a former military facility. Constructed between 1936 and 1938 during the era of National Socialism by architect Fritz Fuß as "Luftgaukommando III," the building served a key infrastructural role for the German Luftwaffe. After World War II, US forces utilized the building as their military and intelligence headquarters until the last GI departed in 1994.

Accessibility

Fluentum's ground floor exhibition space is wheelchair accessible. To access the 1st floor, there is an elevator that is only partially wheelchair accessible. Parking for people with disabilities is available. If you need any assistance, our on-site staff is happy to help.

Social Media

Instagram: @fluentumcollection
#fluentum #svenjohne

Media Partner

**ARTS OF THE
WORKING CLASS**

gallerytalk.net
WIR SCHREIBEN KUNST.

BERLINARTLINK

Contact Fluentum

Junia Thiede
Artistic Director
press@fluentum.org
+49 (0) 30 2864 4479
Clayallee 174
14195 Berlin

FLUENTUM

CONTEMPORARY
TIME-BASED
ART

www.fluentum.org

Press contact

Corinna Wolfien

Books Communication Art

+49 (0) 175 5676046

mail@corinnawolfien.com