

MD 72 presents *Berlin Local*, a significant exhibition of a new project by the British conceptual artist, Stephen Willats. Whilst Willats also has major exhibitions at the Tamayo Museum, Mexico City and Shanghai Biennial opening coincidentally this same November, *Berlin Local* is intended to stress the local – the importance of community and neighbourhood as a focus for art practice.

Since the late 1950s, Willats' work has involved interdisciplinary methods deriving from sociology, cybernetics, semiotics and philosophy. Willats has developed an interactive, collaborative practice that explores art as a social phenomenon by assigning the public/audience the role of observer and participant and using their urban everyday as a site of investigation.

For this project, Willats involved a couple running an antiquarian book shop and a lady running a market garden in the direct neighbourhood of MD72. The result is a series of works presented as an installation of a drawing vinyl and eight super 8 films accompanying four double-sided panels at the MD72 space and installations at the book shop and garden, and also at an Italian restaurant and at a car showroom, both a reminiscence of West Berlin times. Over eight months, Willats worked with the participants to engage with their social relationship and their own creative potential and perception of their environment. Interviews, photographic and film material, signs and symbols which surround the participants in their everyday life are streamed together in the form of films and diagrammatic panels. For Willats, the meaning and the function of art derives from the multiplicity of perception and communication of all the people involved, both of the viewers, as well as of the participants. A map accompanies the exhibition, showing the sites of the installations around the MD72 and increasing the neighbourhood connections that are an essential part of the work.

Willats has had a long involvement with Berlin: In 1979 Willats was awarded a residency by the DAAD programme and in 1981 he had the first solo exhibition devoted to his work at the Neue Nationalgalerie “Leben in vorgegeben Grenzen – 4 Inseln in Berlin”. Since then Willats has regularly exhibited in many German cities such as Cologne, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart and Regensburg and will be part of the upcoming exhibition *West: Berlin - Eine Insel auf der Suche nach Festland* at the Stadtmuseum Berlin. Since 1965 he has edited Control Magazine.

To coincide with *Berlin Local* at MD72, the daadgalerie is staging the exhibition *How Tomorrow Looks From Here* by Stephen Willats, featuring works on the theme of the model, simulation and interaction. Two joint catalogues *Berlin Local / How Tomorrow Looks From Here* have been published for this occasion.

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