

KÜNSTLERHAUS BREMEN

Am Deich 68/69 // 28199 Bremen // Tel: 0049.(0)421.508 598 // Fax: 0049.(0)421.508 305 // www.kuenstlerhausbremen.de

Press Release

Josef Strau

Invitation Epiphany

11 February – 30 April 2017

How much text can an exhibition contain while retaining its essentially spatial format, its opposition to the form of a conventional publication? How to read a story that sabotages its own continuity and legibility while nonetheless suggesting a continuous narrative?

For more than thirty years, Josef Strau has investigated different notions of text production and the forms this takes. His artistic practice derives from the written word and is characterized by shifting social roles and changing perspectives from which he approaches the text. He has written articles on art for professional journals and press releases and catalogue essays for artists of his acquaintance, and organized numerous exhibitions as the founder of the infamous project space Galerie Meerrettich in Berlin. A true “artist’s artist”, Strau’s work cannot be extracted from the network of relationships in which he is enmeshed. Caught between the pull of artistic freedom, collectivity, and the market, he describes his connection to art production as a “guilty relationship”. His works – in neglected and under-utilized mediums – evolve from the texts that they serve to display. They are reference objects that trace the structure of a fragmented narrative. Freely pursuing streams of thought, Strau’s writing style employs a unique syntax. His biographically influenced stories, which in automatic writing manner utilize methods from both literary and concrete poetry, wander from sense to nonsense and incorporate the flavor of their ambiguous origins.

Once more, Strau plays in Bremen with the format of the retrospective, using a selection of text posters to convey an overview of his ongoing work with text. This presentation is combined with a second that shows a newly produced series of wall pieces inspired by Byzantine icon painting. These works share a unique materiality and a new working method in which the works are treated with tin. Thus, the connection with icon painting emerges not from the content of the work, but from the contradiction between the iconoclastic banning of images and purposeful artistic production.

Josef Strau’s works have been shown in numerous international solo and group exhibitions at galleries and institutions including Vilma Gold, London; Galerie Buchholz, Berlin; dépendance, Brussels; House of Gaga, Mexico City; Greene Naftali, New York; Secession, Vienna; The Renaissance Society, Chicago; Arnolfini, Bristol; Stedelijk Docking Station, Amsterdam; Malmö Konsthall; and Portikus, Frankfurt. “Invitation Epiphany” is Josef Strau’s first solo exhibition in a German institution.

The exhibition is curated by Gergana Todorova.

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Opening: Friday, 10 February 2017, 7 p.m.

Performance with and by Chechilia Gherson, Dhamon Sfethsios, Thomas Nehrvi, and Joseph Strau, 8 p.m.

Sunday, 26 February 2017, 2 p.m.: Guided tour by Gergana Todorova (Interim artistic director).

Thursday, 2 March 2017, 7 p.m.: Artist talk by Josef Strau.

Tuesday, 18 March 2017, 7 p.m.: Dorota Gaweda and Egle Kulbokaite, Young Girl Reading Group 142

Sunday, 23 April 2017, 2 p.m.: Guided tour by Fanny Gonella (Artistic director).

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For additional information or press images, please contact the Künstlerhaus Bremen at info@kuenstlerhausbremen.de or +49 421 508 598.