

The Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart – Berlin presents Adrian Piper’s first solo exhibition in a German museum. *The Probable Trust Registry: The Rules of the Game #1-3* features her same-titled major work recently acquired for the collection of the Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin.

The work consists of three identical, golden reception desks that are placed before gray, ceiling-high walls in the historic hall of the museum. With the assistance of receptionists, visitors can sign a contract with themselves at these desks. In the contracts, each individual voluntarily commits to align his or her future deeds with ethical principles such as honesty and reliability. The entries will then be collected in a registry which all participants will receive at the end of the exhibition. They form a community of people who are likely to be trustworthy in the future.

*The Probable Trust Registry: The Rules of the Game #1-3* is equally an installation and a participative group performance. In a dialogical process it deals with the question how trust is built, and thus aims at the foundations of interpersonal relations. Considered in a larger context, it raises philosophical as well as quite practical questions regarding democratic processes and individual responsibility. It does not only call on the visitors to make a personal declaration, but also urges us to think about our actions and the consequences they entail on political, economic, and social level.

*The Probable Trust Registry: The Rules of the Game #1-3* demands a life-long commitment in order to create a new basis of trust among us that is under threat these days. *The Probable Trust Registry: The Rules of the Game #1-3* tries to counteract this decline, or, as Adrian Piper explains: “In order to build trust among ourselves, we must begin right now to train ourselves to become trustworthy. This requires that each of us can rely on ourselves to fulfill our own expectations of ourselves; and this, in turn, that we can bring our actions into accord with our assertions, our assertions into accord with our beliefs, and our beliefs into accord with our values. The Probable Trust Registry offers the public the opportunity to work together, individually and collectively, on strengthening these character traits.”

Against the backdrop of current international political and social developments and the upcoming parliamentary elections in Europe, the presentation of the work can be seen as stance against the change in values that seems underway. “I think that museums in our current situation have to focus on the foundations of our coexistence,” says Udo Kittelmann, Director of the Nationalgalerie – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin and curator of the exhibition, to “take a determined position for a liberal and pluralistic society. The presentation of Piper’s work is our contribution to this issue.”

Adrian Piper (b. New York, 1948) is a philosopher and first-generation conceptual artist. Her oeuvre is one of the most significant positions in contemporary art. Piper has lived and worked in Berlin since 2005. *The Probable Trust Registry: The Rules of the Game #1–3* was honored with the Golden Lion at the 2015 Venice Biennale. The Museum of Modern Art in New York will present a comprehensive retrospective of her work next year.

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