

Press Release

5 May 2021

Arbeit am Gedächtnis – Transforming Archives

Main programme May – November 2021

Exhibition, June to 19 September 2021

Akademie der Künste, Pariser Platz

Press and
Public Relations

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On the occasion of its 325th anniversary, the Akademie der Künste reflects on the central role of the arts and cultural institutions in the culture of memory with the programme “Arbeit am Gedächtnis – Transforming Archives”. A major exhibition that kicks off in June and a series of events from May to November 2021 will explore the current artistic practice of dealing with memory and memory storage: Artists examine archives, challenge the processes of selection, and probe gaps in the depots. Moreover, the Akademie der Künste and its archives are themselves a site of artistic memory work that is tasked with defending, and at the same time re-assessing, long-established spaces of knowledge and memory. For the Akademie der Künste in its anniversary year, “Arbeit am Gedächtnis – Transforming Archives” also amounts to a self-examination of its own work. How and what a society remembers has become a key question at a time when self-perceptions are being re-negotiated and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion are being questioned.

The project centres around the exhibition “Arbeit am Gedächtnis – Transforming Archives” in the Akademie’s building on Pariser Platz. The exhibition will be set up in early June and will open to the public as soon as corona regulations allow.

13 commissioned artworks visualise the grammar of remembering and forgetting, and show preserved material in new contexts. The artistic memory work reveals itself here as archaeological practice and political act; it positions itself against historical amnesia and advocates for the decolonisation and diversification of established bodies of knowledge. The participating artists, most of them Akademie members and alumni of the Akademie’s fellowship programmes, explore the topic from their different perspectives: visual arts, literature, film, music and theatre. The installations will be spread out through the exhibition spaces and public areas of the Akademie venue. One of the exhibition halls is dedicated to 15 exemplary objects and documents selected from the Archives of the Akademie der Künste. They testify to memory as the driving force of artistic creation and form a constellation of artistic procedures: “Remembering is work”. (Einar Schleef)

With artistic positions by Mirosław Bałka, Candice Breitz, Ulrike Draesner, Arnold Dreyblatt, Thomas Heise, Susann Maria Hempel, Alexander Kluge, Eduardo Molinari, Matana Roberts, Cemile Sahin, Cécile Wajsbrot, Jennifer Walshe, Robert Wilson

Positions from the Archives by Walter Benjamin, Bertolt Brecht, Inge Deutschkron, George Grosz, Walter Kempowski, Käthe Kollwitz, Ursula Mamlok, Heiner Müller / Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Edgar Reitz, Einar Schleef, Axel Schultes / Charlotte Frank, Uwe Timm, Heinrich Vogeler, Mary Wigman, Christa Wolf

The exhibition will be accompanied by a livestream programme featuring weekly talks, lectures and panel discussions with participating artists and guests including Aleida Assmann, Sharon Macdonald, Max Czollek, Julian Heynen and Alice Creischer. As a prelude on 2 June, Akademie President and filmmaker Jeanine Meerapfel will speak with writer Cécile Wajsbrot.

A magazine accompanying the exhibition will be published in German and English.

Further information on the exhibition and the events:

www.adk.de/gedaechtnis

Exhibition Information

Arbeit am Gedächtnis – Transforming Archives

Exhibition, from June to 19 September, 2021

The exhibition will open as soon as corona regulations allow.

Tues – Sun 11 am – 7 pm

Admission € 9 / 6

Free admission Tues after 3 pm and for visitors under 18

Corona-related access restrictions, time slot tickets

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