

Anonymous Drawings: A Review

Subverting the art market principles and practices, offering individuals worldwide to participate in a project where their backgrounds and identities are incompletely irrelevant whereas the content of their creative endeavour is all that matters, giving an unlikely city area of Moabit an accessible communal space, giving substance to social inclusion through a range of intended and unintended practices such as presenting drawings by authors who are individuals with physical disabilities inseparably from all other, challenging common approaches to experiencing and defining art...this and more is what Anke Becker and Kunstverein Tiergarten have achieved.

Galleries are not commonly found in Moabit. On my way to Kunstverein, I passed dozens of restaurants, shops, and fruit stalls, scent of doener mixing with one of fish. Huge windows of the Kunstverein thus offer an unusual sight: dozens of small images arranged on the gallery's inner walls according to aesthetic vision of Anke Becker. These images lure the passer-by to come in, and many do (admission is free of charge), thereby zooming in the individual drawings making up the collage-like image they had seen from the outside.

There are spaces on the walls where a name is written instead of a drawing hanging there: this happens when a drawing is sold. Only then does the identity of its author become known. The price is the same for all drawings, irrespective of the author's age (children's drawing also made it in the selection) and market value (renown artists stand on equal footing with „amateurs“) – 150 euros. The author receives 100 euro Anke tells us this pays two monthly rents for a Chinese student who sent his/her drawings, while being peanuts for Swiss public.

How does the drawing get to Anke in the first place? She launched an open call on the Internet, specifications being simple (only formal rule regards the maximum size of a drawing) and limiting the number of drawings per sender to two. The response has been overwhelming, we are told. In certain “poor“ countries, obstacles such as the price of sending an envelope abroad sometimes play a role, and the outreach is not fully global, but to a large extent, the project transcends borders, nationalities and distances, alike the medium used to bring it about. This cosmopolitan face of Anonymous Drawings urged for a digital version, to allow the artists and the interested public the see the exhibited drawings. (Accessible at <http://www.anonyme-zeichner.de/?id=1&L=1>; there is also a Facebook Page). However, their immediate context of neighbouring drawings can only be seen in the physical version of the exhibition. This brings me back where I started, on the streets of Moabit, Berlin, to the Kunstverein Tiergarten, which is hosting the exhibition until 20 April 2013.

Anke's project started in 2006 and has been hosted in a variety in places since, more than 8000 artists from all over the world having taking part.

We are deeply grateful to Anke for her time and passion with which she told us the story of Anonymous Drawings, for the opportunity to see the images she collected and reflect on plurality of questions arising from her project.

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