

< rotor >

Centre for Contemporary Art

Volksgartenstraße 6a, 8020 Graz, Austria
www.rotor.mur.at



In Suspense

Albeit Unintentionally—Rather Acrobatic

Opening: Saturday, September 19, 2020 from 12:00 to 20:00 at < rotor >
Duration: 19.9.-28.11.2020

Participating artists:

Ruth Anderwald + Leonhard Grond ◦ Iris Christine Aue ◦ Deborah Birch / Veza Vernández ◦
Günter Brus / Jörg Schlick ◦ Fedo Ertl ◦ Josef Fürpass ◦ e.d gfrerer ◦ Daniel Hafner ◦
Veronika Hauer ◦ Marlene Hausegger ◦ Matthias Jäger / Bernhard Wolf ◦ Roman Klug ◦
Zita Oberwalder ◦ Clara Opperl ◦ Keyvan Paydar ◦ Erwin Polanc ◦ Wendelin Pressl ◦
David Reumüller ◦ Isa Riedl ◦ Christina Helena Romirer ◦ Karoline Rudolf ◦
Irmgard Schaumberger ◦ Maria Schneider ◦ Markus Sworcik ◦ Lea Titz



Curatorial statement

March 2020. In the weeks before, it had already become apparent, at first still abstract, seemingly far away, but then it became concrete, and from one day to the next so many things changed in this country too. The threat that gives rise to these changes is not visible to the naked eye. It is something microscopically small that cancels out the usual course of events.

Since then, much has remained unclear. What does the new living together look like? What is possible right now and what is not? Will everything change again tomorrow? When are we going to return to some kind of normal state, and do we really want everything from before that back? What is happening to us and the world right now?

“To be in suspense is to hold your breath. And to look with as much attention as possible at what is simply there, at what offers itself to you in the presence of things.” The French psychoanalyst and philosopher Anne Dufourmantelle (1964-2017) offers us this formulation in her 2011 book *Éloge du risque* (Eng. *In Praise of Risk*, 2019). In one of the brief chapters, which is titled “In Suspense”, she advocates that the interim state itself be appreciated: “Suspension is not the arrested time that comes before something else happens; it is the event itself”.

In her text, Anne Dufourmantelle refers to tight-rope walkers and trapeze artists, among others, and their ability to “attempt this miracle of suspense out on the wire”. “Taking the risk of being in suspense is rather acrobatic,” concludes Anne Dufourmantelle. And this is also an ability that

is demanded of people in view of the uncertainties and unpredictability that accompany the current situation: to be—albeit unintentionally—acrobatic.

Those who come down to earth again after being in suspense are sometimes on uncharted territory. Take a deep breath first. Do we flee quickly back into all too familiar territory? Or do we embark on the risk of changing course? Anne Dufourmantelle recommends also in this situation “not to trust any prefabricated or predigested concept. To remain as far as possible from thinking calcified into postures, responses and certainties, but still to think.”

Of course, questions of being in suspense are also based on their counterpoint: What prevents us from being in suspense? What are the burdens of the world that make it impossible for us to take off from it? And if we bring art into play at this point, does it stabilise us on the ground, does it anchor us there or is the opposite the case, does it ease the one or other burden? Does it help us to bear the state of suspense?

The current situation affects the structures, possibilities and problematic areas of our societies like a burning glass. It becomes apparent all too quickly that ready-made answers and postures no longer produce certainties. We remain paralysed if we do not make use of this exceptional time of being suspended in uncertainty, which nobody has expected. And not only open up space for new things for ourselves, but actually relieve the world.

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After the lockdown on 16 March, < rotor > centre for contemporary art felt compelled to postpone almost all projects planned for 2020 that have to do with participatory art and/or artistic research projects until next year.

Instead, we developed the exhibition project presented here, which considers and reflects the situation that has arisen. Works by 25 protagonists of the Graz and Styrian art scene will be shown. Young artists as well as more established ones are involved. In addition, works from the Art Collection of the City of Graz will be part of the exhibition. This also allows us to present the work of three artists who have already passed away, but whose work is of great importance in the context of this project.

To accompany the exhibition, < rotor > will offer a supporting programme in the course of which we will resume the physical contact with our audience, which was interrupted by the coronavirus pandemic, in discourse formats with a limited number of participants.

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Curatorial team:
Margarethe Makovec, Anton Lederer, Markus Waitschacher, Leonhard Rabensteiner,
with the collaboration of Birgit Kulterer (Collection of the City of Graz/Cultural Department)