

Press release, Berlin, 4 Nov 2022

Class Issues – Art Production In and Out of Precarity

Exhibition

25 Nov 2022 – 9 Jan 2023

Opening: 24 Nov 2022, 7 pm

With a welcoming address by Dr. Klaus Lederer, Senator for Culture and Europe

Location: Berlinische Galerie, Alte Jakobstraße 124–128, 10969 Berlin

Press conference: 24 Nov 2022, 11 am

Please register at presse@ngbk.de



Vlad Brăteanu, an artist who cannot get funding is no artist, nach Mladen Stilinović und Anca Benera und Arnold Estefan, 2021, © Vlad Brăteanu

Class Issues – Art Production In and Out of Precarity

Extreme class differences collide within the field of art. The promise of an art-world career is often accompanied by lived realities and conditions of production entrenched in precarity; behind the glamorous image of the artist lurk shrouded poverty and relations of dependence. The exhibition *Class Issues – Art Production In and Out of Precarity* explores how strongly one’s background influences access and careers, thematizing the ways in which art production is largely dependent on economic, social, and cultural capital.

To this end, *Class Issues* brings together works from the collection of the Berlinische Galerie with contemporary positions—from drawings and paintings to installation, video, and audio works. Along five thematic strands, works have been selected that illuminate experiences of inclusion and exclusion while negotiating questions posed by the presence of classism within the field of art.

In doing so, classism is considered alongside racism, sexism, and ableism, adopting an intersectional perspective in recognition of the fact that different forms of discrimination are often interlocked. The consequences of such experiences of discrimination can negatively impact mental health or manifest themselves in self-doubt. Liang Luscombe’s fabulative video satire illustrates these connections: as a way out of debt, the protagonists consider looting, selling their own teeth, or fleeing to a Caribbean tax haven.

Classism and Access: When one’s background impedes access to educational institutions, exhibition opportunities, or funding, classism is usually at play. This has as much to do with a lack of financial resources as it does with having insufficient contacts or knowledge required to write grant applications. Yet, funding is a crucial factor for an artist’s career; Vlad Brăteanu names its importance on his banner declaring “An artist without funding is no artist”.

Conditions of Production: How can one make art when neither money nor space is available? The exhibition presents works that negotiate and document the precarious working and living conditions within the field of art. For example, many artists are limited in format and materials according to the availability of resources—or lack thereof. Meanwhile, other bodies of work perpetually remain in the proposal stage. Projects by Douglas Boatwright and Verena Pfisterer make the act of working in and out of precarity tangible: when the printer malfunctions, the “misprint” literally indexes the lack of resources; when there are no means to realize the expansive installation, a small-format concept sketch is all that remains. The exhibition concept

deliberately includes the wall labels, providing information about the actual production costs of some of the works, the artist's parents' occupation, applications for funding, or the number of jobs the artist had to take on in order to support themselves.

Art Market: The field of art is characterized by a paradoxical simultaneity. While the works of a few artists fetch astronomical prices, others work under precarious conditions and finance themselves through jobs at minimum-wage level. The spokesperson for Berlin's professional association of visual artists (bbk), Frauke Boggasch, shows the absurdities of life in the art scene via recordings of her long-awaited fellowship and residency in Paris, where her privileges, albeit short-lived, clash with the lack of access for people living on the streets.

Areas of Neglect: Many problems remain unvoiced out of shame. For example, (old-age) poverty is a taboo subject in an art world that often sees itself as critical and progressive. It even affected Hannah Höch, whose works are some of the most prominent within the collection of the Berlinische Galerie, and it continues to impact numerous artists living today, as witnessed in letters from artists over sixty who applied for funding during the Corona pandemic. Also on view are works by artists without academic training and those with physical or mental impairments—positions that, due to the barriers of entry, often remain invisible.

Options for Action: The negotiation of class issues leads to questions surrounding potential courses of action that could counter classism. This includes efforts to make production conditions transparent; for example, the members of La Buse choose to only work collectively, positioning themselves against the idealized image of the individualized artist via a communal practice of anonymized production.

Class Issues will be complemented by a film program in the IBB video room at Berlinische Galerie, as well as by a program of events and workshop aimed at expanding the themes taken up in the exhibition.

With works by Douglas Boatwright, Frauke Boggasch, Verena Brakonier / Greta Granderath / Jivan Frenster, Vlad Brăteanu, Margit Czenki für ‚Der goldene Engel –Pro System‘ mit ‚Die Mission – künstlerische Maßnahmen gegen die Kälte e.V.‘, Karolina Dreit / Kristina Dreit / Anna Trzpis-McLean (Arbeitszyklus Working Class Daughters), Paul Goesch, Martin Elmar de Haan / Anonym, Hannah Höch, Matthias Horn, Marion Lebbe / Caroline Sebilleau / Emmanuel Simon, Liang Luscombe, Franziska König, Silke Nowak, Verena Pfisterer, Jelka Plate, Karin Powser, Arthur Segal, Christian Specht, Margret Steenblock / ClaraRosa, Anna Schapiro, Hito Steyerl / Giorgi Gago Gagoshidze / Miloš Trakilović, Gabriele Stötzer, Mika Svolos, Gülbin Ünlü, Anna-Lena Wenzel, Norbert Witzgall

nGbK Project Group Class Issues: Frauke Boggasch, Silke Nowak, Anna Schapiro, Anna-Lena Wenzel, Norbert Witzgall

The project is a collaboration between the nGbK and the Berlinische Galerie.

Admission:

12 €, concessions 8 €

Free admission for under 18s

Admission is free for members of the nGbK and for artists who can present proof of membership within recognized art associations.

Opening times:

Wed–Mon 10 am–6 pm

Tue closed

Press images: <http://u.pc.cd/qqw7>

Further images upon request

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Program of Events

13 Nov 2022

11 am–6 pm

Class Matters

Workshop with Francis Seeck
Location: Stadtwerkstatt, Karl-Liebknecht-Str. 11, 10178 Berlin
Language: German
Registration at anmeldung@ngbk.de

24 Dec 2022

7 pm

Exhibition opening

with speeches by Dr. Thomas Köhler (BG) / Dr. Klaus Lederer (Senator for Culture and Europe) /
Annette Maechtel (nGbK) / Class Issues Project Group
and a performative installation by Karolina Dreit / Kristina Dreit / Anna Trzpis-McLean
(Arbeitszyklus Working Class Daughters)

4 Dec 2022

3 pm

Paradoxien des Künstler*innendaseins

Panel discussion
with Class Issues PG, Marina Schulze, and a performance by MYSTI
Moderation: Jacqueline Saki Aslan
Language: German
Location: Berlinische Galerie Auditorium
Free admission

5 Dec 2022

2–3 pm

Public guided tour

with the Class Issues Project Group
Language: German
Admission included in the exhibition ticket

8 Jan 2023

3 pm

Praxen der Umverteilung

Panel discussion
with Verena Issel, Mareice Kaiser, Martina Witte, and a contribution by Jelka Plate Moderation:
Jacqueline Saki Aslan
Language: German
Location: Berlinische Galerie Auditorium

9 Jan 2023

2–3 pm

Public guided tour

with the Class Issues Project Group
Language: English
Admission included in the exhibition ticket

9 Jan 2023

7 pm

Navigating an Unjust System

Online panel discussion

with Douglas Boatwright, Vlad Brăteanu, Franziska König, Liang Luscombe, and a contribution by Michael Anhoff

Moderation: Jacqueline Saki Aslan

Language: English

Registration at anmeldung@ngbk.de