

goseriede 11

30159 hannover | germany

www.kestnergesellschaft.de

kestner
gesellschaft

Kestner Gesellschaft

Presskit summer 2023

Press contact:

Katja Banik, communication

kommunikation@kestnergesellschaft.de

phone: +49 511 70120-16 | fax: +49 511 70120-20

mobile: +49 170 2765043

You will find our digital press release and pictures at the bottom of our webpage:

<https://kestnergesellschaft.de/en/page/press>

fon +49 511 70120 0
fax +49 511 70120 20
kestner@kestnergesellschaft.de

Press release

Summer / autumn 2023

Exhibitions at a glance

July 8 – Oct 1, 2023

The New Man, The Announcer, The Constructor. El Lissitzky: The Self-portrait as the Kestner Gesellschaft

Group Exhibition

July 8 – Oct 1, 2023

Ella Walker. Chorus

Project Space Shifting Present

July 8, 2023 – July 7, 2024

Marlena Kudlicka. one more than 10

Café Tender Buttons

July 8 – Oct 1, 2023

John Wood and Paul Harrison. words on the front of a building

Facade

July 8 – Oct 1, 2023

Paulina Ołowska. Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers

Prinz Gholam. Appearances

Opening Performance

(see flier inside press kit)

July 8 – Oct 1, 2023

calendar of events

Presscontact

Katja Banik, communication

kommunikation@kestnergesellschaft.de

phone: +49 511 70120-16 | fax: +49 511 70120-20

mobile: +49 170-2765043

You will find our digital press release and pictures at the bottom of our [webpage](#).

kestner
gesellschaft

Group Exhibition

The New Man, The Announcer, The Constructor. El Lissitzky: The Self-portrait as the Kestner Gesellschaft

July 8 – Oct 1, 2023

artists within the group exhibition:

Michelangelo Antonioni, Willi Baumeister, BEASTER, Johanna Billing, Martin Boyce, Max Burchartz, Heinrich Dunst, the next ENTERprise, Fernanda Fragateiro, Assaf Gruber, Paul Harrison and John Wood, Lajos Kassák, Marlena Kudlicka, Marysia Lewandowska, El Lissitzky, Felipe Mujica, László Moholy-Nagy, Paulina Ołowska, László Peri, Prinz Gholam, Florian Pumhösl, Susanne Sachsse, Wieland Schönfelder, Kurt Schwitters, Katja Strunz, Nikolai Michailowitsch Suetin

A look at the history and avant-garde mission of the Kestner Gesellschaft

With the group exhibition ***The New Man, the Announcer, the Constructor. El Lissitzky: The Self-Portrait as the Kestner Gesellschaft***, curated by Adam Budak traces the founding moments of its history as well as its avant-garde mission. Presented in 1923, seven years after the founding of the Kestner Gesellschaft, **the El Lissitzky exhibition was the Russian artist's first institutional solo show** and marked his pioneering role as the announcer of a new vocabulary that revolutionised the formal language of art, as well as his role as the constructor of an institutional way of thinking based on scientific and empirical perception and the innovative approach of exhibition architecture, strategies of staging and a thorough understanding of artistic creation.

The Kestner Gesellschaft as a nucleus for experimental and progressive ideas

***The New Man, the Announcer, the Constructor* celebrates the centenary of this exhibition** by paying tribute to this significant moment in the institutional history of the Kestner Gesellschaft, a moment that sowed the seeds of a great diversity of experimental and progressive ideas that will be reflected in the future programme and institutional identity of the Kestner Gesellschaft.

This exhibition not only highlights the pioneering and visionary aspects developed by various representatives of the avant-garde active in Hanover in the early 1920s, but also explores the long-lasting legacy of this period and its impact on museum

**kestner
gesellschaft**

discourse, particularly with regard to Dorner's notion of the "living museum" and El Lissitzky's "imaginary spaces", in which the experience of art was to become more personal, intense and multidimensional - fitting for the life of a new, modern man living in an ever-changing world full of contrasts.

The exhibition emphasises the pioneering and visionary aspects that were developed in the early 1920s by the then director and curator Alexander Dorner and other representatives of the avant-garde who were active in Hanover at that time. Conceptualised as an institutional self-portrait of a prophetic artist, *The New Man, the Announcer, the Constructor* consists of archival material and historical positions set in confrontation with the contemporary artists' deconstructive and revisionist reading of the modernist paradigm.

Exhibition architecture from Vienna: "Spaces find function in their use".

The exhibition architecture was developed by the Viennese architecture firm the next ENTERprise (Marie-Therese Hannoncourt-Fuchs and Ernst J. Fuchs). **tnE Architects** believe that space truly discovers its function upon being used. This way of thinking opens up a discourse in which concepts and spatial strategies - as related to unforeseeable, future needs and developments- play a key role. The programmatic and spatial limits of their buildings and concepts are conceived with a consciously high level of permeability on the basis of the performative potential of architecture and the interplay between space, atmosphere, context and user.

Loans from Eindhoven and Berlin and many other supporters

The Kestner Gesellschaft is grateful to all lenders, in particular the Dutch Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, whose team generously loaned more than 40 works for this exhibition, and the Derda Gallery in Berlin, which also provided significant support with around 30 loans.

100 Years of El Lissitzky: 100 Historical and Contemporary Works

The exhibition comprises more than 100 pieces showing **numerous new works** by historical as well as contemporary international artists from 1919 to the present day in a total of three halls covering more than 800 square metres.

Curator: Adam Budak

Assistant Curators: Robert Knoke, Alexander Wilmschen

**kestner
gesellschaft**

List of artists whose works are shown in the exhibition *The New Man, the Announcer, the Constructor. El Lissitzky: The Self-Portrait as Kestner Gesellschaft* in alphabetical order:

Michelangelo Antonioni (1912 – 2007)

Michelangelo Antonioni was an Italian film director, author and painter. His films, with their media and pop culture critical approaches, deal among other things with the search for identity in a changing world. He also dealt with social themes such as class society, youth culture and political rebellion. In the 1960s and 1970s, his work was considered groundbreaking, and to this day his films have had a major influence on cinema, both in terms of content and cinematography. The end of his US film drama *Zabriskie Point* (1970), which he directed, can be seen in the exhibition. Named after the viewpoint of the same name in Death Valley, the film is considered a road movie and homage to the flower power and hippie movement of the late 1960s.

Willi Baumeister (1889 – 1955)

Friedrich Wilhelm Baumeister, Willi Baumeister for short, was a German painter, graphic artist, typographer, stage designer, art theorist, author and university lecturer at the Städelschule in Frankfurt, among other places. He is considered one of the most important representatives of German Art Informel and was also active in Concrete Art. From 1919 to 1930 Baumeister devoted himself to Constructivism and is regarded as an important artist of modernism with his works. In the 1920s Baumeister worked as a teacher at the Stuttgart Art Academy and became a member of the artists' association "Der Sturm". During this time he developed his own style, which was characterised by Cubist and Constructivist influences. Baumeister experimented with abstract forms, surfaces and colours and strove for a synthesis of painting and architecture. Some of his works from 1923/24 will be on display in the exhibition.

BEASTER

BEASTER formed in 2013 and consist of the four founding members Angela Fette, Sascha Hahn, Phillip Schulze and Christian Jendreiko. All four members come from the visual arts, but also work with music and sound or have transferred their musical work into an intermediate area of visual art. The focus of their installation in the exhibition

is a wall piece of geometric shapes (in the background) showing a Rorschach Test (psychological test with inkblot images) as a geometric abstract figure. The overall installation shows an artist's studio as a stage space. The visitors are inside the machine room of art. The objects in this room show how the descendants of the modern avant-garde work on them.

Johanna Billing (*1973)

Johanna Billing is a Swedish artist working mainly in video, installation and performance. As an artist, Johanna Billing has a unique approach that explores the relationship between art and everyday life and encourages viewers to bring their own experiences and perspectives to the interpretation of her works. In Johanna Billing's work *Project for a Revolution*, the artist references Antonioni's film *Zabriskie Point* (1969). The subject of the film is a debate among students and a "call to arms" in a university. In the process, a contrast is shown from within two educational institutions: between the expressive uproar of opposition to US military force in the wake of the Vietnam War, as also shown in the opening scene and the rebellious dynamic of Antonioni's film, and the "safe" haven of the Scandinavian welfare state at the turn of the millennium with its students trapped in stagnation in which Billings' film is situated. While the original ending of *Zabriskie Point* is shown at the beginning of the exhibition, Billings' reference to its beginning ends the exhibition, which also transfers the repetitive cycle in her video to the dramaturgy of the exhibition. The utopias of the avant-garde continue to run their circles.

Martin Boyce (*1967)

Martin Boyce is a Scottish sculptor and installation artist based in Glasgow. Drawing on the iconography of everyday life and the history of modern architecture and design, his sculptural installations create haunting environments of poetic landscapes. In his work *In Between Breaths and the Sodium Spill* from 2004, objects from private and public spaces are removed from their actual environment and in their accumulation as mobiles, become a composition that is reminiscent of Constructivist graphics by El Lissitzky and his contemporaries, both in its graphic reductiveness and the colour dominated by black and red.

Max Burchartz (1887 – 1961)

Max Burchartz was a German graphic designer, typographer and painter and is considered one of the pioneers of modern design. Although lesser known than some of his contemporaries, many basic principles of communication design are still based on Burchartz's approaches today. In 1919, he became friends with Kurt Schwitters and Otto Gleichmann and met the artist El Lissitzky. The exhibition shows a selection of graphic works by Max Burchartz, whose constructivist and reduced formal language was groundbreaking for the period in which they were created in the 1920s and had a great influence on the students of the Bauhaus as well as generations of subsequent designers. Max Burchartz exhibited at the Kestner Gesellschaft in 1923 at the same time as El Lissitzky.

Heinrich Dunst (*1955)

Heinrich Dunst is an Austrian artist who creates spatial interventions that address the gap between what can be seen and what can be said, the untranslatability of one form into another and the contextual nature of spatial presentations. Dunst's work in the exhibition consists of a compilation of several plain objects in the room and on the wall that take the cover of El Lissitzky's 1923 figurine portfolio as their starting point. The objects, some new and untreated, some older and worn, also seem to recall El Lissitzky's graphic compositions in their colour and spatial arrangement, but transferring them into three-dimensional space.

the next ENTERprise Architects

The next ENTERprise Architects is a Vienna-based architectural practice founded in 2000 by Marie-Therese Harnoncourt-Fuchs and Ernst J. Fuchs. In addition to concrete building tasks, they also deal with installations, exhibition designs and experimental interventions in urban space. One of their strengths is to think of spaces and spatial concepts in a new and often surprising way, so that the space only finds its function when it is used. For the exhibition architecture, an intensive dialogue arose with the rooms of the Kestner Gesellschaft, the works on display in each case, and the constructivist ideas of El Lissitzky and his contemporaries, which are combined to create an immersive spatial experience. The boundaries between the works on display and the exhibition space thus merge fluidly.

You will receive more information at the lecture by Marie-Therese Harnoncourt-Fuchs on July 13 at 6.30 pm at the Kestner Gesellschaft (see event calendar).

Fernanda Fragateiro (*1962)

Fernanda Fragateiro is a Portuguese artist known for her installations, sculptures and photographs. She often uses geometric shapes, clean lines and minimalist aesthetics in her installations. Through the appropriation and transformation of materials and architectural elements, she creates new narratives and asks questions about the relationship between space, body and society. In Hall 3, the artist will present her installation *(e) motion still*, an installation made especially for the exhibition. Graceful geometric figures reaching up to the ceiling made of polished stainless steel.

Assaf Gruber (*1980)

Assaf Gruber is a Jerusalem born sculptor and filmmaker. His photographs, sculptures, and installations relate the materiality of objects to narrative dimensions, which in turn create fictional spaces in which movement and non-movement function as a medium. In the exhibition Gruber features screens with sound showers. A children's book written by El Lissitzky is named as the central theme, in which a black and a red square play a central role. The design features central characteristics of Constructivism, including a black and red square - as in El Lissitzky's story. The performers talk about El Lissitzky's story and designs and understand them as monuments for the future, as an invitation to participate.

John Wood and Paul Harrison (*1966), (*1969)

John Wood and Paul Harrison are a British artist duo known for their installations and sculptures in which they use themselves as the main characters. They often use simple actions and objects from everyday life. Their work is often marked by a subtle comedy and explores themes of time, movement, identity and human behaviour. They are dedicated to representing the normal, the everyday. Their works are a kind of reference book for how to do, make, build, or draw things that you would probably never want to do, make, build, or draw. In addition to the work *words on the front of*

a building (2023) on the façade of the Kestner Gesellschaft, as well as works on the St. Nicolai Cemetery, they will show the installation *Six Orange Chairs* (2018) as part of the exhibition.

Lajos Kassák (1887 – 1967)

Lajos Kassák was a Hungarian painter, writer, poet, journalist and activist. He is considered an important figure of the Hungarian avant-garde movement of the 20th century. In 1912 he began writing expressionist poems, novels and dramas. Kurt Schwitters, Oskar Schlemmer, El Lissitzky and Alexander Archipenko published in the journal "MA", which he edited. As a painter, Kassák was also involved in the development of Cubism and Constructivism. His works are characterised by geometric shapes, abstract compositions and vivid colours. Kassák believed that art had transformative power and that artists should play an active role in society.

Marlena Kudlicka (*1973)

Marlena Kudlicka is a Polish artist who explores mathematical and linguistic structures in her works, focusing on the mechanics of spatial and semantic relationships that affect communication, language and space. She is interested in the question of what "precision tolerance" is allowed to transform thoughts into a physical form. In her journey between precision and error, Kudlicka draws from the tradition of the historical avant-garde, particularly Russian Constructivism, including Suprematist painting, the utopian architecture of Constructivism, and the legacy of Constructivist film experiments. In the exhibition Marlena Kudlicka will present her work *Apostrof Katastrof and Participle / C.* from 2020. Furthermore, she has designed a mural (wall piece) for the Café Tender Buttons under the title *one more than 10* exclusively for the Kestner Gesellschaft that will be on display for one year (until July 7, 2024).

The artist will be at the Kestner Gesellschaft on Thursday, September 7, at 6.30 p.m. for an Artist Talk.

Marysia Lewandowska (*1955)

Marysia Lewandowska is a Polish-born artist living in London. She creates projects and installations on the borderline between art and theoretical research. Lewandowska opens with an excerpt from Sophie Küppers' *Welcome Speech*, which is accompanied by a video projection in the exhibition. Sophie Küppers was married to El Lissitzky in her second marriage and was previously the wife of the first director of the Kestner Gesellschaft, Paul Küppers. In the fictional speech, Küppers reports on the challenges of the time, Lissitzky's work as a new approach, as a new approach to art and the world, during the opening of the exhibition.

El Lissitzky (1890 – 1941)

Eliezer "El" Lissitzky (1890-1941) was a Russian artist, architect, designer and photographer. He is considered one of the pioneers of the Constructivism movement and was an important representative of the avant-garde in early 20th century Russian art. Lissitzky is considered a pioneer in the design of books and posters. He developed new innovative approaches to the use of typography and visual elements to create dynamic and interactive readability. He was also involved in the design of exhibitions and spatial installations and designed revolutionary architectural concepts. In addition to his graphic works for the Kestner Gesellschaft in the form of his two portfolios *Kestnermappe* and *Figurinenmappe*, the exhibition also features a large selection of other works by the artist. In addition to books, notebooks and architectural designs he designed, pioneering advertising materials for the 1920s are also on display, including those for the Hanover-based company Pelikan.

Felipe Mujica (*1974)

Felipe Mujica is a contemporary Chilean artist known for his experimental and conceptual art. He is particularly interested in the relationship between art, space and the viewer and often creates environments where visitors are actively involved and have the opportunity to experience and interact with the artworks. Mujica was inspired by the poem "El hombre imaginario" / "The Imaginary Man" by the Chilean poet and physicist Nicanor Parra when titling his installation *Árboles imaginarios* (2023) for the exhibition. The installation creates dynamics, characterised by a broader "outside view" and an intimate "inside view". In the covered space, the curtains are placed at different heights in the main room in relation to the inside of the corridor and the outside or the border of the corridor. This hanging is intended to create a playful dialogue with the

architecture of the Kestner Gesellschaft. The connection to Lissitzky is based on the idea of imaginary space, the fourth dimension.

László Moholy-Nagy (1895 – 1946)

László Moholy-Nagy was a Hungarian-American painter, photographer, typographer and stage designer. He was engaged in non-representational painting, influenced by Kazimir Malevich. In his Berlin studio, he maintained contact with Kurt Schwitters, Theo van Doesburg and El Lissitzky. His work as a graphic designer was strongly influenced by the De Stijl movement, Constructivism and Merzkunst. He was also considered an important figure in the Bauhaus movement. In many of his currently exhibited works, László Moholy-Nagy uses the colours black, grey, red, blue and yellow, which are among the typical colours of Constructivism.

Paulina Ołowska (*1976)

Paulina Ołowska is a Polish artist. Her work spans painting, drawing, collage, performance, installation and video, in which she references art and design history, as well as architecture, spatial design, traditional Polish crafts, puppetry, functional backdrops, fashion and advertising. At the opening, Paulina Ołowska will present a new version of her celebrated performance, or tableau-vivant *Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers*. (see opening program)

Peter László Peri (1898 – 1967)

Peter László Peri was a Hungarian-British sculptor and engraver. Peri began exhibiting together with László Moholy-Nagy's constructivist concrete sculptures, wooden sculptures, spatial constructions and linocuts in exhibitions at the gallery "Der Sturm". In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Peri continued to work with concrete but increasingly experimented with polyester resin. He carried out numerous commissions for schools and universities. The strength and lightness of polyester enabled him to create a series of "diagonal sculptures", life-size figures that seem to defy gravity and fly off the wall surface into space. Among other things the exhibition includes the *Design for Mural* from 1924 as a colour lithograph.

Prinz Gholam (*1969), (*1963)

Prinz Gholam is a German/Lebanese artist duo consisting of Wolfgang Prinz (*1969) born in Leutkirch and Michel Gholam (*1963) born in Beirut. Prinz and Gholam are video artists. They use a variety of media, including installation, sculpture, photography and performance. The joint performances are reminiscent of a tableau vivant, in which their own bodies become objects of art. In long-lasting poses, they imitate images from art history. For the exhibition they created a selection of several dozen masks, which in their playfulness take up themes, ideas, concepts and formal elements of the early 20th century avant-gardes around El Lissitzky and also queer artists of the same time, such as Jean Cocteau and Marsden Hartley. By mixing a wide variety of influences, references and styles, the masks refuse a clear lineage and reveal the complexity of passed down history and form. In the accompanying performances, a further selection of the masks are used for a continuation of the mixing of different influences and references. In the exhibition, the masks are shown with two chairs designed by El Lissitzky, which in their reference to Lissitzky simultaneously refer to the two absent performers, who only activated the masks performatively at the opening.

Florian Pumhösl (*1971)

Florian Pumhösl is an Austrian artist whose works develop a contemporary relationship to modernity. In his extreme reduced compositions and objects, Pumhösl engages with the formal vocabulary of modernism, often focusing on architecture, sculpture or graphic art. In the exhibition Pumhösl shows a selection of works from his series *Negative Spaces*: Thin, long minimalist objects made of black granite and red quartzite, in which he explores the possibilities of defining a vertical object that divides a sequence. For the wall objects not only form references to signs and figures of modern architecture and art, but also structure the empty space between them: the directions they point to, the imaginary spaces that emerge between or in front of them, and a structure they pretend to have.

Susanne Sachsse (*1965)

Susanne Sachsse is a German actress and performance artist. Born in Munich and raised in the GDR, she worked as an actress at the Theater Ensemble. In film, she is

best known for her collaboration with director Bruce LaBruce. She appeared in several of his controversial and provocative films, including "The Raspberry Reich" (2004) and "L.A. Zombie" (2010). Her acting has been praised by critics and made her a distinctive figure in German independent film. Today she is a freelance artist with the art collective *Cheap* and has participated in plays at the Schaubühne and the Volksbühne. In addition to her work in theatre, Sachsse is also active in film and television. In the exhibition, she presents an installation titled *History of The Future On Your Lap*.

Wieland Schönfelder (*1985)

Wieland Schönfelder is a Berlin artist and actor. Among other things, he deals with the often unseen and overlooked backgrounds of art historical themes. In his works in the exhibition, he placed scenic groups of figures next to graphic figures by El Lissitzky, which were developed in Hanover in 1923. His mostly sculptural and installative works skilfully blur the boundaries between figure, space and moving image. The Futurist opera *Sieg über die Sonne* (Victory over the Sun) from 1913 served El Lissitzky as a model for his second edition portfolio for the Kestner Gesellschaften and the figurines shown on the pages. Wieland Schönfelder turns Lissitzky's process of abstraction and reduction upside down, so to speak, and creates sculptures that not only attempt to depict the elements from the actual opera, but even imagines possible scenarios of the performers backstage.

Kurt Schwitters (1887 – 1948)

Kurt Schwitters was a German artist, painter, poet, spatial artist and commercial artist who is considered one of the most important representatives of the 20th century avant-garde. He developed a "Gesamtweltbild" (whole world view) in the Dadaist style under the keyword *Merz*. His works encompass various styles, such as Constructivism and Surrealism, as well as Dadaism, to which they were similar only by being opposites. Among other things, Schwitters used scraps of paper, newspaper cuttings, scrap metal and other findings to create collages, assemblages and installation rooms. From today's perspective, the Hanover-born artist is one of the most influential artists of the early 20th century and his works are considered an important part of the development of conceptual and modern art. Various MERZ objects will be on display in the exhibition.

Katja Strunz (*1970)

Katja Strunz is a German artist best known for her sculptures, expansive installations and collages. She is particularly concerned with the phenomenon of folding, which is reflected in her constructive art, with many formal references to Lissitzky and other artists. The method of folding exhibits a nestling of space and time. Fragmented intertwinings of the present and the past and the vision of the unfolding of the future open up a "space of possibility". Hope is considered a significant component in overcoming unspeakable, unexpressible trauma. In the exhibition, Katja Strunz shows installations made of metal, paper and wood. Strunz uses geometric shapes and lines to explore space and movement. She is particularly interested in the relationship between artwork and viewer. On the long wall in Hall 3, for example, she is showing her work *Zeitraum #13, 2002 - 2021*.

Nikolai Michailowitsch Suetin (1897 – 1954)

Nikolai Michailowitsch Suetin was a Russian artist and one of the most important figures of Suprematism. Born in Kaluga, Russia, Suetin worked as a painter, designer, ceramics painter and sculptor. In the 1920s he became a member of the artists' group UNOVIS (Utverditeli Novogo Iskusstva, "Advocates of New Art"), led by Kazimir Malevich. El Lissitzky also took great interest in the young artist. The exhibition features his work *Suprematist Icon* from 1927, watercolour and pencil on paper.

Ausstellung

Projektraum Shifting Present

Exhibition

Project Space Shifting Present

Ella Walker. Chorus

July 8 – Oct 1, 2023

Kestner Gesellschaft presents the first institutional solo exhibition of the British artist Ella Walker (born 1993, Manchester, UK).

In her first institutional solo exhibition, the british artist Ella Walker combines a variety of historical and cultural motifs and figures into painterly and thematically complex works that become stages for human interaction across time. In her constant engagement with iconographies of Christian painting, medieval manuscripts, theater, dance, film, poetry, and fashion, she searches for time-transcending motifs and formulae of the human figure and existence, coexistence, and the nearness of pain and beauty.

The large-scale paintings in the exhibition and the smaller works in the *coloured drawings* series of works on paper all show a kind of stage, rudimentarily equipped only with a floor, a background and props, which places the performing or dancing figures in the center. Like a collection of small sketches and individual groupings that often find their way into the stagings of the larger works, the small works on paper function like fragments, rehearsals of the actresses and sub-narratives in Walker's painterly oeuvre.

In almost all the works, figures are gathered in one or more groupings, echoing the exhibition title *Chorus*, which denotes a group of singers, dancers or performers. In ancient Greek theater, the chorus usually represented the common people or society and their voice (*vox populi*). In a sense, as an abstraction of society, the chorus also functioned as a commentator on the action, provoking and anticipating certain reactions from the audience.

**kestner
gesellschaft**

Biographie

Ella Walker (*1993 in Manchester, UK) studied painting and printmaking at the Glasgow School of Art and drawing at the Royal Drawing School in London. Her work is included in several European permanent collections, including the Royal Collection in London, and was recently exhibited in a solo exhibition at Casey Kaplan in New York (2022) and at Huxley-Parlour in London (2021). She has also been part of group exhibitions at Casey Kaplan in New York, Platform Southwark in London, and the Edinburgh Art Festival (2021). Walker's second solo exhibition with Casey Kaplan in New York is slated for March 2024. She currently lives and works in London.

Curator: Adam Budak

Assistant Curators: Robert Knoke, Alexander Wilmschen

Mural

Café Tender Buttons

Marlena Kudlicka. one more than 1o

July 8, 2023 - July 7, 2024

Marlena Kudlicka explores mathematical and linguistic structures in her work, focusing on the mechanics of spatial and semantic relationships that concern language, and space. Her carefully crafted, often rigorous sculptural and relief-like constructions, for which she typically uses materials such as steel, glass, and enamel, reflect the thought processes behind patterns, systems, equations, and formulas. She is questioning to what degree "precision tolerance" is allowed in order to transform thoughts into physical form. On her journey between precision and error, Kudlicka draws from the tradition of the historical avant-garde, particularly Russian Constructivism, including Suprematist painting, as well as the utopian architecture of Constructivism, and the legacy of Constructivist film experiments.

For the Kestner Gesellschaft Kudlicka developed a massive and filigree looking, elegant wall sculpture titled *one more than 1o*. It is located on the front wall in the area of the Tender Buttons Café. On a connecting line of about 17 metres, three large circles in the colours dark red, black, and pearl white are arranged at different distances from one another, accompanied by smaller characters like brackets, quotation marks, percentages, numbers, and letters such as an inverted 1, a capital A, and a lowercase t.

Just as space, in El Lissitzky's opinion, should be mobile and elementary at the same time as well as possessing an inner balance - "We no longer want space as a painted coffin for our living bodies" - the sculpture *one more than 1o* enters into a mobile, living interrelationship of things and thus expands its own perceptual space.

Biographie

Marlena Kudlicka received her Master of Arts in Painting and Drawing at the Faculty of Painting, Graphic Arts and Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan, Poland (1993-98). Her works have been shown at various international venues, such as Hamburger Bahnhof - Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart Berlin; Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst Bremen; Wrocław Contemporary Museum; Zacheta National Gallery Warsaw; Museum of Art Lodz; Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art Budapest, as well as CGAC Santiago de Compostela, Spain.

Kudlicka's works are also in the collection of numerous museums.

Curator: Adam Budak in cooperation with Robert Knoke

Facade and St. Nicolai Cemetary

John Wood and Paul Harrison. something on the front of a building

July 8 - Oct. 1, 2023

The British artist duo John Wood (born 1969 in Kowloon, Hong Kong) and Paul Harrison (born 1966 in Wolverhampton, UK) have placed one or two things across and along the outdoor space in front of the Kestner Gesellschaft and developed a humorous tabula rasa of the everyday. The new neon installation *words on the front of a building (2023)* was installed on the façade for the exhibition John Wood and Paul Harrison. *something on the front of a building*. In front of the building in the park of the old St. Nikolai cemetery, the duo has installed the green park signs *10 Signs for a Park (2022)*. The public sculptures are in direct dialogue with each other and show the two artists' ongoing engagement with the overwhelming universe of things, time and boredom, the sober language of everyday life, as well as the tragedy of metaphysical being, while at the same time questioning the identity of the place.

How many words does it take on the façade of a building to learn something about its meaning and function in everyday life? What would happen if the text only referred uselessly to its own word content and thus to itself? Words on the front of a building deals with these questions and in regard to architecture as an object in the public space, leaves a lot unclear. Wood and Harrison open up a humorous space of thought that requires the search for a relation between architecture, words and things in everyday life and demonstrates their linguistic absurdity. At first glance, the public sculptures *10 Signs for a Park* look like everyday signs in a park that show the way or provide information about the park. They do not point anywhere, they do not instruct or demand anything from their viewers. As signs, they refer to themselves, say things that are common knowledge and only invite you to ponder a little about words like "DAYLIGHT" or "TREE →".

With wit and ironic messages, the neon installation and the ten sculptures creep into the public subconscious and play with the behaviour of the public, which is always regulated and controlled by information texts, and allows for relief in the mood of doing nothing and not having to do anything in the face of hundreds of signs and façade writings in everyday urban life.

Biography

John Wood (b. 1969 Kowloon, Hong Kong) and Paul Harrison (b. 1966 Wolverhampton, UK) live and work in Bristol, UK. Both artists studied at Bath College of Higher Education and have been working together since 1993. John Wood and Paul Harrison have had numerous international solo and group exhibitions at CAMH, Houston; Mori Art Museum, Birmingham; Frist Centre, Nashville; Kunstmuseum Thun, Switzerland; Ludwig Museum, Budapest; Museum of Modern Art, Rio de Janeiro; Whitechapel Gallery and Tate Britain, London; Kunstmuseum, Wolfsburg; MoMA, New York; MUDAM, Luxembourg; OCAT Museum, Shanghai and ICC, Tokyo.

Curator: Alexander Wilmschen

Grand Opening

Friday, June 07, 7 p.m.

Paulina Ołowska. Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers

For the glamorous inauguration of the Summer exhibition program, Kestner Gesellschaft is delighted to present the German premiere of *Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers*, an acclaimed performance-cum-tableau-vivant by the Polish artist Paulina Ołowska (*1976). Ołowska's enduring position of reinterpreting modernism includes folkloric storytelling, witchcraft, medieval knowledge, fashion, feminism, socialism and the exploration of a connective ability of nature.

Often addressing questions of female alchemy and cultural convention in her work which consists of painting, sculpture and performance, in *Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers* Paulina Ołowska revisits the work of the visionary Polish artist Zofia Stryjeńska (1891–1976). A leading light of the Polish cultural scene in the interwar period, later consigned to oblivion by the Communist regime, Zofia Stryjeńska created a multidisciplinary oeuvre (painting, graphic and stage design), influenced by her country's rituals and folklore. Exploring Stryjeńska's notion of ballet as a "wreath of ceremonies" and designing costumes after her 1918 painting series *Bożki słowiańskie* (Slavic Deities), Ołowska brings to life Stryjeńska's iconic protagonists, six Slavic goddesses, in a magical and evocative performance of resilience and magic, thus paying a powerful tribute to an influential female artist from the past, a feminist paean against invisibility, erasure and war.

Ołowska's protagonists' surreal garments, with their enormous headdresses and their decorations of peacock feathers and wheat stalks, represent fanciful figures from Slavic mythology and folklore: goddesses of mischief, prosperity, fate, spring, winter, and the skies, with "bodies of clay, hair of wheat or branches, thorns and thistle." In *Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers*, the narratives concerning the rituals around death/birth and winter/spring are conveyed via costume, movement, sound, and lighting. This is the artist's powerful commemoration of the "great reverence for mysteries and gifts of nature."

An original score by American artist Sergei Tcherepnin, which accompanies the performance, mixes cosmic sounds with traditional Mazurkas, Polkas, and Oberkas, as well as "spiritual disco" and other local musical traditions. Tcherepnin composed an electronic variation, an ethereal, site-specific soundscape, played through

loudspeakers, a music for the Slavic goddesses to move and dance their celebration of rejuvenation, metamorphosis and a reunion with nature.

Biography

Paulina Ołowska lives and works in Rabka Zdroj, Poland. She studied at the School of Art Institute of Chicago (1996), the Fine Arts Academy in Gdańsk (2000) and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Ołowska was awarded the prestigious Aachen Art Prize in 2014, in conjunction with an exhibition at the Ludwig Forum for International Art, Aachen, Germany. Her solo exhibitions and artistic projects have been shown at international venues such as The Kitchen, New York (2017), Tate Modern, London, (2015), Ludwig Forum for International Art, Aachen (2015), Zachęta National Gallery of Contemporary Art, Warsaw, (2014), Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2013), Kunsthalle Basel, Basel (2013), CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco (2010), Camden Arts Centre, London (2009), Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich (2009), or Sammlung Goetz, Munich (2007). Her most recent solo exhibition Her Hauntology was on view at Kistefos Museum, Norway, 2022.

Ołowska presented the ballet performance *Slavic Goddesses - A Wreath of Ceremonies* at Kitchen, New York, in 2017, and *Slavic Goddesses and The Ushers* at the Museo del Novecento, Milan, in 2018, and at the Biennale Gherdeina in Ortisei in the Dolomites in 2020.

Curator: Adam Budak

Education and outreach program of Kestner Gesellschaft

(Dr. Julia Meier & Katja Krause, Art education)

The Kestner Gesellschaft's outreach and education program encompasses many different areas that primarily attempt to bring the themes and artistic content of the respective exhibitions closer to a broad public. In the words of Paul Klee, "Art does not reproduce what is visible, but makes visible", we see that art is often about intangible or emotionally complex content, which first needs to be carefully approached and given special attention. Which means it is also important to understand that the idea of the liberal arts is primarily concerned with what is socially not permitted, not sayable or not tangible and can thus never be a direct representation of real conditions, but rather their artistic realisation, i.e. the presentation of different facets of the human condition.

Guests from science, art, culture, fashion, literature and film

According to the history and the exhibition venue of the Kestner Gesellschaft, contemporary artistic trends will be shown in an interdisciplinary manner in the form of guest lectures, panel discussions and performances with subsequent discussions. Therefore we invite university lecturers, performers, fashion designers, filmmakers, authors and many other cultural practitioners for the weekly accompanying program to enable an active, topical and lively exchange of ideas, thoughts and visions. We want to know how you react to the exhibited works, what experiences are made, what questions arise, what actions might follow.

kestnerkids: educational programs for children and young people

With educational programs for children and young people we aim to bring them closer to art. Here, as with our educational program and its concepts of art, the goal is to create a place of education that, in the words of Jean Piaget, is "an open system" which offers opportunities for learning experiences that are experimental, flexible, playful and co-creative. New forms of discovery and perception of art are given by changing spatial conditions in the exhibition halls alone.

New in the program:

kestnerkids making art format:

KunstFrühstück / ArtBreakfast, July 8, 2023, 10-12.30 a.m. (6-8 years) and

KunstSchmökern / ArtReading, July 22, 2023, 10-12.30 a.m. (6-8 years)

All other *kestnerkids making art* dates - also *kestnerkids goes international* - can be found on our [homepage](#).

Support from sponsors

The Kestner Gesellschaft's other educational outreach format is sponsored by PSD Bank and includes Saturday events with children of different age groups.

Exclusive Director Tours

In addition, there is the format "Members Special" - individual guided tours by the director exclusively for members of the Kestner Gesellschaft in smaller groups.

Dates, Events and Lectures

Friday, July 7, 2023, 7 pm.

OPENING PERFORMANCE

[Paulina Ołowska. Slavic Goddesses and the Ushers](#)

Prinz Gholam. Appearances

DJs: **Vaginal Davis & Hyunhye Seo**

Thursday, July 13, 2023, 6.30 pm

thinking spaces: the exhibition El Lissitzky and more projects by the next ENTERprise Architects

Lecture by Marie-Therese Hannoncourt-Fuchs

the next ENTERprise Architects was founded in Vienna in 2000 by **Marie-Therese Hannoncourt-Fuchs** and **Ernst J. Fuchs**. Their projects range from buildings, installations, exhibition design and experimental interventions in the cityscape to urban design concepts. **the Architects** believe that space truly discovers its function upon being used. This way of thinking opens up a discourse in which concepts and spatial strategies - as related to unforeseeable, future needs and developments- play a key role. The programmatic and spatial limits of their buildings and concepts are conceived with a consciously high level of permeability on the basis of the performative potential of architecture and the interplay between space, atmosphere, context and user.

Key projects including the Wolkenturm Grafenegg (AT), Kaltern lakeside swimming baths (IT), the project HAWI – Experimental Temporary Living (AT), the installations Audiolounge and Noeklius – informed sculpture and the recently completed museum

**kestner
gesellschaft**

of the Heidi Horten Collection (AT) has been published internationally and exhibited in locations including ArchiLab Orléans (FR), the Secession Wien (AT), the São Paulo Biennale (BR), Galerie Aedes Berlin (DE), Manifesta 7 Rovereto (IT), Mackey Garages MAK Los Angeles (USA) and the Venice Biennale (IT).

Their projects have been awarded and nominated several times for the Mies van der Rohe Award, among others. Most recently they received the renowned Hans Hollein Art Prize for Architecture for their work.

Marie-Therese Harnoncourt-Fuchs has been active as a juror, lecturer and teacher at home and abroad and was appointed Professor of Design and Building Theory at the University of Kassel (DE) in 2018. She is currently a member of the art advisory board of the Bundesimmobiliengesellschaft BIG, a board member of the Architekturstiftung Österreich and a member of the Transdisciplinary Research Centre for Exhibition Studies TRACES at the University of Kassel.

<https://www.tne.space>

The lecture will be in cooperation between the Kestner Gesellschaft and the BDA Hannover

Tuesday, 18 July 2023, 6-7.30 p.m.

This is the Title for the Talk

Artist Talk with John Wood and Paul Harrison in the context of the exhibition *John Wood and Paul Harrison. something on the front of a building.*

**kestner
gesellschaft**

Thursday, 20 July 2023, 6.30-8.30 p.m.

El Lissitzky und Alexander Dorner. Aspekte einer Kooperation mit Nachhall

Lecture by Dr. Ines Katenhusen

The lecture recreates one of the first modernist spatial concepts of the Weimar Republic: The Abstract Cabinet, which opened in 1927 at the Provinzialmuseum, now the Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hannover, was commissioned by the museum's director Alexander Dorner as part of his overall curatorial concept and realized by El Lissitzky, based on his earlier works.

What were Lissitzky's years in Hanover like, what was his relationship to the Kestner Gesellschaft, where did he work and live from time to time? What objectives did the artist and the curator associate with this cabinet, which is still perceived as groundbreaking today? What caused controversy, what did they agree on? And to what extent do these agreements and disagreements continue to shape the reception history of the Abstract Cabinet, the interpretation of El Lissitzky's work, and the perception of Alexander Dorner's curatorial approach to this day?

Ines Katenhusen (ines.katenhusen@zuv.uni-hannover.de): studied history and German language and literature at the University of Hanover. Dissertation on "Art and Politics. Hanover's Confrontations with Modernism in the Weimar Republic," awarded the "1998 Förderpreis der Stiftung der deutschen Städte, Gemeinden und Kreise zur Förderung der Kommunalwissenschaften". Since 2000, research on the German-American art historian and museum director Alexander Dorner; in this context, research and travel grants from the Fritz Thyssen Foundation, Brown University, the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies/DAAD/Johns Hopkins University, the Fulbright Commission, the German Historical Institute, Washington, and the Terra Foundation for American Arts/John F. Kennedy Institute for North American Studies, FU Berlin. Exhibition catalogs and other articles on Dorner have since appeared in German, U.S., and Russian journals and books. In addition she wrote numerous articles on art, cultural and urban history, as well as on the history of European integration. Since 1992, she has worked in various fields of academic administration, and since 2017, she is an advisor for teaching and studies on the staff of the President of Leibniz Universität Hannover.

Thursday, 27 July 2023, 6.30-8.00 p.m.

[Ella Walker. Polyphony of Images](#)

Artist talk with Ella Walker and the director of the Kestner Gesellschaft and curator of the exhibition Ella Walker. Chorus Adam Budak.

In her first institutional solo exhibition, Ella Walker's painterly works weave references from medieval and Renaissance painting and theater, with aspects of fashion and film to create complex stage pieces between pain and beauty that become enactments of human interaction across time.

A conversation about the influences of fashion to pre-renaissance painting, the relationship of the individual to the group, the interplay of painting and the stage-bound arts of theater and dance, from Commedia dell'arte to Ballet Russes, the timelessness of human expression and togetherness that transcends centuries, cinematic influences from Pier Paolo Pasolini to Peter Greenaway, the appearance of Maria Callas and other icons of (pop) culture, and the meaning of the exhibition title *Chorus*.

Ella Walker trained in painting and printmaking at Glasgow School of Art (Glasgow, UK) and drawing at the Royal Drawing School (London). Her work has been exhibited throughout the United Kingdom, as well as in Casey Kaplan's group exhibition *Where the threads are worn* (2021). Her work is included in several European permanent collections, including the Royal Collection (London, UK), and was recently exhibited in a solo exhibition at Casey Kaplan, New York in 2022. She currently lives and works in London.

Thursday, 24 August 2023, 6.30 pm

[Prounenraum: A Room as Manifesto](#)

Lecture by Prof. Dr. Kai-Uwe Hemken

Thursday, 07 September 2023, 6.30 pm

"when the apostrophe becomes a catastrophe, or on language games and an impossible exactitude of science"

Marlena Kudlicka in conversation with Julia Meier and Adam Budak

Thursday, 14 September 2023, 6.30 pm

El Lissitzky: The Constructor, 1924 - The self-portrait as a construction of the new: see - recognize - act

Lecture by Dr. Peter Rautmann

Despite its small format (19.5 x 19 cm), the artist's self-portrait is one of Lissitzky's major works, insofar as - in a life-threatening situation - he develops a complex symbol of his artistic self-image. The montage of superimposed photographs in the union of head, eye, and hand points to his intention of a connection between artistic conceptualization and active implementation. As part of the avant-garde of the 1920s, he seeks to incorporate current media and processes in art and culture (photo, montage, photogram, light and typography) and use them to shape unfamiliar concepts of time and space - as part of a utopia of a new society.

Lissitzky's stay in Hanover in 1923/24, mediated by Kurt Schwitters, with an exhibition and the realization of the two Kestner folders, he gave the Kestner-Gesellschaft, founded during World War I, important impulses for an exhibition activity that wanted to show novel tendencies in art and society as points of orientation. Lissitzky understood his art as a decided form of internationality, to promote the exchange of art movements between all parts of Europe. These aspects are just as relevant today - beyond Europe - and can also shape the self-image of the Kestner-Gesellschaft. The current artistic practice of the Kestner-Gesellschaft would like to be measured against this standard when the subtitle of the Lissitzky exhibition reads: "El Lissitzky: The Self-Portrait of the Kestner-Gesellschaft".

Tuesday, 19 September 2023, 6.00 p.m.

Artist Marysia Lewandowska & Frances Morris (Director Emerita, Tate Modern) in conversation

Thursday, 21 September 2023, 6.30 pm

EL LISSITZKY. PROUNEN – WATERCOLORS – GRAPHICS – THEATER FIGURES: Genesis and existence of the exhibition 1923

Lecture by Prof. Ulrich Krempel

Tuesday, 26 September 2023, 6.00 p.m.

The After Life of Avant-garde (a children's tale about ghosts)

Performative Lecture: Marcelo Rezende & Assaf Gruber

This lecture aims to explore the concept of the avant-garde as a ghostly presence. Drawing on the definition of the ghost provided by French philosopher Jacques Derrida, we will highlight the ghost's elusive and ambiguous nature. The ghost exists in a state of undecidability, neither fully present nor absent. It represents an absence that paradoxically disrupts stable meanings and certainties, extending beyond conventional notions of spectral beings or supernatural entities. We will examine how this ghostly presence permeates various aspects of human experience, language, and culture. The lecture will observe the presence of such a ghost in specific cultural moments of the past and the present, employing the methodology of Hauntology, which combines ontology and haunting. Hauntology suggests that the past continues to haunt the present, influencing and shaping it in often overlooked ways.

Friday, 29 September 2023, 6.00 p.m.

El Lissitzky and the red wedges & red squares in graphic design of the 1980s

Lecture by Prof. Victor Malsy

You can find more up-to-date information on our webpage at the bottom of the press section.

You can download handouts [here](#).