

Limited blindness

We play town hall!

Information sheet

(machine translation)

Film title: Wir spielen Rathaus!
(We play townhall!)

Genre: Art documentary

Length: 44: 26 minutes

Language: German
(Subtitles In progress, not yet available in viewing version)

Completion date: April 2024

Premiere: 10.4. Achtung Berlin Filmfestival / Babylon Kino (otherwise so far only one other local screening at the place of origin Oderberg, in the local dance hall)

Directed by: Matthias Richter, Heiko Michels (based on the unreleased, live-produced short film "Heimatfilm" by Joanna Ratajczak and Matthias Richter)

Music: Joanna Auguri

Voice-Over: Ines Burdow

Production: Limited blindness

Synopsis: The "Rathaus-Spiele Oderberg" took place in June 2023. During the long term performance, 15 artists and actors from the Limited blindness group are moving into the empty Oderberg town hall in East Brandenburg near Berlin for a month. Numerous other activists from the region are invited at the weekends. They set up networks and opened offices to the public, held public townhall meetings, danced and cooked in the market square and experimented with visitors from near and far on questions of political participation.

The inhabitants of the small town initially reacted with scepticism or even hostility. And the artists, who arrive with actionism, ideas, concepts and arrogance, become quieter and more and more spectators of an unfamiliar psycho-social reality. But over time, friendships and spectacular spatial interventions develop, in which visitors, residents and artists play with the public sphere of the city centre in a new way - a social sculpture.



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Acute relevance: The alienation between urban and rural areas is becoming a growing problem internationally. In the wake of digitalisation, the analogue public sphere is increasingly disintegrating in rural areas: shops and bars are closing, weekly markets are dying out, government offices are being merged and centralised, church congregations are shrinking. Oderberg (once a harbour of the city of Berlin, like a teeming picture of public life) is a prime example of this development. In many places, it is accompanied by xenophobia and scepticism towards democracy.



The film documents the local decay of the public sphere, showing the clash between town and country during an art experiment in which art itself reaches the limits of failure. The (mostly urban) artists are seen as invaders of the city, 75 kilometres from Berlin; their concepts disintegrate with the reality of their presence. They also react quickly to the local longing.

This development is itself reflected in the aesthetics of the film language. The film documents mostly time-stringently. If it initially tries to capture reality with interviews, the lens begins to dance more and more. The film aesthetic allows the camera to tremble, to pan away in shame at an important narrative moment. The "bird's eye view" of an omniscient narrative style of the filmmakers ebbs away more and more: the voice-over established at the beginning hands over the baton of the narrative to multi-perspective and musical images from the natural urban space and the historical space. In the end, the empty town hall and with it the province itself do not appear as something to be filled, but rather in their fullness

Participants

Artists &

Activists:

Anna Clementi, Adrienne Goehler, Marc Weiser, Pastor Leumund, Ufo Lindenberg, Kulturzug Berlin-Wrocław / Oliver Spatz, Thomas Gerber, Joanna Ratajczak, Fabian Larsson, Artur Albrecht, Christian Eckert, Theatre Okno, Paula Bogati, Heiko Michels, Heike Rocher, Daniel Rocher, Beata Kana, Gerhard Rothe, Die Andere Welt Bühne, Joanna Gemma Auguri, Centrum Kultury Chojna, Kollektiv Nachhaltige Kultur, Oke, Mina Bartscht le Fur, Jannis Böhm, Liederlauschenfestival, Tanztheater Land Brandenburg, Rixdorfer Puppenbühne, La Tonia Y Monotektoni, Uwe Rada, Inga Böhm, Zorka Wollny, Radio Woltersdorf, Gabriel Feitel, Torsten Weigel, Martin Heesch and many more.

Biographical:

Heiko Michels works primarily as a theatre director, often creating site-specific works. He is the founder of Limited blindness; he newly realised several film-theatrical hybrid performances. He recently produced the (live) radio play "Sparks of Love" for rbb.

For the art programme Therme Art, Michels co-curated talks on the contemporary relationship between urbanity and nature at Art Basel, Art Miami, the Venice Biennale and the König Galerie Berlin, among others.

Matthias Richter studied in the video department of the Volksbühne Berlin and produces films about theatre performances (regularly for Limited blindness), as well as for musicians such as Laibach or Bettina Wegner.

Limited blindness is an association of performative artists. Since 2002, they have been realising performative situations on the threshold of sound art, experimental film and experiential art. In the arrangement of special audience situations and by shifting disciplinary frameworks, their works draw attention to political fringe zones. Important works (selection) were

SCHIFFBRUCH MIT PUBLIKUM (2024, experimental live feature film, directed by Pedro Deltell & Heiko Michels, 80 min.)

ACHTUNG BRANDENBURG (2024, symposium, Volksbühne, Grüner Salon, curation: Heiko Michels)

ZUM EWIGEN FRIEDEN (2023, theatre play, premiere at the Theater im Delphi Berlin, director: Heiko Michels, video: Pedro Deltell,)

RATHAUS-SPIELE ODERBERG (2023, interdisciplinary long performance, curation: Heiko Michels, Paula Bogati, Marc Weiser)

ICH BIN BERLINER (2022 D+ESP, experimental feature film directed by Pedro Deltell, 60 min.)

FUNKEN DER LIEBE (2021/22 live radio play & radio play, directed by Heiko Michels. Haus des Rundfunks Berlin, Theater im Delphi Berlin, including audio version broadcast by rbb, nominated by the German Academy of Performing Arts as Radio Play of the Month March 2022)

ENDE DER NÜCHTERNHEIT (2011-15, intermedia theatre series, nachtsyl of the Thalia Theater HH, Heimathafen Neukölln, Hans-Otto-Theater Potsdam, Chalon-sur-Saône Theatre Festival, etc.)

ALIENS VOTE - GREECE ELECTS THE GERMAN FEDERAL STATE (2013, live performance in the theatre and online film, Bios Theatre Athens, directed by Fabian Larsson)

Documentation of all works as well as voices, press reviews etc. at: