



Press Release

Helmhaus Zürich

6 December 2019 – 26 January 2020

Opening: Thursday, 5 December 2019, 6 p.m.

for Zurich

With: SHAHTO ALI, FERDINAND ARNOLD, PALOMA AYALA, CAROLINA CERBARO, JULIA GERÖCS & GABRIEL STUDERUS, GUSTAVO HANSSON, TATJANA HARTMANN, MARCEL REUSCHMANN, STILL UND DUNKEL, PAKKIYANATHAN VIJAYASHANTHAN, ANTSHI VON MOOS, ANNE KÄTHI WEHRLI, YANG KWANG-JA, @ALLESFLEISCH. CURATED BY NADJA BALDINI, VRENI SPIESER, SIMON MAURER, DANIEL MORGENTHALER

Over the course of 45 lunchtime discussions, we have learned from 45 Zurich folks about their quest. This daily discussion *search.zh* in the Helmhaus exhibition *Searching* has overwhelmingly confirmed that, even in a city as spoilt for choice as Zurich, almost everyone is still in search of something.

***for Zurich* is the second part of this binary exhibition *Searching for Zurich*. We are searching for a Zurich that is otherwise not highly visible. For a Zurich that has perhaps even slipped under the radar – but a Zurich that becomes all the more evident when participation in the arts and culture is writ large.**

Who or what comes searching *for Zurich*? In this exhibition, we address both the geographical direction, as in heading for Zurich, and the question of the timeframe involved in searching for Zurich's past or present, as in defining some kind of post-Zurich in the sense of post-modernism for instance. We are searching for a city – and for that which defines a city: the diversity of its people. What drew these people to Zurich? What do they bring to this city? Where do they go once they choose to, or have to, leave Zurich behind them? How does the city impact on their daily lives and their art? And what comes after the Zurich we know today?

for Zurich brings together a former weightlifter who has spent years creating meticulously detailed watercolours (**Marcel Reuschmann**) with a Sudanese lawyer who relishes mixing contradictory symbolism (**Shahto Ali**). While an artist from Küttigen opted *for Zurich* and immediately stirred up some dust (**Anne Käthi Wehrli**), a Korean artist headed *for Zurich* and dusted some cobwebs off the past instead (**Yang Kwang-Ja**). *for Zurich* leads us into dilapidated buildings (musical-artistic trio **Still und Dunkel**) and introduces us to art as a new home, a refuge, and a shelter (**Gustavo Hansson**) – all at Helmhaus, which itself was once a shelter for agricultural produce.

for Zurich is a haven for people who are redefining themselves (**Antshi von Moos**) as well as for others who have been harshly treated (**Pakkiyanathan Vijayashanthan**, already represented by a harrowing work in *Searching*). **Carolina Cerbaro**, responsible for the graphic design of both exhibitions, *Searching / for Zurich*, finds the city in geometric lines, while **Ferdinand Arnold** finds it in freeform flecks of colour. In the exhibition *for Zurich* some artists have looked to feminist texts from Latin America (**Paloma Ayala**) and others to the tales of migrant workers on the night-train to Budapest (**Julia Geröcs & Gabriel Studerus**). And while the work of **Tatjana Hartmann** spills out beyond the confines of the building, **@allesfleisch** operates primarily on Instagram – going online *for Zurich*.

We have learned a great deal through *Searching for Zurich*. Not only about Helmhaus as an institution, but also about ourselves and our ways of looking at art. Each and every artist opens up a whole new world to us. And all of these worlds converge in Zurich. We endeavour to make Helmhaus a place where everyone involved, including our visitors, can feel safe and well – as a kind of safe space that tolerates and respects a wide range of attitudes. We have found that we understand one another, come closer together, and learn from each other – and that tolerance, social justice, solidarity and empathy are all important. A cultural-political goal such as participation takes on real meaning when it is actually lived. We'll continue in that vein – *for Zurich*.

Events (for dates and details, see enclosed invitation card)

for Zurich starts just before Christmas. Which means it falls at a time when the sheer overkill of events and consumerism in Zurich is at its very height. In that respect, our programme of events certainly has something to both keep abreast – and counteract. Starting with an activists' meeting in solidarity with Amazonia, Chile, Ecuador, Kurdistan, Lebanon, Mexico, Venezuela... initiated by artist **Gustavo Hansson** (Saturday, 7 December 2019). The following week, Nathalie Killias will host a talk with trend researcher **Bitten Stetter** about the 5 o'clock Thesis relating to the future for Zurich (Wednesday, 11 December 2019). The very next day marks the launch of our book on last year's *refaire le monde* trilogy, which explored a number of still-topical themes foreshadowing the current exhibition. And on Friday, the trio **Still und Dunkel** will be giving a live performance, incorporating their vast archive of audio and visual documentations of derelict buildings throughout the world (Friday, 13 December 2019).

Over the holiday period, Helmhaus will keep to its regular opening hours. Then, after New Year, the programme of events *for Zurich* will continue apace, with two anti-racist workshops by socio-cultural activist **Rahel El-Maawi**, addressing predominantly white institutions (8 and 15 January 2020), followed by **Anne Käthi Wehrli** activating her installation in the main room with a performance on 16 January 2020, and an open discussion round on Sunday, 19 January 2020 featuring as many as possible of the people involved in the exhibitions *Searching for Zurich*. Rounding off this programme of events on Tuesday, 21 January 2020 is an exchange with **Anthony Engi Meacock**, member of the art, design and architecture collective Assemble (Turner Prize winners 2015). As always, guided tours are also available for adults and children, led by our art mediators and curators.