

Press release for the exhibition

## Voicing Bethanien

an exhibition space in context. A video installation by Sonya Schönberger/Berliner Zimmer

- Location:** Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Mariannenplatz 2, 10997 Berlin
- Opening hours:** September 2 - November 5, 2023. Sun-Wed 10am - 8pm, Thurs-Sat 10am - 10pm
- Entry:** free
- Opening:** Friday, September 1, 2023, 3 p.m.  
Welcoming address at 7 pm: Clara Herrmann, District Councilor for Culture.  
Introduction to the exhibition: Dr. Nele Güntheroth, Stadtmuseum Berlin,  
Vincent Schier and Sylvia Sadzinski, curators, moderated by Stéphane Bauer  
9:00 p.m.: DJ Ipek
- Press Preview:** Friday, September 1, 2023, 11 am. Registration is required.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, the project *Voicing Bethanien* looks back at the eventful past of a Kreuzberg and Berlin cultural institution with an exhibition and program of events. The multi-room video installation from artist Sonya Schönberger consists of forty interviews with people who have shaped this place and talk about their memories and, above all, about their lives. *Voicing Bethanien* is a collectively voiced and individually experienced narrative of a venue of international and local significance in a city that has constantly been marked by rapid urban development and social upheaval.

Schönberger's focus on individual life stories and personal connections to the city of Berlin provides a framework for this collection of interviews. It is the continuation of her video archive *Berliner Zimmer*, and takes Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien as the project's thematic foundation.

In its 50-year history, Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien has witnessed the convergence of numerous people and narratives that have had a lasting influence on Berlin's cultural scene and continue to shape it. At the same time, Kunstraum Kreuzberg was and is a meeting place for people who have worked at Bethanien and share a common history. *Voicing Bethanien* takes stock of a city and its art and cultural scene, showing the extent to which these are interwoven, informed by each other, and continuously changing and benefiting from a plurality and ambivalence of biographical positions, points of view, opinions, and artistic approaches. The exhibition space of Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien will be filled with forty interviews conducted for the exhibition. Organized into five chapters, the videos enter into an exchange with each other, and a collectively voiced account of living and working together in the district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg and the city of Berlin emerges from the individual biographies. Even when negotiating social ruptures, problems, and grievances, moments of neighborliness and structures of solidarity are celebrated, as is the will to effect change.

Interviews with: Adrian Nabi, Akbar Behkalam, Andrea Binke, anette hollywood, Ante Pavić, Brezel Göring, Çağla İlk, Christiane Zieseke, Christoph Tannert, Cornelia Reinauer, Dani Hasrouni, Egill Sæbjörnsson, Ewa Strózczyńska-Wille, Frida Neander Rømo, Gabriele Behnke, Gangolf Ulbricht, Hanna Hegenscheidt, Hannah Kruse, Janina Benduski, Jürgen Zeidler, Karin Baumert, Leonie Baumann, Maarten Janssen, Magda Korsinsky, Marisa Maza, Michael Schönke, Naomi Hennig, Oliver Baurhenn, Rebecca Marquardt, Renate Drews, Ringo, Rosemarie Richter, Safter Çınar, Sophia Tabatadze, Stefanie Endlich, Stéphane Bauer, Susanne Weiß, Thomas Engel, Werner Brunner, Wolfgang Müller

**Sonya Schönberger** is a Berlin-based artist whose practice deals with biographical disruptions occurring at times of political or social upheaval. Her artistic exploration begins with people themselves, who talk about their lives in a conversational setting. She has applied this approach to establish her own archives and additionally worked with existing and found archives. Five years ago, she launched **Berliner Zimmer**, an active and constantly growing archive of video interviews with Berliners whose backgrounds are as diverse and heterogeneous as the city's urban population. The subjects of these interviews are people of different origins and generations, who tell their life stories and discuss their current inspirations, motivations, and concerns. Furthermore, Berliner Zimmer is framed by the city itself. As a common place of residence and shared environment, it is a point of reference in the interviews as the subjects talk about their life stories and how they have been interwoven with the city of Berlin. The archive is designed to record a hundred years of history and is housed in the Berlin Stadtmuseum.

**Program of events for *Voicing Bethanien*.**

**Guided walks in Kreuzberg:**

Sunday, September 3, 2023 with Jacek Slaski: Art Spaces

Sunday, September 10, 2023 with Beate Witzel: Nature in the City

Sunday, October 8, 2023 with Stella Flatten: Living Stones - Research practice

Sunday, October 15, 2023 with Gülşah Stapel: Immigrant Communities

Each group will meet at 2 p.m. in the exhibition.

**Guided tours of the exhibition:**

Thursday, September 7, 2023 with Stéphane Bauer

Thursday, September 21, 2023 with Sylvia Sadzinski

Thursday, October 12, 2023 with Nele Güntheroth

Thursday, October 26, 2023 with Vincent Schier

Each tour will begin at 6 p.m. in the exhibition.

**Finissage:**

Sunday, November 5, 2023, 5 - 8 p.m.

With a guided tour with Sonya Schönberger

Followed by drinks and music

A project from Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien in cooperation with Stadtmuseum Berlin, curated by Sylvia Sadzinski & Vincent Schier with curatorial supervision by Dr. Nele Güntheroth. Supported by Hauptstadtkulturfonds, The Senate Department for Culture and Community, and the Exhibition Fund for Municipal Galleries and Exhibition Fund for Visual Artists. This exhibition was made possible with support from room in a box.

**Coinciding with the opening of *Voicing Bethanien* as part of Berlin's Kultursommerfestival:**

Friday, September 1, starting at 3 p.m. on Mariannenplatz in front of Bethanien

**KGB-Sounds - Open air concerts featuring artists' bands:** Banu Çiçek Tülü, Isasi Armengod, Großer Hund, Richard Kennedy, Edna Martinez

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