Kunsthallen-Architectures for the Continuous Contemporary (Bern, 2-3 Sep 16)

University of Bern, Sep 2–03, 2016
Deadline: Nov 20, 2015

Olivia Baeriswyl

Kunsthallen. Architectures for the Continuous Contemporary in Europe and the US

This conference is dedicated to the Kunsthalle as a specific architectural and institutional site, whose building serves as a literal and metaphorical place for artistic and curatorial collaboration, and as a catalyst for international exchange. The starting point of our discussion is the Kunsthalle Bern, who will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2018. Its distinctive building served numerous international artists as a venue and temporary site of intervention.

The format of the Kunsthalle has had diverging histories in Europe and the US. In Europe, these institutions were often founded during the second half of the nineteenth century in parallel to public museums dedicated to the collection and display of historical cultural artefacts. The architectures of such early examples give an indication of the demands toward these intitutions. In the US, the format of the Kunsthalle as a non-collecting space for contemporary artistic practices seems to be more directly connected to an institutional critique toward established museums. Both in Europe and the US the Kunsthallen were the first to show the avant-gardes from across the Atlantic. With this conference, we want to shed light on how the Kunsthallen have contributed to a history of contemporary art in Europe and the US.

We aim to contribute to the current international research effort on institutional histories. We invite contributions that provide case studies and extrapolate general structures of the institutionalization and historization of contemporary art. Topics of interest include, but are not limited to, the following questions:

- What are the relationships between established institutions of art and the newly developed Kunsthallen?
- How is the specific purpose of a Kunsthalle reflected in its architecture? How have artists reflected on these specific structures of the contemporary? How might this artistic perspective on an institutional format be described in a historical continuum?
- Can the research on these institutions serve as a new paradigm for the understanding of transatlantic cultural exchange?
- How can specific exhibitions of the Kunsthalle Bern be reinterpreted under this perspective?

The 2-day conference, which is made possible due to the generous support of the Terra Foundation for American Art, Chicago/Paris, will be held at the University of Bern, Switzerland, on Septem-

ber 2nd- September 3rd, 2016. Please submit your abstracts electronically (up to 300 words) for a 30-minute paper together with a CV to Olivia Baeriswyl (kunsthallenconference@gmail.com). Participants agree to contribute a paper for publication.

Organizers:
Peter J. Schneemann, Chair of History of Modern and Contemporary Art, Institute of Art History, University of Bern
Eva Ehninger, Laurenz-Professor for Contemporary Art History, Department of Art History, University of Basel
Valérie Knoll, Director, Kunsthalle Bern

Reference:
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