

Out/Site. The Sculptor's Symposia Series (Bern, 18–19 Sep 25)

University of Bern, Hallerstrasse 6, Room 205, Sep 18–19, 2025

Yvonne Schweizer

Out/Site. The Sculptor's Symposia Series and Cold War Artistic Exchange.

Organizers: Marcin Lachowski & Yvonne Schweizer

Institutes of Art History Bern & Warsaw

The conference will initiate research into the phenomenon of outdoor sculpture symposia. Invented in St. Margarethen, Austria, in 1959, this format has since seen sculptors relocate their studios outside. It was adopted in West Germany, the GDR, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Switzerland. The first meeting took place in an abandoned quarry, i.e. outside of any institutional setting. The symposium format allowed artists to experiment with new display concepts for sculpture 'en plein-air' and functioned as a gateway for artists from different political systems. The thesis is that on such non-institutional ground, concepts of collaboration could be developed beyond the demarcation lines of world politics. The workshop builds on two current debates in the humanities: how to preserve and gather (digital) cultural heritage in decentralised open source systems? What historiographic models are suitable to challenge the binary narrative of two opposing art systems in the East and the West?

Attendance is warmly welcomed; no previous registration needed.

PROGRAM

Thursday, September 18

9.15-9.40 Introduction

9.40-10.10 Magdalena Nieslony (Innsbruck)

The Landmark as a borderline case: Karl Prantl between modernist "truth to materials" and post-modernist site-specificity

10.10-10.40 Patricia Grzonka (Vienna)

Off Site? Women's participation and representation at the International Sculptor's Symposium in St. Margarethen / Austria

10.40-11.00 Discussion

11.00-11.20 Coffee Break

11.20-11.50 Christoph Wagner (Regensburg)

Politics of Eternity: Sculpting Europe?

11.50-12.00 Discussion

12.00-13.30 Lunch

13.30-14.00 Nadja Gnamuš (Ljubljana)

Beyond Ideological Divides: Sculptural Practices and Political Contexts in Slovenia's Forma viva

14.00-14.30 Mária Orišková (Trnava)

Stone, Wood, Metal and Clay: Women Sculptors at the Sculpture Symposia and Plein-air Exhibitions in Czechoslovakia, 1964–1988

14.30-14.50 Discussion

14.50-15.10 Coffee Break

15.10-15.40 Kristian Handberg (Copenhagen)

The Danish-Polish Sculpture Project in Aalborg 1967: Sculptural Exchange and Spatial Sculpture

15.40-16.10 Marcin Lachowski (Warsaw)

Sculpture Symposia as Places of Transgression in Sculptural Form

16.10-16.30 Discussion

16.30-16.50 Coffee Break

16.50-17.20 Pavlína Morganová (Prague)

Symposium Chmelnice Mutějovice 1983

17.20-17.50 Bernard Wnuk (Warsaw)

Symposia and Open-air Events in the 1980s as Underground Practices

17.50-18.10 Discussion

18.15 End of Day 1

Friday, September 19

9.15-9.30 Recap Day 1

9.30-10.00 Yvonne Schweizer (Bern)

Accelerated Eyes. (Re)Visiting Outdoor Sculpture Trails

10.00-10.30 Marcin Lachowski / Bernard Wnuk (Warsaw)

A Photo Tour via Database

10.30-10.50 Discussion

10.50-11.10 Coffee Break

11.10-12.00 Wrap-up

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Contact:

Yvonne Schweizer

ArtHist.net

Institute of Art History, University of Bern
yvonne.schweizer@unibe.ch

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