

Press release, November 2020

Blickachsen 13 to be postponed because of COVID-19 pandemic

In view of the unforeseeable development of the pandemic, and the restrictions affecting the intensive preparations for the exhibition over the coming months, the thirteenth edition of the Blickachsen Sculpture Biennale will not take place in 2021 as planned. After careful consideration, this has unanimously been decided by the Board of the Blickachsen Foundation.

Alongside the quality and judicious positioning of the artworks on display, the success of the Blickachsen exhibition format rests not least on its international character and close co-operation with many partners and artists from around the world. In view of the dynamic spread of COVID-19 and the mounting travel warnings and quarantine restrictions, the successful preparation for and presentation of Blickachsen 13 in 2021 does not seem realistic.

On the one hand, the current restrictions severely limit the opportunities for a personal exchange between all involved and will prevent artists from visiting the exhibition locations, as the basis for their artistic interventions. At the same time, these restrictions create considerable uncertainty in planning the transportation of the works and the setting up of the entire exhibition, which require the close co-operation of many hands. And finally, it cannot be excluded that continuing national and international restrictions on travel in 2021 will lead to a level of visitor attendance out of all proportion to the personal and financial investment made by the artists, organizers and sponsors.

“We have not taken the decision to cancel Blickachsen for next year lightly”, says Stefan Quandt, chairman of the Blickachsen Foundation Board of Trustees. “Especially in these uncertain times when the prospect of an extensive exhibition in the open air must have seemed particularly appealing for many Blickachsen fans. However, in the present situation, we see no alternative but to postpone the exhibition.”

This decision has also been supported by those responsible at the co-organizers of Blickachsen: by the mayor of Bad Homburg, Alexander W. Hetjes, Spa director Holger Reuter, and the director of the Public Stately Homes Administration in Hessen, Kirsten Worms.

“Together, we are now looking ahead and counting on sufficient planning certainty in the coming year to enable us to arrange the next exhibition, while maintaining our high standard, in 2022”, says Christian K. Scheffel, founder and curator of the Sculpture Biennale, and director of the Blickachsen Foundation. “I am confident that we will then be able to follow up

on the enormous public success of Blickachsen 12, and once again be able to invite visitors to a rich experience of art.”

The Blickachsen sculpture exhibition was first held in 1997, and is today considered the most important biennial exhibition of three-dimensional art in the German-speaking world. Its concept based on sight lines (Blickachsen) rests as much on the fascinating dialogue between the most varied forms of artistic expression as on that between contemporary art, nature and the historical surroundings. Here, world-renowned artists are presented together with promising younger talents. To date, the Biennale’s partner museums, which change each time, includes leading institutions such as the Swiss Fondation Beyeler, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in the UK, or the French Fondation Maeght.

In 2019, hundreds of thousands of visitors came from home and abroad to explore the twelfth Blickachsen in Bad Homburg and five further locations in the Rhine-Main region. The exhibition brought together 60 works by some 30 artists from all over the world, including once again – thanks also to the partnership with the Swedish Wanås Konst sculpture park – numerous location-specific and participatory installations.

Thus, in Blickachsen 12, visitors were able to discover installations by Kaarina Kaikkonen, Anne Thulin or the Friends of Blickachsen Prize-winning artist Katarina Löfström high in the treetops of the Bad Homburg Kurpark, while Satch Hoyt and James Webb surprised with their soundscapes, or Arik Levy and the artist duo Winter/Hoerbelt, by integrating the visitor in very different ways into their highly visible works. In the Bad Homburg Schlosspark, in addition to works by Alicja Kwade, Elmgreen & Dragset or Sean Scully, “choreographic objects” by William Forsythe could be experienced, and Yoko Ono transformed the apple trees in the castle orchard into wish trees, which by the end of the exhibition had been densely covered with the written wishes of visitors to the Biennale.