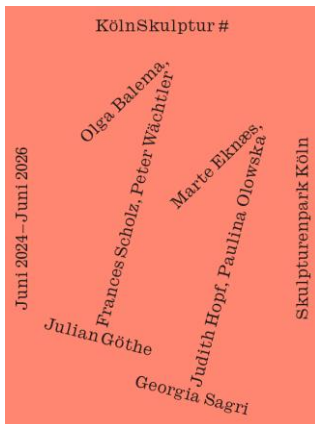


Skulpturenpark Köln KölnSkulptur #11

Stiftung
Skulpturen
park
Köln



Body Manoeuvres

Gardens or parks like the *Skulpturenpark Köln* are carefully organised sections of nature in which forms, rhythms and colours form a harmonious yet contrasting and stylistically varying whole by means of elements like trees, shrubs, stones and lawns. Visitors are led along paths to experience a balanced place, rich in details, unfolding in time and space. Nuances of seasonally changing atmospheres are captured in the interplay of light and shadow.

This forms the background for the 11th edition of *KölnSkulptur*, along with the park's permanently installed sculptures and buildings, which have coalesced into a whole over the years. The presentation marks a range of positions between the monumental and the ephemeral, and in doing so takes important developments in contemporary art into account. We encounter globally relevant issues such as technological developments in the area of artificial intelligence, the impact of climate change, current challenges faced by democratic institutions or the rise of new economies in works specially made for *KölnSkulptur* by eight contemporary artists. In different ways they reflect and formulate approaches to art, nature and the future at a time of global uncertainty and crisis.

The urban setting is an obvious starting point for artistic work processes. It is perceived as a place of social interaction in which people, time and the particular characteristics of the location combine in an essential way with the experience of open-air sculptures. Here, where environmental effects can be experienced very directly by each individual – more so than in the enclosed, sheltered spaces of a museum, for example – the impact of various natural, cultural and social forces on the body becomes the overall theme of the exhibition.

The invited artists direct their gaze outward in an invitation, through their objects and proposals, to experience art as a kind of fertile ground for experimenting with boundaries that also show up the fragility and vulnerability of every organism. Their works are based on the understanding that the world as we know it is being fundamentally changed by science and technology.

This in turn influences what it means to be human and how the conditions of a body might appear in the context of human capital. The works reflect transformations within cultural narratives, particularly how historical processes and individual recollection affect the body and the collective memory.

The body should not therefore be considered solely in its biological self-evidence; as a central social 'organ' it refers both to naturalness and to artificiality, and it also has a fictional character as the abstraction of various social narratives and realities. Many of the sculptures extend the conventional definition of their medium as a permanent fixed form and presence in space and time by going beyond the usual standard of a self-contained body and sometimes incorporating unusual materials. They range from the subtle to the colossal, from scattered to monolithic, from performative hybrid forms to the medium of film.

In most cases the on-site circumstances are taken into consideration, as in *Insides*, by Marte Eknæs. This work presents a system integrated into an existing hole in the sculpture park. Recycled building materials recreate a kind of open torso with its specific organs, and at the same time imagine it as the continuum of an otherwise hidden urban infrastructure. Peter Wächtler responds to the sculptural representations found in the vicinity, mostly on the (rather bleak) squares in front of public buildings, with a bronze sculpture positioned between figuration and disembodied abstraction. It chafes at images of the body that reflect the political and social life of past eras, but the direction to be taken in response to imminent changes remains unclear: flight or paralysis?

As well as these pieces, the exhibition also presents new sculptures by Olga Balema, Julian Göthe, Judith Hopf, Paulina Olowska, Georgia Sagri and Frances Scholz, all of whom attempt to locate the body in the materiality of their works, and to materialise it as a means to negotiate an individual position in relation to the surrounding landscape. Through deft manoeuvres requiring a (controlled) alteration in movement or direction they open up new ways of seeing the human body and its relationship to the world.

Nikola Dietrich
Curator *KölnSkulptur#11*