

MANIFESTA 11

Press Release

Zurich, 15 September 2016

Manifesta 11 in Zurich draws to a close

With intense discussions, keen interest from both local and international audiences; and global media coverage, Manifesta 11 was widely noticed as a successful experiment which will leave its mark on the host city of Zurich.

In three days, the 11th edition of Europe's major biennial of contemporary art will be over. With its experimental format, the exhibition curated by German artist Christian Jankowski attempted to provide answers to some interesting and challenging questions. How can international artists and their professional hosts work together outside of a studio atmosphere? What kind of collaborations will they come up with, and how will they be manifested in the resulting works of art? What happens when teenagers are tasked with the video documentation of these exhibits? And how will the local arts scene interact with the protagonists of an international biennial?

Only the final evaluation of surveys conducted among visitors will reveal whether Manifesta 11 was a success. However, preliminary numbers before the closure are higher than expected, with positive indications from ticketing sales. The numbers tell their own tale: **171,000 visits** of the main venues Löwenbräukunst, Helmhaus, Cabaret Voltaire and Pavillon of Reflections; **17,850 participants** in the Education programme which included 7,300 participants in guided tours and 3,400 visits by students.

In **Cabaret der Künstler – Zunfthaus Voltaire**, the Manifesta 11 guild for artists, more than 1,000 performances took place with highlights including the group Gelitin and singer Peaches. In addition, 38 projects were realised as part of the Parallel Events to set a stage for the local arts scene. The prominent corporate design, developed by local design studio Ruedi Baur Integral, was visible throughout the city and met with considerable enthusiasm

Hedwig Fijen, Director of Manifesta: "The real success of Manifesta 11 is the fact that the biennale here in Zurich established itself deep within the city's tissues as well as engage it's population, which is in fact the function of a biennale contrary to a museum or gallery and with What People Do for Money: Some Joint Ventures, it succeeded."

In addition to the immensely popular Pavillon of Reflections, which will remain at Bellevue for the upcoming Zurich Film Festival, one of the highlights from the exhibition spaces was Mike Bouchet's project The Zurich Load at Löwenbräukunst. The strong odour emanating from his work garnered controversial reactions, but the concentrated and compressed excrements – ostensibly a collaboration with the city's entire population – will linger on in Zurich's collective cultural consciousness. After the exhibition in the context of Manifesta 11, the American artist's 80-tonne sludge sculpture is set to be disposed off. "This is just another day's worth of biosolids, which we will process

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odur-free according to our daily routine here at the treatment plant” says Bouchet’s host Philipp Sigg, Process Engineer, Werdhölzli Wastewater Treatment Plant. Other highlights include the works by Jorinde Voigt in a boatmaker’s workshop, Marguerite Humeau at ETH, Jennifer Tee at Enzenbühl cemetery, or Teresa Margolles’ moving piece about the fate of a transgender Mexican sex worker at Hotel Rothaus. The “Historical Exhibition” co-curated by Francesca Gavin and with works by artists from August Sander and Andrei Tarkovsky to Andreas Gursky were embraced by visitors as an explanatory and complementary offering, giving them a better understanding of the development and history of the central topic of art, artists and their working conditions. The initial project by Santiago Sierra, who sealed off Helmhaus securing it for the (imaginary) event of war, was subjected to a fundamental transformation from real-life emergency construction to documentary video installation.

Corine Mauch, the Mayor of Zurich, commented: “Manifesta was an experiment for our city. We trusted in its extraordinary concept, and it paid off. The experiment was successful. Manifesta introduced Zurich to exciting art which made us think, was often inspiring and occasionally irritating. The analysis conducted by Manifesta will offer us insights for the future of Zurich as a city of culture.”

Peter Haerle, Director of Cultural Affairs for the City of Zurich, said “Perhaps there were some things that did not measure up to our high expectations, which is quite common for such a complex and experimental event. Nevertheless, Manifesta provided Zurich with some critical impulses and food for thought as a city of culture. A cultural powerhouse like our city can certainly handle that. And the debate about current and future working conditions, not least in the realms of art and culture, has certainly struck a nerve.”

Manifesta, the roving European Biennial of Contemporary Art, is held every two years in a different European host city – currently and until 18 September in Zurich, followed by Palermo in 2018 and Marseille in 2020. Its mission is the critical exploration of current political and social issues in modern-day Europe.

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www.manifesta11.org / www.manifesta.org

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About Manifesta

Manifesta was conceived in the early 1990s as a nomadic, European biennial of contemporary art, responding to the new social, cultural and political reality that emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War. Following a desire to explore the psychological and geographical territory of Europe and to provide a dynamic platform for cultural exchange throughout the region, it takes place every two years in a different European city. Along with the Venice Biennale and documenta in Kassel, Manifesta is one of the foremost art events in Europe.

Since 1996, Manifesta has taken place in Rotterdam, Luxembourg, Ljubljana, Frankfurt, Donostia/San Sebastián, Trentino–South Tyrol, Murcia, Genk and most recently St. Petersburg. Over the course of ten biennials and twenty years, more than 2.5 million people have visited Manifesta's events and participated in its programs. It has successfully presented artists, curators and young professionals from as many as forty different countries, and in each edition continues to innovate and reimagine contemporary art practice.

Manifesta 11 Zurich

The eleventh edition is hosted by the city of Zurich and runs until 18 September 2016 under the title *What People Do for Money: Some Joint Ventures*. It is composed of the following parts: 30 new commissions in the satellites as well as in Löwenbräukunst and Helmhaus, which are result of encounters between artists and their 'hosts'; *The Historical Exhibition: Sites Under Constructions*, also at the art institutions; the *Pavillon of Reflections* and the *Cabaret der Künstler – Zunfthaus Voltaire*, a stage for joint-venture performances and home of the newly founded artist's guild. Manifesta 11 is curated by Christian Jankowski and co-curators Francesca Gavin and Manuel Scheiwiller.

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