

“Berlin after Re-unification“

Project Description / Installation

Artist: Christian Heinrich

Technique: digital prints, oil collage mounted on canvas

Size: approx. 2,7 m high by 4 m wide, made of 61 pieces on canvas (each 30x50cm)

History

Berlin has again become a significant cultural centre. The un-comparable offer on culture, the turbulent history and innovative development has made this metropolis into one of the most exciting places in Europe, attracting over nine million visitors a year. In Berlin the spirits of the times join advanced civilization, modern trends and history. No other German city has been formed by a history of repeated upheaval and change like Berlin. Above all the newer history is still present throughout the city, empty lots, old house facades, some in need of repair, cheap east block pre-fabricated mass housing apartment blocks, new modern architecture and the most striking symbol, the Berlin Wall.

Theme

After the fall of the Berlin Wall there was an atmosphere of fundamental change similar to the “Golden Twenties”. Through the merger of two very different cultural landscapes (East and West) a lot of room for creativity and dramatization was released, but it also produced much potential for conflict. This excitement, breakage, movement and contrast, which came after re-unification make this city so unique, so lively. The constantly growing design, fashion, art, architecture and music scene draws young innovative, creative artists from around the world and characterizes the cities image.

Goal

The objective of this project is to record and visualise this excitement, upheaval, change, versatility, the liveliness and pulsating of the city making it all visible.

Construction / Contents

61 small collages on canvas (each 30 by 50cm) will be composed as blocks in a wall. Each an art work on its own devoted to a typical Berlin facet, arranged like blocks in a wall side by side and one above the other, as mosaic stones becoming part of a whole. They grasp into each other while at the same time corresponding to evoke suspense, sketch breakage and bring versatility to light.

The number 61 stands for the year the wall was built and marks the beginning of a very different life style and culture scene, which would evolve in both German States.

The idea for the installation of the individual wall blocks being composed on an existing surface had several reasons and making my choice regarding the contents.

1. Depiction of both moments of surprise, the unexpected building of the Berlin Wall in August of 1961 and its opening in November 1989.
2. Stones of a wall to mark its instability, its breakability, its permeability.
3. To illustrate the hardening positions of both German States over the years, both the FRG and the GDR.
4. The wall, a border, a boundary between two Germanys, but also a cutting point of many diverse facets, which came into being over the years.
5. To evoke very different emotional feelings in the observer, the viewer, the onlooker, depending upon his or her chosen position, height of width along the wall.

Transport / Composition

Because the installation is composed of individual parts, it is easy to transport, variable and as an entire work of art not constant. The small canvases can be packed and stacked in cases or cardboard boxes and easily transported. The entire depiction is adaptable to the available formal presentation area; the wall can be high, wide or long. During the exhibition individual parts can be taken out up to the point of dismantling the entire area.