

MANIFESTA 11

Press Release
Zurich, 5 April 2016

Manifesta 11 in Zurich: Preparations for the European Biennial of Contemporary Art Enter Their Final Phase

In just over two months, on 11 June 2016, Manifesta 11 will open in Zurich under the title *What People Do for Money: Some Joint Ventures*.

Preparations for the large international art exhibition are nearing completion: The new productions, the result of encounters between international artists and representatives of Zurich-based occupations, are taking form. For example, the Catalan artist Carles Congost is working with the Zurich Fire Brigade to produce a film, *Simply the Best*, which will address the differences between a vocation and wage labour. Maurizio Cattelan is working together with a Paralympic athlete. Teresa Margolles with a transsexual sex worker, Marguerite Humeau with an engineer for robotic and Shelly Nadashi with a literature teacher. Another of the participating artists, French author Michel Houellebecq, has teamed up with a doctor to present Manifesta visitors a meticulous evaluation of his health.

The 30 new productions follow the format of the Joint Venture. Each of these artistic projects will be exhibited in three different ways: at a satellite venue, in a classical art institution and in the form of a film screened at the Pavillon of Reflections.

The **historical exhibition**, which will comprise over 100 positions, is being co-curated by Manifesta 11 Chief Curator Christian Jankowski together with English Curator Francesca Gavin. *The Historical Exhibition: Sites Under Construction* will take up and explore the various ways in which current and historical working worlds have been portrayed in art.

Furthermore, **Cabaret Voltaire is undergoing a radical architectural change** to become a guildhall for artists. On the facade, a new plastic bay window will signal the transformation of the historical building, from which Dadaism emerged 100 years ago. The building's interior, in keeping with the theme of the biennial, will be turned into a working world along the lines of an office building. Those who want to join must put on a joint-venture performance. Thus, Cabaret der Künstler – Zunfthaus Voltaire will be the site of Manifesta 11's performance programme. To become members, artists must undertake a performance with a non-artist.

What do I do for money? What does my work do to me at the same time? The curatorial concept developed by Christian Jankowski for Manifesta 11 is focused on the fields of work found in Zurich and their relation to art. The eleventh edition of Manifesta, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, will take place from 11 June to 18 September 2016 in Zurich.

The Idea behind Manifesta 11

Thirty international artists are developing projects with “hosts” of their choice, representatives of different occupations. The results of these encounters will be exhibited at the hosts’ respective workplaces (the so-called satellite venues) as well as at the main Manifesta venues – in the well-known Zurich art institutions Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, LUMA Westbau / POOL, Kunsthalle Zürich and Helmhaus. Starting with the first one this past month, the new Manifesta projects are being inaugurated one by one at the satellite venues by the hosts and their friends.

The **architectural icon of Manifesta 11** will be the **Pavillon of Reflections**, a floating platform on Lake Zurich. Equipped with a large-scale LED screen, theatre seating, a swimming area and a bar, the pavilion will provide a place for dialogue and reflection on the artworks made new for the biennial. The centrepiece of the program of events at the Pavillon of Reflections will be a series of films that follow the development of each new artwork and document their reception within the hosts’ communities. These films are being produced by students and alumni from the Cast/Audiovisual Media Department at the ZHdK. Local junior high and high school students from Zurich have also contributed as ‘art detectives’. The Pavillon of Reflections is being supported by EKZ (the electrical utilities of the canton of Zurich) and designed and built by Studio Tom Emerson from ETH Zurich.

Each edition of Manifesta reacts to the diversity of social, political and geographical conditions in contemporary Europe. Since the first Manifesta twenty years ago, the initiators have always placed critical thought, scientific research and artistic experimentation in the foreground. “Putting together a Manifesta in Switzerland, a country that – through its system of direct democracy, high standard of living and protectionist foreign policy – is said to have achieved an almost idyllic character,” says Hedwig Fijen, Founding Director of Manifesta, “can feel quite surreal, at a time when Europe is confronted with the most dramatic humanitarian crisis since the Second World War.” She adds, “This Manifesta takes the form it does exactly because of that discrepancy”. Corine Mauch, mayor of Zurich: “I am very much looking forward to the Manifesta in Zurich. The concept is appropriate for Zurich. The city, its inhabitants and the local art scene will all be part of the biennial. Manifesta offers us an artistic and critical view of our city from the outside. Manifesta 11 should also appeal to a new and broader audience in the city and beyond, an audience that otherwise does not engage much with contemporary art and only seldom ventures into museums or exhibitions.”

The Joint Ventures: Three Exemplary New Productions

Michel Houellebecq, known as an author with a mercilessly analytical and prophetic view of contemporary society, is undergoing a meticulous checkup for Manifesta 11, after his physical condition was the subject of repeated speculation in the media. Houellebecq thus revives a part of his earlier artistic practice: photography. His host, Dr. Henry Perschak, who is a doctor of general internal medicine at the renowned Clinic Hirslanden, will guide the enfant terrible of French literature through ECG, MRI and blood tests. Houellebecq, who has an interest in the aesthetics of medicine, will display x-ray images of his brain as well as sound recordings and moving images of his heart and circulation alongside the invoices incurred from the examinations. Therefore begging the question: What's the price of good health?

The Mexican photographer, video and performance artist **Teresa Margolles** has devoted her work over the past 10 years to the extreme violence in her home country of Mexico and the drug war being waged there. For Manifesta 11, Margolles is initiating an encounter between transsexual sex workers from Zurich and Juarez, Mexico. The encounter will take place over a game of poker. One of the sex workers is Margolles' host, Sonja Victoria Vera Bohorquez, who is from Zurich. The poker game is the setting for a dialogue about the rather diverse lives and working conditions of the sex workers in the two countries. The performance will take place during the first days of Manifesta 11 in the Hotel Rothaus on Langstrasse. Afterwards, a multimedia installation will recall the context and details of the encounters.

The Catalan artist **Carles Congost** has decided to work with the Zurich Fire Brigade. His host is Roland Portmann of Schutz & Rettung Zürich (Zurich Protection & Rescue). *Simply the Best* is a mockumentary centred on a young Swiss fireman. The fireman loves Gospel music and is an huge fan of singer Tina Turner, who currently lives in Switzerland. In her honour, Congost is staging a pyro-musical spectacle for Manifesta 11. The preparations and rehearsals for this spectacle, along with the twists of his own fate, are the topic of Congost's video work. The artist aims to raise questions about the meaning of work, leisure and the economy in Switzerland as well as in a global context. The term «FI/RE», an acronym for Financial Independence/Retiring Early, describes a global phenomenon that is widespread in Switzerland: investing wisely so that you can stop working as early as possible.

The Historical Exhibition: Sites Under Construction

“What do you want to be when you grow up?” From early childhood on, work is thought of as something of essential importance for personal desires. The profession we select plays a central role in the development of our identity, in how we speak, behave and relate to other people. In a highly complex city such as Zurich, which is considered one of the leading financial and economic metropolises of the world, human working conditions are complex. Therefore, they are the starting point for the curatorial concept: “What do you do for money?”

Next to the Joint Ventures, the new artistic productions, which are being created in a vibrant process of cooperation between artists and hosts, the curated section of Manifesta 11 brings together artistic positions from the past and the present to examine how work can be the subject of artistic reflection. At the same time, the selected works illuminate the concrete working conditions under which art is produced. Where does the artist, with his or her various options, stand in the global collection society. Is he or she instrumentalised?

The Historical Exhibition: Sites Under Construction gathers artworks and non-art-specific materials from the past fifty years into different groupings. The show, co-curated by Francesca Gavin, is divided into eleven chambers. These are inspired by the intersections between private and public, the personal and the professional, and examine how and why artists portray the working process and relations that they face and engage in.

“Collected on a scaffold-like structure are artworks and non-art-specific materials from the past fifty years, a period in which social layers were broken up and after which some can no longer be defined from the position into which we were born, like a baker’s daughter or the son of an accountant”, explains co-curator Francesca Gavin. The London-based writer and curator goes on to say: “Work is to be found where we observe the rules, punch our cards and pay the tax man what we owe. But the limits of the structures of work can also put us in a position to exercise our creativity and build new relationships.”

Manifesta 11's Education Concept

Manifesta aims to better understand contemporary art and the role it can play in society. With every edition of Manifesta, the education department has played a central role in the conception of the biennial, and the same goes for Manifesta 11 in Zurich. This edition of Manifesta will set a special example of how contemporary art can attract a heterogeneous audience. The education team, led by Yana Klichuk and David Smeulders, has developed a mediation programme which focuses on how participation can contribute to generating a diversified art audience. The mediation team does not assume that the visitors have prior knowledge of contemporary art and want to animate the participants to form their own opinions. All art-lovers – regardless of age, experience or knowledge about art – are invited to help shape the dialogue around Manifesta 11.

“The curatorial concept of Manifesta 11, especially in terms of the Joint Ventures, can also be seen as an mediation project in itself: artists engage non-artists to produce art. In its educational programme, Manifesta 11 will amplify this experience by inviting ‘non-art-professionals’ to be trained alongside the experienced art guides, to lead guided tours and introduce the Joint Ventures of Manifesta from various perspectives,” explains Yana Klichuk, Head of Education.

The education programme is generously supported by Engagement Migros, initiating partner of Manifesta 11.

The Platform for Local and Regional Art Production: Manifesta 11 Parallel Events

Every two years, Manifesta offers a new city the opportunity to present its diverse urban and regional cultural life within an international context. The Parallel Events have established themselves as an essential element of all previous Manifesta editions, and Manifesta 11 in Zurich will provide visitors a chance to delve into the city's local cultural scene. They events will cover projects ranging from the visual arts to performance, video, photography, dance, theatre, music and design. Peter Haerle, Cultural Director of the City of Zurich, states: “The Parallel Events will feature Zurich's cultural diversity in all its many facets: They will demonstrate the power and vitality of the independent art scene as well as the creative and artistic potential of the art institutions. I am delighted to experience this colourful landscape through the Parallel Events.”

One event in the programme will be the transformation of Foto-Ernst – a specialist photography store in Zurich that has been closed for years – into a Wunderkammer, or cabinet of curiosities, replete with original prints. Weekly beginner and advanced courses will introduce guests to the trade of analogue photography. Hopefully, the location and its inherent magic will provide the inspiration for many new works of art. An overview of all 38 Parallel Events can be found on the Manifesta 11 website.

Manifesta 11 Publications

Manifesta 11's catalogue *What People Do for Money* will place the hosts centrestage in addition to including new texts by Franco Berardi, Harald Falckenberg, Aaron Moulton, Sally O'Reilly, Mikhail Shishkin and Jakob Tanner. The bilingual (German/English) catalogue will be published by Lars Müller Publishers.

The Manifesta 11 Guide book will appear in German, French and English and will be a handy and indispensable companion for all visitors to the biennial. It will offer an overview of all of the newly produced artworks and all the exhibition venues as well as including a map of the city, additional information about the artists in the form of image and text, and helpful information about Zurich.

The Film Programme

The Xenix Open Air summer programme will follow the theme of Manifesta 11: Movie screens will become a workspace – and practitioners of the occupations portrayed will be in the audience at each screening. For example, taxi drivers will be invited to the screening of Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*. The film programme has been developed jointly by Kino Xenix and Manifesta 11, and it will be open to the general public.

Sponsors and Initiating Partners

The realization of Manifesta 11 is made possible by the generous support of various local partners. Apart from the Initiators, Manifesta Amsterdam and the City of Zurich, the project was supported in a very early stage by our Initiating Partners. These include the Lottery Fund of the Canton of Zurich, Engagement Migros, Swiss Federal Office of Culture, Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia, Ernst Göhner Stiftung, Georg und Bertha Schwyzer-Winiker Stiftung and Sophie und Karl Binding Stiftung. We would furthermore like to especially thank our Main Sponsor, EKZ, and our Corporate Partner, Bank Julius Baer. A comprehensive naming of Manifesta 11 Partners, who have all made significant contributions to Manifesta 11, will be published on our homepage by the end of April.

Initiators / Initiatoren / Initiateurs



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www.manifesta11.org / www.manifesta.org

Preview for Presse and Professionals

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Image Material for Downloading www.manifesta11.org/de/press/downloads

Artist's/Host-Duos, Visualisations Pavillon of Reflections, Cabaret der Künstler – Zunfthaus Voltaire,

Further documentary images of Manifesta 11 development are available on the website Keystone photo agency, www.keystone.ch

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.

The eleventh edition will be hosted by the city of Zurich and will run from 11 June until 18 September 2016. It will be curated by Christian Jankowski. Under the title *What People Do for Money: Some Joint Ventures*, artists will be brought together with representatives from various Zurich-based professions.