

MANIFESTA 11

Christian Jankowski: Concept for Manifesta 11 «What People Do For Money: Some Joint Ventures»

“When artists curate, they cannot avoid mixing their artistic investigations with the proposed curatorial project: for me this is the strength and singularity they bring to curating.”
Ricardo Basbaum, writing in ‘The Next Documenta Should Be Curated by an Artist’

Berlin based Christian Jankowski has been appointed Chief Curator of Manifesta 11, the European Biennial of Contemporary Art, which will be hosted in Zurich, Switzerland in 2016. For the first time in Manifesta’s history, an individual artist will take the position of Chief Curator.

In his work as an artist Jankowski has always collaborated with people in other professions. The different vocabularies and approaches that people bring to the art determines the artwork itself. **What People Do For Money: Some Joint Ventures** will place spread art across Zurich’s social make-up, questioning the extent to which reception and judgement of art is influenced by the viewer being an art professional or not.

Jankowski’s concept hinges on three tenants that have motivated his artistic investigation throughout his career, three concerns that also happen to be perfectly suited for the first Manifesta to take place in a fully developed, globalised, metropolitan centre like Zurich. The three concerns are: professions (in relation to art), collaboration, and non-traditional art audiences. Jankowski’s concept also is based on the logic of integrating art’s production, its authorship, and its display into the full scope of the city’s professional landscape.

Christian Jankowski (Göttingen, 1968) studied at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg (Germany) and is currently based in Berlin. In his artistic actions and media artworks, he makes use of film, video, and photography, but also painting, sculpture, and installation. Jankowski’s work consists of performative interactions between himself and non-art professionals, between contemporary art and the so-called ‘world outside of art’. During the course of his artistic career, Jankowski has collaborated with magicians, politicians, news anchors, and members of the Vatican, to name just a few. Jankowski registers these performative collaborations using the mass media formats in which he stages his work—film, photography, television, newspapers. This procedure lends his work its populist appeal. Jankowski’s work can be seen both as a reflection, deconstruction, and a critique of a society based on spectacle. In his view, art has turned into a spectacle, and as a result, has undermined its critical potential.