

MEDIA RELEASE

Zurich, 23 October 2012



Protests at the sculpture *2 Concrete Cadillacs in the Form of the Naked Maja* by Wolf Vostell, Rathenauplatz, Berlin 1987 (Landesbildstelle Berlin)

Art – The Apple of Discord

An interdisciplinary conference on «Conflict, Disputation, Dissent: The Disruptive Force of Art»

Scandalous forgeries, wrangling over planning requirements for listed buildings, rivalry between artists, and debates about the freedom of art frequently hit the headlines. There is more to this than a conflict of interest between the art world and the world of politics, or between social and market forces. It is also a sign that matters of art are taken seriously by the general public. This conference will look from different angles at why the relationship between art and society is so explosive.

When art, architecture or the preservation of monuments attract attention, there are often conflicts involved, either within the art community or in its relationship with politics, society or the market. Again and again, disputes about the freedom of art blow up over violations of people's aesthetic and moral sensitivities or over challenges to market interests. Scandalous forgeries have made art the subject of court litigation with often sensational media coverage, while artists themselves sometimes devise provocative strategies as they vie for public attention and sales opportunities. Finally, political objectives are brought into play during quarrels about how to preserve monuments and in the competition between institutions and academic disciplines to obtain public funding.

All this friction indicates that art is important to society and that the two camps can still talk to each other. For art historians, conflict research means exploring the role and status of art in society. This conference will be asking these questions in three sections: the first will address controversies around the preservation of monuments, then a panel will look at some examples of artistic production caught up between political and social demands. The last section will be devoted to conflict as an artistic strategy.

The opening keynote will be given by media studies specialist Kurt Imhof, to be followed by speakers from Switzerland, Germany and the United States, who will present their research.

The conference is being organised by the Swiss Association of Art Historians (VKKS/ASHHA) in collaboration with the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA). It will take place on 8 and 9 November 2012 at the SIK-ISEA premises in Zurich.

You will find the programme at www.sik-isea.ch (Events)

Venue and registration

Thursday and Friday, 8 and 9 November 2012: SIK-ISEA, Zollikerstrasse 32 (near Kreuzplatz), CH-8032 Zurich

There is no fee for participating. **Please register by 26 October 2012:** by e-mail to monika.krebser@sik-isea.ch. Places are limited and will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis.

For more information please contact

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