

Exhibition: »Hosen haben Röcke an.
Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt 1984-1994« (*Pants
Wear Skirts. The Erfurt Women Artist's Group
1984-1994*)

Opening event: Friday, 26 November, 14:00-
24:00

Duration: 27 November 2021–30 January 2022

Location: neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst
(nGbK), Oranienstraße 25, 10999 Berlin

Artists: Monika Andres, Claudia Morca
Bogenhardt, Tely Büchner, Elke Carl, Monique
Förster, Gabriele Göbel, Ina Heyner, Angelika
Hummel, Verena Kyselka, Bettina Neumann,
Ingrid Plöttner, Marlies Schmidt, Gabriele
Stötzer, Harriet Wollert, and others

Press preview: Friday, 26 November,
12:00–13:00. Please register by mail:
presse@ngbk.de



Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt at Kulturhof Lietzen
(Harriet Wollert, Verena Kyselka, Ina Heyner,
Gabriele Göbel, Tely Büchner, Gabriele Stötzer,
Monika Andres), 1989 © Archiv Gabriele Stötzer

»Hosen haben Röcke an. Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt 1984-1994«

For the first time and comprehensively, the exhibition »Hosen haben Röcke an« (Engl.: *Pants Wear Skirts*) presents original materials and costumes from the archives of the actors of the Women Artists' Group calling themselves **Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt**. Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt (Erfurt Women Artists' Group) was active for around a decade, beginning in the last years of the East German state. Founded by Gabriele Stötzer in 1984, it lived out an artistic alternative to the prevailing conditions. Unlike many other subversive collectives, its long existence and cohesion was based on an artistic determination. The group defended its freedom and autonomy under the conditions of a totalitarian system, its non-institutional structure ensuring maximum flexibility. The group's Super-8 films, photographs, performances, fashion/object shows, manifestos and sound experiments celebrate female self-empowerment, gender justice, artistic freedom as a universal human right, and radical critiques of society. While subscribing to the heterotopic quality characteristic of art-scene subcultures at the time, the group's activities were also explicitly social and political in tone.

Artistic and social liberation in authoritarian systems

Initially, the women met to discuss nonconformist and feminist literature, esoteric knowledge and questions of sexual liberation. But their interest soon shifted to the elaboration of an interdisciplinary artistic practice. This is reflected especially clearly in five experimental Super-8 films that also give the exhibition its basic structure. These films (made beginning in 1986) and later live performances with literary and musical elements revolve around provocative costumes created by the artists as their alter egos. Early films like *Frauenträume* (Women's Dreams, 1986) and *Geister berühren* (Touching Ghosts, 1987) were not deliberately designed as acts of political dissidence. At this early stage, the group's actions aimed more at exploring unspoken secrets of female identity and energy. In *Frauenträume* personal dreams served as a symbolic surface for the projection of brief, often surrealistic scenes: Monika Andres examined the archetype of the »third breast«, Verena Kyselka staged a secret break-in at Erfurt Cathedral, while

Ingrid Plöttner made her fantasy of flying come true. *Komik Komisch* (Comic-Comical, 1988) was the first film to politicize the aesthetic. *Signale* (Signals, 1989) and *Die Überfahrt/Cross-over* (1990) can be read as explicit responses to political change in the real world.

Although many cultural figures were going into exile at the time due to political repression, these women artists all refused to leave East Germany. Additional space for their activities was provided through the countercultural infrastructure of the Protestant Church in Thuringia, which also supported punks and peace activists. The high-profile occupation of the Stasi headquarters in Erfurt on 4 December 1989 was organized by five activists, including three women from the Künstlerinnengruppe. In the course of events unfolding at the end of 1989, this was the first occupation of a Stasi building anywhere in the GDR, soon followed by similar actions in other cities. What was special about the Erfurt occupation was the fact that it was organized exclusively by women – women who had improved and perfected their organizational skills during many years of underground activity. Such strategies, going beyond the field of art, and the successful founding of the artist-run Kunsthau Erfurt, that is still operating today, mark the unique quality of Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt, which remained active with different members until 1994. As the curators say: »The way they turned their ideas, fears, and desires into art, based on solidarity, creativity and political fearlessness, remains highly relevant today.«

nGbK project group:

Susanne Altmann, Kata Krasznahorkai, Christin Müller, Franziska Schmidt, Sonia Voss

Graphic design: Klimaite Klimaite

Exhibition architecture: Bernhard Tatter

Updates on the programme: Please visit www.ngbk.de/en:

For the latest information on access to our space during the pandemic, please visit our website: www.ngbk.de

Press contact:

neue Gesellschaft für bildende Kunst (nGbK)

Wayra Schübel

Oranienstraße 25

10999 Berlin

Tel. 030-616 513 13

presse@ngbk.de

www.ngbk.de

Press images

»Hosen haben Röcke an«. Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt (1984-1994)

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01_Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt: Filmstill aus »Frauenträume«, Super-8-Film (mit: Gabriele Göbel, Verena Kyselka, Monika Andres, Monique Förster, Ingrid Plöttner, Elke Carl, Sylvia Richter, Ina Heyner), Kamera: Gabriele Stötzer, 1986, ©Archiv Gabriele Stötzer

Erfurt Women Artists' Group: Film-still from »Frauenträume« (Women's Dreams), Super 8 (with: Gabriele Göbel, Verena Kyselka, Monika Andres, Monique Förster, Ingrid Plöttner, Elke Carl, Sylvia Richter, Ina Heyner) camera: Gabriele Stötzer, 1986, ©Archive Gabriele Stötzer



02_Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt: Filmstill aus »Frauenträume« Super-8-Film (mit: Gabriele Göbel, Verena Kyselka, Monika Andres, Monique Förster, Ingrid Plöttner, Elke Carl, Sylvia Richter, Ina Heyner), Kamera: Gabriele Stötzer, 1986 ©Archiv Gabriele Stötzer

Erfurt Women Artists' Group: Film-still from »Frauenträume« (Women's Dreams), Super 8 (with: Gabriele Göbel, Verena Kyselka, Monika Andres, Monique Förster, Ingrid Plöttner, Elke Carl, Sylvia Richter, Ina Heyner) camera: Gabriele Stötzer, 1986, ©Archive Gabriele Stötzer



03_Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt: Gruppenbild, Erfurt 1990, Foto: Gabriele Stötzer, © Archiv Gabriele Stötzer
Erfurt Women Artists' Group: Group Photo, Erfurt 1990. Photo: Gabriele Stötzer ©Archive Gabriele Stötzer



04_Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt: Gabriele Stötzer, Maske und Anzug »Schafwolle«, 1989 (natürliche Schafwolle, Maske: Schafwolle, Leinen, Füllmasse, Maske: 55 x 50 cm Pullover: 65 x 70 cm, Hose: 45 x 80 cm, Foto Claus Bach, Weimar, © Archiv Gabriele Stötzer

Erfurt Women Artists' Group: Gabriele Stötzer: Mask and Suit »Sheep Wool«, 1989 (natural sheep wool, mask: sheep wool, linen filling material, mask: 55 x 50 cm, sweater: 65 x 70 cm, pants: 45 x 80 cm) Photo: Claus Bach, Weimar, © Archive Gabriele Stötzer



05_Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt: Monika Andres: »Name, Stadt, Land« – Zeitungskostüm und Banner, Installation Karl-Marx-Stadt (Chemnitz), 1988, Foto: Christiane Wagner, © Archiv Monika Andres

Erfurt Women Artists' Group: Monika Andres: »Name, Stadt, Land« (Name, City, Count after the German educational game) – Newspaper costume and banner, installation Karl-Marx-Stadt (Chemnitz), 1988 Foto: Christiane Wagner, Weimar, © Archive Monika Andres



06_Künstlerinnengruppe Erfurt: Verena Kyselka, »Die Nachrichtensprecherin«, (Antennenkostüm), 1989 Foto: Christiane Wagner ©Archiv Verena Kyselka
Erfurt Women Artists' Group: Verena Kyselka: The News Anchor, (Antenna-Costume), 1989, Photo: Christiane Wagner, © Archive Verena Kyselka