

PRESS RELEASE

Evil Clowns at HMKV attracts 9,000 visitors

The exhibition *Evil Clowns* organised by HMKV (Hartware MedienKunstVerein) at Dortmunder U from 27 September 2014 to 8 March 2015 was seen by a total of **8,848 visitors**. It explored the figure of the clown in contemporary and popular culture (film, music videos, advertisement, political activism) by highlighting its inherent ambivalence and tracing its mutation from popular entertainer to creepy villain.

During the exhibition HMKV offered **61 guided tours** and a varied programme of events, including special Halloween and Carnival happenings, film screenings, lectures, a film night and guided tours for teachers and the hearing-impaired. From a face-painting workshop on Halloween to a guided tour in sign language and a lecture by Prof. Dr. Ulrich Sachsse, Consulting Physician for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, who approached the character of the Joker in the cult film *The Dark Knight* (2008) from a psychoanalytical point of view – **our educational events appealed to 1,589 visitors**. With its popular topic, the show also attracted prominent visitors to Dortmunder U, notably **John Law, co-founder of the Cacophony Society**, San Francisco.

For this exhibition **HMKV collaborated for the first time with the Jeu de Paume in Paris**, one of France's major venues for contemporary art and media. As part of this partnership, the net artist Constantin Dullaart created an exclusive new piece for the exhibition: *High Retention, Slow Delivery* questions the new structures of power generated by social media via "followers" and "fans". To show how easily this new "currency" can be manipulated, Dullaart bought 2.5 million fake followers, which he then redistributed to the Instagram and Twitter accounts of selected artists, gallerists and other decision makers in the art in order to change the balance of play and undermine existing power structures. Dullaart's work symbolically alludes to the villains hiding behind the "masks" of Instagram, Facebook and the like, who induce us into doing crazy or "silly" things in trying to satisfy our hunger for attention.

***The Village's Biggest Loser* by Abner Preis was also produced specifically for the purpose of the exhibition.** A three-channel video installation based on the short story *The Lottery* from 1948, it follows the inhabitants of a small village taking part in a traditional lottery, where the first prize is a public execution by stoning. Preis's version does however conclude with a happy end of sorts. In the exhibition spectators were provided clown costumes and encouraged to dress up and immerse themselves in the fictional world of the story, thus becoming an integral part of the work. The filming involved 40 amateur actors, aged between 8 and 80, from Dortmund and environs.



Hartware MedienKunstVerein

On the Tuesday before the end of the show HMKV organised a **special event for bloggers and online activists**, who were invited to take part in a guided tour of the exhibition, followed by drinks and an informal discussion. Participants were let in on insider information surround the show and were given the opportunity to learn more about the HMKV and its next project, ***The Mechanical Corps: On the Traces of Jules Verne***, which will open on Friday 10 April 2015. The discussion was continued on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, where it reached further audiences.

The exhibition was furthermore discussed in relevant media nationally and internationally:

The French daily *Libération* dedicated its front page to the project in October 2014, *Le Monde* published an interview with the curator of the show and director of HMKV, Inke Arns, and the New York-based *DISmagazine* reported on Constant Dullaart's work.

Regional and national media also reported extensively, including *Ruhrbarone*, *taz – die tageszeitung*, *Westfälischer Anzeiger*, *Ruhrnachrichten*, *trailer*, *WDR*, *Funkhaus Europa*, *Deutschlandfunk*, *Sat1*, and *Deutschlandradio Kultur*.

Last but not least the exhibition has attracted interest from various institutions and will **travel to a venue in Erlangen (South of Germany) in April 2016**.

Main Sponsors of the HMKV

Dortmunder U – Center for Art and Creativity
Cultural Department of the City of Dortmund
Ministry for Family, Children, Youth, Culture and Sport of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia

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HMKV im Dortmunder U

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