



Berlin, 27th February 2024

PRESS RELEASE

fair share! for women artists e.V.

Friday, 8 March 2024, 2.00 - 3.30 pm

Museum construction site at the Kulturforum, Matthäikirchplatz, 10785 Berlin

Art campaign for International Women's Day:

**Rededication of the planned museum *berlin modern* into a
Museum of Women Artists* Berlin (MdK*B)**

Programme: Bernadette La Hengst & Chor der Statistik, poetry slammer Franziska Wilhelm, augmented reality experience, realised by Katia Ditzler, and performance.

Film: Rigoletti. An art card edition will be published.

Following the example of the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., which opened in 1987, fair share! for women artists e.V. celebrates the symbolic rededication of the 'berlin modern' - currently in construction at the Kulturforum Berlin - as a museum for women artists. In a place that is strongly shaped by men through the art in museums and public spaces, the architecture of surrounding buildings, the science in the State Library and the music in the Philharmonie, the MdK*B creates a balance with its extensive collection of previously overlooked female artists. On a personnel, operational, ecological and educational level, the MdK*B follows the concept of a caring culture: flat hierarchies, cross-departmental exchange, and fair pay for all freelancers and employees; free admission to the collection, open spaces and a committed education programme involving the urban community and local artists. As an institution at the service of society, visitors experience a museum in motion, a place of polyphony, inspiration and interaction.

The initiators are available for interviews.

Further details can be found on the following pages.

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V.i.S.d.P. Rachel Kohn, Karin Meyer

The Museum of Women Artists* Berlin (Mdk*B) - a vision

On the occasion of International Women's Day 2024, **fair share! for women artists e.V.** will stage an imaginary rededication: as a vision for the future, the *berlin modern* museum - currently under construction at Berlin's Kulturforum - will become a **Museum of Women Artists* Berlin Mdk*B**. Our museum is inspired by the **National Museum of Women in the Arts**, Washington, D.C., which opened in 1987 and hosts the most extensive collection of art by women, with around 5,500 works by over 1,000 female artists from the 16th century to the present day and is dedicated exclusively to the promotion of women in the arts.

Why only women artists?

In the context of the Berlin Kulturforum with its museums, art works, sculptures, and architectures almost all accomplished by men, a museum solely for female artists provides an important correction of the utter imbalance. Despite an increasing number of exhibitions featuring women artists in recent years, it has not been possible to close the significant gender gap in the collections and sustain the visibility of women artists. The **Mdk*B's** visionary collection is based on a selection of **regional to international female artists** who have received little attention from the art world to date, regardless of their pioneering influence on the art of their time. In addition, in the **Mdk*B** the traditional genre boundaries and the separation between art and crafts/design are left behind. All parts of the collection are in motion, continuously revised and presented in ever-evolving contexts. Berlin-based artists, too, are involved in the exhibitions and are invited to temporarily juxtapose their works with works from the collection in a self-designed discursive space.

Inclusive instead of exclusive: taking education seriously

To further raise awareness of gender equality in the arts, the **Mdk*B** not only focuses on unusual presentation formats, but also on **specialised education and outreach programmes**: Inclusion and participation of the urban society are strengthened by the fact that life's realities and visitors' own circumstances play a central role in the conception of guided tours, talks and creative programmes for all age groups. Large, bright and easily accessible workshop spaces constitute the core of the museum. Artists and museum educators offer instruction in hands-on activities on a daily basis. To introduce young people to the world of women artists, the **Mdk*B** provides virtual interactive tools in preparation prior to and following up after visits to the museum. Close contacts are maintained with schools across all Berlin districts and beyond.

Culture of participation and respect

Participation and interaction are fundamental principles not only in our interactions with visitors, but also internally. At the **Mdk*B**, artistic direction is not dictated by individual decisions, but by the collaborative efforts of an entire team: exhibition concepts are developed through dialogue among curators, art educators, conservators, technicians, supervisors and representatives of society. In an atmosphere of mutual respect, the museum becomes **a place of participation**. This is also reflected in the fair payment of all employees and freelancers.

Art & Care

Participation is also evident in the **Motherhouse Studios**, which will be integrated into the **Mdk*B** as an offshoot of the pioneering London project. Innovative artistic and curatorial projects are developed in short residencies with optional childcare available for female artists with caregiving responsibilities. Serving as a national and cross-disciplinary centre of expertise for promoting gender equality in the arts, a **Caring Culture Lab**, also located in the building, explores topics such as visibility, awareness-raising, community building, knowledge transfer, further vocational training and certification relating to the intersection of art and care.

Support for female artists

The Mdk*B enters into **partnerships and co-operations** with art institutions, galleries, artists' networks and advocacy groups that are actively engaged in promoting women artists. An independent commission based at the Mdk*B awards a **fair share! seal of approval** to institutions demonstrating exceptional commitment to showcasing female artists.

Statement

For this year's International Women's Day, we artists and activists from **fair share! for women artists e. V.** are outlining a vision of a museum that transcends traditional, elitist and male-dominated structures. An exclusive focus on women is not an ideal solution, but a starting point and a crucial catalyst for closing the long-standing gap in German art collections - for a **fair share** in the state-funded art scene. We are happy to see instances of exhibitions with equal representation in individual cases, such as the new presentation of the Collection of the 21st Century at the Hamburger Bahnhof - Nationalgalerie der Gegenwart, or the recognisable efforts to include more female artists, such as in the collection show "Zerreiprobe. Art between Politics and Society" at the Neue Nationalgalerie.

The persistent gender gap can only be narrowed with persistent commitment and considerable financial resources - both of which are still lacking. Through our campaign for the imaginary rededication of the building project at the Kulturforum, we are envisioning a museum that may seem ambitious and unaffordable. At the same time, we raise questions of the necessity of a new museum building that consumes resources while locations such as the former ICC in the West of Berlin await meaningful repurposing.

The artworks that will be housed at the intended museum "berlin modern", built by the German Cultural Ministry at an expected expense of nearly €600 million are parts of the Neue Nationalgalerie collection as well as the private collections of Erich Marx, Ulla and Heiner Pietzsch and Egidio Marzona as well as works by Gerhard Richter. Once again they will be dominated by male, western, white artists. If the millions of funds had been used instead to purchase works by female artists, to strengthen and expand educational work, set up and equip workshops, provide contractual security for freelance staff or raise the number of employees and establish fair pay, the momentum and benefits for Berlin's cultural landscape would be much more enduring.

Fair share! for women artists e.V. aims to raise awareness of the diverse, radical, controversial and ingenious work of female artists! The works we want to present to the public do not have to be displayed on the walls of an expensive, iconic new building. Instead, they should be integrated into the collections of existing, tax-funded museums, as well as finding their way into specialised literature, galleries, seminars and textbooks at schools and universities.

We believe in fair share!

The fair share! campaign is designed to be climate-friendly and will be implemented in the most resource-efficient way possible. The realisation is financed by private donations.

Account: fair share! e.V.; Skatbank, IBAN: DE04 8306 5408 0005 3220 73,
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