

Win-Win Lottery

Kassel, 10 June – 25 September 2022

For the duration of *documenta fifteen*, artists Hannes Egger and Thomas Sterna will give away a total of 12 one-week slots for solo exhibitions at KulturBahnhof Kassel. The choice of who is selected, however, is not up to a team of curators – but to the Wheel of Fortune. To accompany the 12 shows, a symposium will take place in parallel. Raffle tickets to win an exhibition spot can be purchased at www.winwinlottery.org from 02 April 2022.

Participating in a major international exhibition is many a contemporary artist's dream – one that promises fame, distinction and possibly even wealth. And yet, this chance is only granted to a chosen few. It is undeniable that success requires not only skill, smart ideas and tenacity, but also a great deal of luck. And that is precisely what Hannes Egger and Thomas Sterna are placing their bets on with the *Win-Win Lottery* project: challenging the contemporary hegemony of the curatorial principle with a game of chance in the form of a raffle.

From 10 June to 25 September 2022, the two artists will rent an exhibition space at KulturBahnhof Kassel and draw lots for a total of 12 one-week presentation slots during *documenta fifteen* – leaving the decision up to chance rather than one or a handful of experts.

From 02 April 2022, professional artists from all backgrounds interested in winning the exhibition space can enter the prize draw by simply purchasing one or more raffle tickets at the price of € 20 each, that way automatically taking part in all future draws. Tickets are available at www.winwinlottery.org. The winners, selected in three draws between May and August 2022, are then free to show their works for a week at the heart of the contemporary art world without any requirements regarding content and/or aesthetic input. They will be notified via e-mail one month before their allocated slot.

The exhibition project resulting from this "aleatory" approach to selecting will be complemented by a symposium – accessible also in the digital realm – featuring a high-profile panel of experts who will explore new forms of selection and creating access to both public and private exhibition spaces.

The increasing re-courtification of post-modern society does not stop at "art" and its forms of presentation, especially since an ever-growing new establishment – the super-rich and celebrities from the worlds of politics and arts – focuses primarily on market-driven artistic excellence as a source of image transfer, status cultivation or speculative investment. As a consequence, "Winner Takes All" effects are becoming ever more pervasive – while stifling older forms of artistic autonomy that are still in keeping with the tradition of modernism. Or, as Pierre Bourdieu put it, those who don't have an (affluent) audience don't have any talent. This is a radical reversal of the beliefs held by Marcel Duchamp, who still dared to voice his dissent with his influential contemporaries of the mid-20th century, placing his trust in a future audience.

The drawing of lots has long been a pivotal part of democratic decision-making: In Ancient Greece, for instance, sortition was used to allocate political offices in Athens, and the practice of casting lots is mentioned several times in the Old Testament. Now, it is undergoing a revival that permeates the current discussions around new forms of democratic participation. The *Win-Win Lottery* project will see the practice trialed as a selection procedure capable of provoking a much-needed debate on conventional evaluation standards and ranking systems.

Hannes Egger's artistic practice is, in essence, characterised by a conceptual approach that aims to involve and interact with his audience. As such, his performances, installations and participatory projects invite us to adopt unusual attitudes, positions and points of view in order to reflect on the reality that surrounds us and the way in which we share the spaces we inhabit. His notion of art does not depart from a work of art in the traditional sense; instead, it involves the creation of situations on an open platform in-the-making, allowing us to observe just how those situations may develop and evolve as a result of participation. He frequently provides coordinates or instructions to be followed, and in doing so turns the participants' actions into a work of art in and of itself.

Autobiographical occasions aside, **Thomas Sterna's** work tends to focus on exploring the current conditions of autonomous artistic production and on questioning their social and political foundations, all the while interweaving the inward gaze and the sociological bird's-eye view. If Adorno's famous words are to be believed, an essential motive behind both approaches is "to let neither the power of others, nor our own powerlessness (...), stupefy us". From Sterna's perspective, this also includes strategies of self-empowerment that transcend one's own artistic practice such as devising and presenting entirely new exhibition formats, adopting activities that may seem to be wholly unrelated to art and authoring theoretical texts, to name but a few.