

**LÜ 8/07**

## **ULRIKE KUSCHEL: This Wall**

Opening: 2.8.07, ab 18 Uhr

Exhibition lasting from 3<sup>rd</sup> August till 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007

Opening hours: Thursday–Sunday, 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

*On the anniversary of the building of the wall, that is Monday, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2007, the exhibition will be opened from 2 to 7 p.m. The artist herself will be present.*

How important is an individual opinion? What kind of significance has a document? How does the design of a document, the way in which it is presented, influence its content?

The works of the Berlin artist Ulrike Kuschel can be seen as works in analysing the significance of the documentary. At the former border watch tower at Schlesischer Busch, she realised a two-piece work in which she uses the benchmark data of 13<sup>th</sup> August 1961 and 20<sup>th</sup> March 2007 to define margins of the history of the Berlin Wall. While the visitor looks out from the second floor into the park, the former border strip, the empty observation room is filling with voices. These voices are reactions on the wall building and opinions of unnamed citizens, collected in August/September 1961 by local SED authorities in order to evaluate the public opinion and to prepare possible adequate measures. Ulrike Kuschel selected some of these transcribed statements from the "Situational Reports from the Boroughs" and arranged for these short sentences to be spoken on tape anew. In such a way communicated two times, they now get into the ears of the visitors at the watchtower.

"Why don't you hold elections? Elections would show what the population thinks." "I'd rather eat kangaroo meat than become a bolshevist." "How will the colleagues from the outskirts get back home?" – Dialects, colloquial language and context-oriented speech were maintained in the transcription. Hence, the statements kept their original expression while the sound of the voices added to their current presence. The six minutes long audio installation called "Things will be even better now – August 1961" becomes a filter that influences the perception of the watchtower and its environment.

On the mezzanine floor, six enlarged newspaper pages dated 20<sup>th</sup> March 2007 are displayed in a rather sober and museum-like manner. The day before the Berlin Superior Court of Justice revoked the provisional injunction of the Berlin District Court against the distribution of the book "Deutsche Gerechtigkeit", in which the author, Roman Grafe, critically disputes the insufficient trials of the Berlin Wall Shootings. This revoked ban resulted from a law case of a former political officer who was deployed in the Border Regiment No. 33, i.e. at the border section called "Schlesischer Busch". In the six newspapers that Ulrike Kuschel assembled and arranged for her installation "20<sup>th</sup> (19<sup>th</sup>) March 2007, German Justice (Deutsche Gerechtigkeit)" this incident is discussed from different perspectives and different weighings. Her decision not only to present the specific articles but to display the complete newspaper pages leads to the effect that the described incident will also be perceived within the context of the news coverage of everyday politics.

How does the design of a document, the way in which it is presented, influence its content? The exhibition "This Wall" tries to re-center the awareness of the watchtower as a part of the Berlin Wall, built for political reasons and with severe consequences for the people in the GDR. For that reason, Ulrike Kuschel decided to imitate the design of historical-political exhibitions but, at the same time, she leaves their narrow limits and gives way to communicating the presented incidents from a subjective perspective.