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Occasion: Exhibition „*Impossible Enough to Be an Art Space*“, Lichtekooi, Antwerp, BEL

Year: 2024

No artist or curator starts at the MOMA. Most cultural activities first sprout in garages, flats, display cases, or other available residual spaces... This phenomenon occurs all over the world and the initiators of these exhibition spaces possess a boundless imagination and explore the limits of what is possible. Be it in a freezer compartment or on a cat scratching post, no space proves too “impossible” to be declared an art space!

This exhibition aims to highlight “exhibition spaces” that often operate in the shadows but are nevertheless an indispensable part of the art world. Lichtekooi aims to highlight and celebrate these artists’ initiatives and, above all, their generosity toward their fellow artists.

For this group exhibition, Lichtekooi is showing 9 “impossible” exhibition spaces that in turn present their own group or solo exhibition.

SINK Vienna is an exhibition constructed underneath a sink in a Viennese art studio. One of SINK’s founders Lukas Matuschek describes the idea behind SINK as the attempt to create a space that enables an experimental approach to art presentation on the one hand and sparks a discourse on urban spatial conditions on the other. SINK is a small art space (186 × 105 × 65 cm) that focuses on small artworks. The project raises questions like what strategies are available to us in order to remain an actor in art despite taking a critical view of a sprawling capital market or trying to discover what constitutes an exhibition space. SINK wonders what is needed to be an exhibition space, and what within this frame can be abolished.

Matuschek recalls his former teacher Hans Schabus saying a small gesture can fill a huge space, and at SINK they try to create a small space for any form a gesture might take. The name is derived from the obvious spatial situation: the exhibition space is literally the volume under an industrial sink in a shared studio in Vienna. After already running an exhibition space that ended when the landlord decided to raise rent once again, Matuschek founded SINK together with fellow artist Florian Sorgo in the transitional period between 2020 and 2021 because it was important for them to remain active during a time of social standstill. Both initiators see the project as an exhibition space and not as an extension of their own practices, even though there is a mutual ground. Finding an old sink used for cleaning silk-screens installed permanently in the corner of their new shared studio, the duo sees some kind of almost political opportunity to use this volume as a starting point for their project. Affordable space is rare, and less space means less time and resources needed. The goal is set to establish a space that already exists and remains in a kind of intermediate state. A place that is not actively used and is neglected in everyday reception and gains visibility precisely through its transformation into an unconventional art space. For a long time, the area under the sink was full of stuff nobody used. It quickly became clear that this would be a perfect place. They have left most of the space in its original state and only added classical gallery elements such as a shiny concrete floor and a lighting system.

SINK is open between six to eight months a year, during which they set up a new exhibition every four to six weeks. Each exhibition normally consists of a vernissage and a finissage per exhibition, sometimes with events in between. Exhibitions can be visited by appointment. The program is made one year in advance and they try to schedule a mix of both established and less-established artists, currently focused on artists living in Vienna. For the past year, the exhibition program has been accompanied by one author per artist, who writes an essay about the exhibition. The writers are chosen in the course of the preparations, through discoveries of interesting texts in specialist magazines or through acquaintances in the Viennese art scene. SINK stands for fair practice and tries to pay everybody appropriately for artistic activities, as both Sorgo and Matuschek are already professionals and see themselves as being exploited in their own individual practices. With an optimistic eye, they're looking forward to the future, because the project is incredibly fun for them and they deem that as the most important thing.

Every exhibiting artist is asked if they are open to donating one or more works to SINK. For the works included in the visual archive of the project, Matuschek meticulously crafts small containers to store them in. This way SINK can keep a little part of their exhibition program as an artefact for the future.

For Impossible Enough to Be an Art Space , SINK Vienna is showing the SINK collection with works by: Amelie Bachfischer, Bildstein | Glatz, Daniel Ferstl, Flora Hauser, Katharina Höglinger, Sophia Mairer, Paul Riedmüller, Hans Schabus and Elisa Schmid.