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Vienna, 7 July 2017

21er Haus
Museum for
Contemporary Art

Quartier Belvedere
Arsenalstraße 1
1030 Vienna, Austria

Museum Hours
Wed and Fri: 11 am – 9 pm
Thurs, Sat, and Sun: 11 am – 6 pm
Open on public holidays

Press Downloads:
21erHaus.at/press

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Simon Dybbroe Møller, The Embrace, 2015, Photo © Simon Dybbroe Møller

Instructions for Happiness

8 July to 5 November 2017

Instructions for happiness – an absurd promise? An exhibition at the 21er Haus sets out to explore this subjective, elusive feeling and scrutinizes conceptions of happiness.

Happiness is considered one of the basic human emotions. We all certainly strive to achieve this state in one way or another. But situations and things that make one happy are often not so easy to come across – usually we experience them unexpectedly and by ourselves. It is upon this personal pursuit of happiness that this exhibition has set its focus.

'Instructions for Happiness approaches a hotly debated topic from different perspectives and comes at the right time. With their works, these artists encourage the questioning of our habitual ideas of happiness and the discovery of new facets of the concept of being happy,' said Director General Stella Rollig.

Antiquity was already equipped with instructions for happiness. Philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and Pythagoras dealt with the subject. Today, there are many life guidebooks and self-help literature which promise to satisfy our need for self-optimization; for wherever a need exists, there will be products made to satisfy that particular lack.

With its title the exhibition also promises such 'instructions for happiness'. Naturally, the curators were aware that there can be no simple solutions to complex problems when they crafted the exhibition title precisely to satirize all that self-help literature. Still, this group exhibition attempts to broach the phenomenon from a variety of perspectives, finding happiness within the interpersonal, the immediate, and the everyday, like in the beauty of little things. The show also reflects on the direct impact of art on society and questions the limits of the aesthetic field.

So-called instructions for use established themselves in the 1990s as artistic strategies, which would always produce new and unique results with each individual execution. *Instructions for Happiness* updates this art practice. It is about art as a means of recognizing ourselves in the

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world and about interacting directly with a work to transform our behaviour in everyday life. The exhibition thus offers visitors a space for experience, so that they may get a little bit closer to their own happiness.

With their works, some of the participating artists demand that visitors follow instructions, to react to set-up situations, to use objects, or to interact with others. Other works abstain from the call to participate, but invite us to reflect on our everyday spaces. 'The perspectives, which are very different in form and content, reflect the diversity of viewpoints that artists – like society in general – have on being happy,' Severin Dünser and Olympia Tzortzi have summarized.

With works by

Anna-Sophie Berger, Keren Cytter, Heinrich Dunst, Simon Dybbroe Møller, Christian Falsnaes, Barbara Kapusta, Rallou Panagiotou, Angelo Plessas, Maruša Sagadin, Hans Schabus, Socratis Socratous, Jannis Varelas, Salvatore Viviano and Anna Witt.

Catalogue



Instructions for Happiness

Editors:

Stella Rollig, Severin Dünser, Olympia Tzortzi

Authors: Anna-Sophie Berger, Keren Cytter, Severin Dünser, Heinrich Dunst, Simon Dybbroe Møller, Christian Falsnaes, Barbara Kapusta, Rallou Panagiotou, Angelo Plessas, Stella Rollig, Maruša Sagadin, Hans Schabus, Socratis Socratous, Olympia Tzortzi, Jannis Varelas, Salvatore Viviano, Anna Witt

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General Information

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| Exhibition Title | <i>Instructions for Happiness</i> |
| Curators | Severin Dünser and Olympia Tzortzi |
| Duration | 8 July to 5 November 2017 |
| Works | 17 |
| Location | 21er Haus Museum for Contemporary Art Quartier Belvedere, Arsenalstraße 1, 1030 Vienna |
| Opening Hours | Wednesday and Friday 11 am – 9 pm Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday 11 am – 6 pm Open on Public Holidays |
| Tickets | General Admission 7 euros 21er Haus Annual Ticket 21 euros Reduced 5.50 euros Under 18 free |
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