

drei kreise

performance in public space

28 - 30 august 2014 – City of Biel/Bienne, CH – le mouvement - performing the city – Schweizer Plastikausstellung curated by Gianni Jetzer und Chris Sharp - Duration: 72 hours

Background — We are invited by the curators Gianni Jetzer and Chris Sharp to the Biel/Bienne Plastic Exhibition 2014 «Le Mouvement - Performing the City» focuses on the crisis of public space.

To ban the prostitution out of the center of the city, the Gouvernement of Zurich launched the so-called «Verrichtungsboxen» in Altstetten. This act has been extensively reported in the national and international press. But rarely has been mentioned that container settlements for artists and asylum seekers stand on the same land in which this new red light district was built. The economic mechanisms leading to this coexistence are very trivial, but it clearly shows what should or should not happen in the centers of the cities.

Setting — On a city-map of Biel we draw three circular lines, passing the five venues given by «le mouvement» (Burgplatz, Wartesaal Bahnhof, Robert Walser-Platz, Kongresshaus, Zentralplatz and Elfenaupark). The circles touch each other over a longer distance between the train station and Elfenaupark. The smallest circle orbits the city center, the middle one connects it with the lake and the big one with the industrial area in the east.

Material and preparation — We contact artists, asylum seekers and (especially complex) sex workers and invite them to perform with us. In a rented space near the train station we furnish a reception and lounge. In one room we display food and the participants can have a rest. The space is during the performance non-stop accessible to the visitors and allows them to make contact with the participants.

Procedure — Each of the circles represents a specific occupational group (asylum seekers, Sexworkers and artists) and is walked along non-stop by one representative of each group. So there are always three people walking at the same time. After three hours somebody else of the same group replaces the person walking. The orbit takes - depending on the circle - about 30, 40 and 60 minutes.

Intermediate consequences — Commentary (*Barbara Casavecchia in Freeze, Issue 167 November-December 2014*): *The contributions by Swiss-based artists were the most understated, but also the most concerned with the boundaries of the public domain: San Keller tried to convince his fellow citizens to break at least one law, while the Biel/Bienne- and Zurich-based duo Köppl/Zacek developed three intersecting circular itineraries (Drei Kreise, Three Circles, 2014) for three groups of walkers (artists, sex workers, asylum seekers) with 36-hour shifts paid at different rates. This work, like many of the performances in 'Le Mouvement', was a reminder that decisions about who can 'perform the city' – whether beautifully or in protest, visibly or in private – are ultimately defined by economic conditions.*

