

Press Release
dieDAS – Design Akademie Saaleck art

WE PUT HANDS INTO THE WATER

Ulla von Brandenburg and Olaf Holzapfel
Altes Kurhaus Bad Kösen
June 15 – September 8, 2024

In memory of the late Daniel Marzona, dieDAS - Design Akademie Saaleck is honored to announce its inaugural dieDAS art exhibition, ***We Put Hands into the Water***. Conceived and curated by Daniel Marzona, it was one of the last projects he worked on before he unexpectedly passed away on April 22, 2024. Featuring renowned artists Ulla von Brandenburg and Olaf Holzapfel, the exhibition will be held at the historic Altes Kurhaus Bad Kösen from June 15 until September 8, 2024 and will serve as a testament to his profound influence on the art world.

The launch of **dieDAS art** by the Design Akademie Saaleck is a seamless continuation of the ongoing project by the Marzona Stiftung in Saaleck. It aligns with their mutual dedication to promoting collaborative ideation, innovation, and integration through culture and art projects in the rural region of southern Saxony-Anhalt, engaging both local and international audiences.

For the inaugural exhibition, the currently unused “Altes Kurhaus Bad Kösen” (Old Spa Center) is being revitalized. Built in 1911 by Building Councillor Schmidt, this neoclassical building helped establish Bad Kösen as a beloved spa destination beyond its region, a tradition that is now being revived.

We Put Hands into the Water, organized by dieDAS art and curated by Daniel Marzona, with the support of the city of Naumburg, presents two artists whose works have been exhibited by prominent German and international institutions, galleries, and museums. Olaf Holzapfel, who has exhibited at documenta XIV in Kassel/Athens, displayed his works in countries such as Argentina, Chile, and Switzerland. A solo exhibition is planned at Haus Konstruktiv, Zurich for May 2024. Ulla von Brandenburg has showcased her work at the Whitechapel Gallery (London, 2018) and Palais de Tokyo (Paris, 2020), and is currently exhibiting at the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid.

In the current exhibition, Ulla von Brandenburg’s large-format fabric panels transform the exhibition space into a vivid, colorful, and stage-like dream-world. Describing her work as “spatial stagings,” she combines elements of folklore, songs, theater, dance, and architecture. Her works explore themes of the individual as well as their underlying dynamics of community and society between chaos and order. Ulla von Brandenburg's pieces formally explore the theatrical elements within visual arts while simultaneously drawing attention to the fine between utopian visions and tangible reality. By doing so, her pieces foster new viewpoints and stimulate the imagination, venturing into previously unexplored territories of thought.

Olaf Holzapfel has been deepening and expanding his exploration of natural materials and traditional techniques in his practice for more than ten years. Actual and illusionistic pictorial spatiality, light, and color play important roles in his diverse works. Using straw, reed, hay, and other organic materials, he delves into the relationship between rural and urban spaces through material images, sculptures, and installations. By exploring this thematic field through recourse to traditional craft techniques, without nostalgia but fully in line with the theoretical discourse, and feeding it into the contemporary art world, Holzapfel's work proves to be relevant and groundbreaking in the social and ecological dimensions of its questions.

Despite their differences, both artists develop new ways of addressing current social issues by drawing on older traditions of craftsmanship, theater, or humanistic knowledge. In each case, the artist takes special consideration of physicality, encompassing the viewer's bodily perception and using the body as a benchmark and starting point for the artist's own work. In this regard, the true potency and efficacy of both works manifest only when its counterpart is encountered in physical space.

The exhibition is accompanied by an educational program for visitors and schoolchildren from Bad Kösen, the Burgenlandkreis and beyond.



Altes Kurhaus Bad Kösen - Courtesy of the city of Naumburg

Visitor information

Opening hours:

June 15 – September 8, 2024, every Friday to Sunday 11 AM – 6 PM.

Press and VIP Preview on Saturday, June 15, 2024, 12 PM - 2 PM.

About Daniel Marzona

Daniel Marzona was born in 1969 in Bielefeld, Germany. As the son of Egidio Marzona, he grew up surrounded by the largest and most comprehensive collection of conceptual and minimal artworks of the 20th century. After studying Art History and Philosophy in Bochum, Daniel Marzona was a curator at MoMa PS1 in New York from 2001 - 2004. He also founded the publishing house "Navado Press" together with Elena Carlini in 2003. From 2007 - 2013 he was the director of Konrad Fischer Galerie in Berlin. He founded his own gallery in 2014 with an inaugural solo exhibition by the late Bernd Lohaus, setting the tone for a gallery program that remained centered around process and reduced, yet poignant, artistic gestures. In 2022 Daniel Marzona began collaborating with Alessandro Scotti, giving shape to Scotti's visionary, non-profit cultural hub, 7022, in Milan, Italy. Together with Nicola Mafessoni, he curated the "Canal Project Room" at 7022 which opened in November 2023 and continues to thrive. He was also involved from early on in the preparations for the Archiv der Avantgarden - Egidio Marzona, a new museum and home to his father's extensive collection in Dresden. Until his untimely death, Daniel Marzona continued to work, curate, write and support artists. He will be remembered for his unwavering dedication to art, artists and free thought.

About the Altes Kurhaus Bad Kösen

Situated in Bad Kösen, the Kurmittelhaus stands as a striking example of neoclassical architecture. Dating back to its construction in 1911 by Royal Building Councillor Schmidt, it was built as the first municipal spa for communal inhalations. Originally designed to cater to the increasing number of visitors, both local and international, the Kurmittelhaus featured a neoclassical facade reminiscent of the Kurhaus in Baden-Baden. It was the first communal spa facility and had two large rooms for social inhalations. All the medical facilities, such as the rooms for dry inhalations and the radium drinking fountain, were of the highest technical standard at the time.

Until its closure in 2014, the Kurmittelhaus served as a brine bath, later becoming a center for children's rehabilitation until 1998. Today, this historic building stands quietly, a reminder of Bad Kösen's past as a hub of therapeutic wellness.

About dieDAS - Design Akademie Saaleck

dieDAS - Design Akademie Saaleck is an international cultural institution based in Saaleck, Saxony-Anhalt. The academy's program promotes transformative and collaborative design creation within a supportive environment that welcomes brainstorming, confrontation, and soul searching. The launch of dieDAS followed a close cooperation between dieDAS founding director Arne Cornelius Wasmuth, the patron and collector Egidio Marzona, and lawyer Andreas Silbersack. dieDAS is a project by the Marzona Stiftung Neue Saalecker Werkstätten and is supported by the state of Saxony-Anhalt and the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as a growing circle of partner institutions and sponsors.

In collaboration with Danish architect Dorte Mandrup, dieDAS has developed a master plan for the restoration and revitalization of the listed building complex in rural Saxony-Anhalt. The project addresses the National Socialist history of the site and its builder and seeks solutions to transform the

"uncomfortable monument" and establish it as a new place for respect, diversity, and innovation. From 2024, the site will be completely renovated.

Thanks to the fellows, partner institutions and companies, and a worldwide network of designers, architects, and creative minds, Saaleck is becoming a place for broad thoughts and visions — diverse, interdisciplinary, and open. The Design Akademie Saaleck is a determined and tangible sign of the power of change of an open community with unrestricted freedom of design — in Europe and in the world.

We Put Hands into the Water is the first art exhibition of dieDAS – Design Academy Saaleck and a collaborative project between the academy, curator Daniel Marzona, and the city of Naumburg, aimed at promoting and disseminating the cultural and societal impulses and values of the academy beyond the city Saaleck. The exhibition is supported by the Kunststiftung Sachsen-Anhalt, the Princess Kira A. Princess of Prussia Foundation, the city of Naumburg, and the Marzona Stiftung Neue Saalecker Werkstätten.

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