MEK - DaHEIM

Short project description
‘daHEIM: Glances into Fugitive Lives’ was a participatory project organised by KUNSTASYL, an initiative of forced migrants and creative people founded by artist Barbara Caveng. Caveng started KUNSTASYL to develop different projects with forced migrants in their temporary home: the refugee shelter in Berlin-Spandau. The initiative started from her question: what does it mean to flee your country? The project ‘daHEIM: Glances into Fugitive Lives’ was one of the responses to this question, for which KUNSTASYL took over some of the exhibition spaces at the Museum Europäischer Kulturen. The participatory process of creating art works and installations for display and building up the exhibition took place between 4 March and 2 July 2016.

During this time, the museum spaces were accessible for visitors who wanted to have a look at the process. The exhibition officially opened in July 2016 and remained open for a full year. Further performances, events and conversations were organised by KUNSTASYL as a programme that ran alongside the exhibition. The exhibition ended with the day-long performance ‘Die Könige’ on 1 July 2017. The project addressed various issues, such as the traumatic experiences of forced migrants, and the question of what might be the ‘right’ way to describe people who were forced to flee their home countries. Alongside the contemporary narrative, the exhibition contained a historical narrative that was curated by the museum. The project is considered a prime example of participatory work in museums, and in the process the museum took on the role of facilitator (mostly practical organisation and providing the financial means and space). At the end of the exhibition, with the end of the collaboration between KUNSTASYL and the museum, several of the works produced in the process were collected by the MEK. These are now kept in the museum and can be viewed in the museum’s online accessible database. The exhibition was documented to be made available online after the project’s end.

About MEK

Museum Europäischer Kulturen – Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz is a museum of everyday culture with a huge collection of objects and cultural expressions dating from the 18th century up to today. The collection itself dates back to 1889, when the Berlin physical anthropologist and politician Rudolf Virchow opened the Museum für deutsche Volkstrachten und Erzeugnisse des Hausgewerbes.

Throughout the years, the museum changed its name multiple times, was divided during the separation of East and West Berlin, until it became the Museum Europäischer Kulturen in 1999. The museum opened with its first permanent exhibition ‘Faszination Bbild’ which addressed cultural contacts between people and societies within Europe. Concepts such as cultural entanglements have informed the MEK’s exhibitions and the museum’s participatory approaches that have increasingly become part of its practice.
Further information
https://www.kunstasyl.net/eg/daheim-einsichten-in-fluechtige-leben
https://books.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/arthistoricum/catalog/book/164

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