

# The Development of Referential Berlin: One Day Exhibition

Saturday, 19 November, 2016, 2pm - 9pm



Institut Für Alles Mögliche (I-A-M)

(Institute for everything that could be possible / Institute for random stuff)

Location: Institut Für Alles Mögliche, ( I-A-M), Zentrale,

Address: Schererstrasse 11, 13347 Berlin-Wedding, Germany

## Curator Statement – Fiona Halse

The concept for Referential Berlin exhibition has changed shape, been revised, re-drawn, picked apart, re-glued and re-assembled with fragments and links and references to relationships combined with threads of like-minded approaches. The exhibition has evolved like a collage and the diversity of work and need to expand definitions to me relates to the artmaking process. One could align the development of the exhibition to the primary process when creating art where brainstorming and loose connections are made, frameworks are plotted and sketched and schematic links seized upon, but there is an allowance for opportunities, accidents and discovery. Having the title of the exhibition as Referential also seemed befitting for Berlin; a city that has been reconstructed, in a state of flux and references the future as an artistic hub and the layered, divided, complex past. The list of artists to hang in the exhibition organically changed over several months and like creating a collage this process became like support drawings or a sketchbook where thoughts and notations of individual's diverse ideas, links and associations were recorded - to me this strengthened the show.

This exhibition not only references collage it references artists from five countries, it notes relationships from art schools and exhibitions, it records the connections made at art fairs and the underlying nexus to the exhibition references accord and support. The exhibition venue at Institut Für Alles Mögliche (I-A-M) that promotes that 'everything that could be possible' and 'random stuff' is encouraged only added to the sense that this exhibition would be assembled in a very fluid manner. The presentation space that had street frontage and flexibility to be a studio live-work space called for an exhibition. The limited time frames, resources and networks in Berlin and isolation of both Jason Haufe and myself as artists in Australia proposed that the format of the exhibition needed to be like an open studio. Hence the exhibition developed from an informal open studios initiative, to an exhibition that capitalised on the opportunity to exhibit and bring together artists in a city that is the considered the artistic hub of Europe.

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This Referential exhibition showcased works that are connected to collage, but the diversity of this artform and the definition of collage has been celebrated and challenged. This exhibition proposed to 'explore the use of paper and found objects to construct space and tactile responses to materials assembled through formal principles'. Overall most artists in this exhibition have an interest in the pictorial and using collage elements as a compositional device. But tactile responses to objects, paper, and material is integrated with the process of creating a collage and the use of the hand to apply and feel the collage as an object and its relationship with assemblage and found objects needed to be explored. This exhibition does not explore Duchamp's ready-mades and most collages do not purely juxtapose, the materials and artworks in this exhibition explore collages' relationship with painting, mark making and creating pictorial space. Overall the definition of collage to me needed to be expanded from the French verb 'coller', meaning 'to glue'. Other definitions where Collage has been described by the Tate as 'both the technique and the resulting work of art in which pieces of paper, photographs, fabric and other ephemera are arranged and stuck down onto a supporting surface' needed to be debated and explored. This challenge to redefine the definition of collage has been proposed by including Stan Van Steendam, Panos Famelis and Christina Fischer. It also seemed appropriate to expand the definition of collage in an exhibition in Germany where Kurt Schwitters 'Merz' evolved and the pictorial extended to poems, rooms and assembling bus tickets. The exhibition also had a focus on artists who created work through 'responding directly to materials' and the exhibition had an overall focus on tactility. This process of creating collages that responds directly to materials not only links this Greenburg Post Painterly artists and New Materialism, it links to the process of creating collage with off cuts, textures and drawing through mark making and touch. There could even be a debate about the collage process being aligned with Deleuze and Guattari's Rhizome theory. There is a continual growth and lateral shoots from a Rhizome and to me it is like a collage that often uses off cuts and accidents to allow new ideas, and these materials can provide a loose referential point and touchstone for passages or direction. Whilst there is a history and tradition in pictorial art that is associated with collage that has started from Cubism, adapted by Dada's photomontage, utilised by Matisse and applied by many media based artists through Photoshop - collage could be considered a very diverse artform. Motherwell might be right when he claims that 'Collage is the twentieth century's greatest innovation'.