

When The Light Goes Out

Ute Bartel | Isabel Kerkermeier | Ulrike Kessl | Johannes Sandberger



Deutscher
Künstlerbund e.V.

Duration: 29 April – 29 June 2023
Opening: Friday, 28 April 2023 | 6 pm
Words of welcome: Sandra Becker
executive committee, Deutscher Künstlerbund
Introduction: Ulrike Kessl, curator and artist
Johannes Sandberger, artist and composer
Hours of opening: Tuesday–Friday | 2–6 pm and by appointment
Gallery Weekend: Friday, 28 April 2023 | 6 am – 9 pm
Saturday, 29 April 2023 | 11 am – 7 pm
Sunday, 30 April 2023 | 11 am – 7 pm
Location: Deutscher Künstlerbund
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Vorstand
Sandra Becker
María Linares, Sprecherin
Philip Kojo Metz
Cornelia Rößler, Sprecherin
Albert Weis

Press release

The group exhibition »When The Light Goes Out« brings together four contemporary artists whose work deals with one of the most urgent issues of our times, the energy and climate crisis, focussing on the inseparable links between humans, technology, and the economy.

The exhibition title is ambivalent and poetic. Depending on one's personal stance, »when the light goes out« has different associations, giving rise to different potential interpretations. When the light goes out, the human, animal and plant worlds find themselves in darkness. Light pollution is curbed, nature recovers, humans benefit. The current energy and climate crisis demands long-term solutions ensuring sustainability and justice for all. The exhibition »When The Light Goes Out« examines our use of resources, their scarcity and their supposed superabundance, addressing these questions in both aesthetic and political terms.

Ute Bartel works with everyday objects, mass produced items that receive little or no attention. Studying the material properties of plastic drinking straws in their simplicity and complexity, she creates works whose biomorphic forms recall natural phenomena such as metamorphoses. At the same time, her use of plastic is a reference to the ubiquitous traces we humans are leaving behind in the Anthropocene.

Isabel Kerkermeier gathers items of furniture, discarded advertising tarpaulins and other materials salvaged from around the city, waste products of no further use in a growth-oriented society. The artist transforms these time capsules, shifting them from a marginal to a central position. Her processed found objects reflect continuous change and unstable parameters like origin and prosperity, calling our usage of resources into question.

The question of material is also central to the artistic practice of Ulrike Kessl, who uses new and used textiles to transform spaces. What if lamps absorbed light instead of radiating it? Would this give us better control over light pollution? Her utopian and dystopian visions highlight how differently the phenomena of lighting and darkness can be perceived and understood.

Johannes Sandberger is an intermedia artist moving between music and fine art. He has developed a formal idiom that is often expressed in small-format coloured wooden sculptures and in drawings. His work in the exhibition, Sinkende Waschmaschinen (Sinking Washing Machines, 1999), refers to natural disasters and makes deliberate use of resource-saving materials. It also shows that the artist was already dealing with issues around climate change more than twenty years ago. Besides his work as a sculptor, he also composes contemporary classical music. During the closing event on 29 June, a piece written specially for the exhibition will be premiered, alongside a suite for 'cello and accordion from 2021.

The exhibition »When The Light Goes Out« seeks to position itself within a sustainable practice. In addition to engaging artistically with the climate crisis, we at the Deutscher Künstlerbund are also trying to make our actions as an institution more effective.

Curated by Ulrike Kessl



Accompanying events

Guided tours and artists' talk during Gallery Weekend

Saturday, 29 April 2023 | 3 pm

with Ute Bartel, Isabel Kerkermeier, Ulrike Kessl and Johannes Sandberger

Closing event

Thursday, 29 June 2023

Lecture | 6 pm

»Die unumgängliche Entwicklung von nachhaltigen Stoffumwandlungen
am Beispiel des Wasserstoffs und Ammoniaks«

Dr Sebastian Öner, Fritz Haber Institute of Max Planck Society, Berlin

Concert | 8 pm

Cosima Gerhardt, violoncello

Christine Paté, accordion

Compositions by Johannes Sandberger

»Der Traum vom Wohnen. Ein Zyklus für Violoncello und Akkordeon«, 2021

»Wenn das Licht ausgeht«, for violoncello and accordion, premiere 2023

Moderation:

Johannes Sandberger, Düsseldorf

