

»KioskShop berlin (KSb)«

From December 2000 to spring 2010, the Berlin based artist Semjon H. N. Semjon connected retail and the art world in a unique way with his long-term project »KioskShop berlin (KSb)« in Berlin-Mitte. Since it opened in October 2001, around 7,000 visitors have visited »KioskShop«.



»KioskShop berlin (KSb)« in 2002; photo: Uwe Walter

In a detour via another complex art installation, »Construction of Modern: The Berlin Collection Dr. Carl Theodor Gottlob Grouwet (1919)«, the »KioskShop« was 2010 enclosed by walls that represented the salon of the collection, and for the gallery opening in September 2011, Semjon reinforced it in a user-friendly manner. This room became the street parlor (Straßen-Salon) of the gallery's Salon Cabinets for 10 years.

Temporary Resurrection

The walls will be dismantled again by the end of October 2021 in order to allow »KioskShop« to reappear as a whole. The looming termination of the gallery space after 10 or 21 years by Berggruen Holding, which had meanwhile acquired the building, prompted Semjon, after a 10-year artistic sabbatical, to show his own work presumably here in Schröderstraße for the last and unfortunately a short time. The future of this one-off installation is uncertain. When the gallery moves out, the »KioskShop« has to be smashed and destroyed. The work of art was created for this very place. Among other things, the wooden floorboards were exchanged for a vibration-free screed floor and the terrazzo floor was manufactured by the artist himself, and the self-made shop furniture was screwed, filled and varnished as a whole. Moving stairs and installing heating without affecting the shop architecture are also part of it. For more than ten years (actually eleven) the work

of art has been an integral part of the development of Schröderstraße: In November 2000, the rooms of the »KioskShop« were only the third rented shop unit on this street. In 2011, all the shops in the tiny and special Schröderstraße were filled with life.

The permanent installation simulates a small neighborhood shop on the one hand, and on the other hand the work of art plays with the perceptions and triggers reflections on the world of goods and their distribution.*

At the center of the walk-in art installation are countless »Product Sculptures«. These are product packages that have been reworked with bleached beeswax, mostly with their contents: Brandt rusk, Ariel detergent, Coca-Cola cans, newspapers and magazines, sweets, cigarettes and much more. As in a shop, they are set up in series in shop fixtures designed and built for this purpose. The picturesque white and strange looking product sculptures, the minimalist design of the white furniture and the brightly lit room create distance and transcend the well-known store ambience into a different level of perception and understanding. »As in front of a painting, distance from the viewer is required and at the same time curiosity is aroused« (Jan Maruhn in a text in 2001). The design was supposed to be a kind of abstract synthesis of perception from the memory of the long-forgotten colonial grocery store, the post-war corner shop run by war widows and today's Späti, which is mainly run by migrants.



»KSb Product Sculptures«; photo: Semjon

The installation was designed as a work-in-progress. Like a real shop, new ›products‹ were constantly being added. For this purpose, Semjon had implemented a presentation system that on the one hand physically protects the sensitive work of art and at the same time increases its added value optically and metaphorically through the display case character.



View during night; 2009; Photo: Semjon

Interventions

The series of »Interventions« (exhibitions with guest artists) was brought into being by Semjon in 2003 to check whether it is possible to present ›foreign‹ works of art by other artists in a clearly pre-formulated exhibition context, as »KSb« presented, without suffocating them or causing chaos. This concept worked well and over 30 exhibitions were carried out with guest artists until spring 2011. This experience certainly also led to the later founding of Semjon Contemporary.



Intervention XIV – Henrik Urs Müller @ KSb; photo: Semjon

Financing

»KioskShop berlin (KSb)« berlin was financed by a subscription system that was supported

by almost 30 participants. In addition the artist was able to convince with this art installation both the Capital City Cultural Fund and the Berlin Senate to support the project substantially. Last but not least the sales of the »Product Sculptures« and the multiples and »Product Paintings« also contributed to the financing of the demanding and multi-layered art project. »KSb« had been open in all these years to the public usually from Tuesday until Saturday from 2–7 pm.



KSb MultipleShop with a choice of multiples and Product Painting editions; photo: Semjon

Future

At this moment nothing really can be predicted about the future of this unique art installation. Semjon has to follow several strategies to make sure that »KioskShop berlin (KSb)« will survive at its historic location. Most of all he should convince the art collector and philanthropist at large, Nicolas Berggruen, to rescue the artwork by allowing Semjon to keep the lease. Since it's his building he can correct previous decisions.

Simultaneously Semjon has to create an art and Berlin alliance with his artists, friends of his gallery and of »KioskShop«, with the collectors of his gallery artists and in general with art people – from Berlin and worldwide – to develop in our analogue and digital world, a striking uproar through communication in social and art networks. Also, of course, the collaboration with an acknowledged law firm is inevitable.

If you want to support the survival of »KioskShop« with networking, an article, or a donation, please contact Semjon at office(at)semjoncontemporary.com

* From 1991 – 2000 Semjon tried in different attempts to realize in NYC his predecessor project *DeliGrocery*. (www.deligrocery.net)