

## Opening Speech for the Glindow Exhibition

In Glindow, we are standing on historical ground. The German writer, Theodor Fontane, visited this location at its economic peak describing in detail the local operation of the brick factories in his article *Wanderungen durch die Mark Brandenburg* (1880). Fontane, a brilliant journalist, researched his facts extensively. His analytical essay describes the prospering infrastructure, the dire living conditions of the workers and the austere working conditions to which they were subjected. He went on to describe the required raw materials, the quality of the finished products and of their distribution, summing up his essay with a detailed description of the then modern technology of the ring furnace, which he finalized as a swansong for the “most advanced compulsory labor industrialism...” [...]

Harald Dieckmann’s project idea seems to be rooted in this historical context. As the director of the Neue Ziegel-Manufaktur Glindow, he came up with the idea of giving three artists the opportunity to work for a certain time on the areal of the Neue Ziegel-Manufaktur Glindow with the intention of creating three site-related artworks as a temporary on site loan for a period of two years. As an art lover and promoter of art he had the unmistakable instinct that the Neue Ziegelei-Manufaktur would be an inspiring site for artists willing to engage with it. Both intention and materials were to evolve in situ, i.e., site-specifically. Dieckmann took time with his search, and having found suitable artists maintained contact with them over several years, until the current project could begin. The project is embedded in this year’s Kulturland Theme Year.

This was the only way to finance the necessary work period for the invited artists: Hella Berent, Johannes Pfeiffer und Chris Hinze.

Hella Berent met Harald Dieckmann in 2011 at Kunsthaus Potsdam where she participated in the exhibition “*Nach Strich und Faden – die Linie in der Kunst der Gegenwart*” (The Line in Contemporary Art). It was a significant meeting for them both. The relationship between line and space, the interplay of the interior and exterior are central themes in Hella Berent’s oeuvre. These elements determined her exhibition contribution at Kunsthaus Potsdam and were part of her dialogue with Harald Dieckmann. Now, five years later, Hella Berent has realized “House of Refuge.” She imagined using handmade bricks, but decided against picking up on the symmetry of the existing buildings. Using the original brick floor plan she intentionally set a singular accent to the surrounding area by shifting the artwork off its axis so that the entrance lies east and diagonal to the administration building of the old brick factory and to Lake Glindow. The history and origins of this artwork can be traced back to 1999, to the city of Brunico in Italy, where Hella Berent realized a work entitled “*Casa del Profugo*” (House of the Refugee) and in 2002 the draft “*Das Zimmer*”

(The Room) for a garden in Düsseldorf. In 2013, in one of her catalogs, she published the following text which traces the spiritual drive for this continuity in the context of her oeuvre: “It is the eternal exterior that is inside / the interior space without a roof / it’s not only the trees (in Glindow it is the weeping willow, the author) / it’s heaven and time as changing light / every mood is gathered in them / and they provide information about what is / they are the memory of the place... “ One can read it as a manifesto and understand Hella Berent’s attitude: she, the traveler, remains completely open while her sojourns document the world in transition. The “House of Refuge” can therefore never attain the status of monument. The foundation wall appears both found and unfinished and can be perceived as a place of a transparent interior and exterior view stimulating the imagination of those who as visitors or people who work and live here, wish to relate to it; step onto the surface of the glazed surface of the bricks and visualize the willow tree two years from now, will it have grown to the extent that it has formed the roof?

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