

## PRESS INFORMATION

**Exhibition        KwieKulik  
                     SHE and HE  
                     May 4 – July 1 2018**

### **Press Conference: Monday, April 30, 11 am**

As part of the press conference taking place on Monday, April 30 at 11 AM, we would like to present the exhibition SHE and HE by the Polish artist's duo KwieKulik, which will open on May 3, 2018 at 7 PM at the Badischer Kunstverein. The exhibition takes place in the framework of the 24th European Heritage Days in Karlsruhe, and is at the same time the first exhibition of the jubilee year of the Kunstverein. The artist, Zofia Kulik, will be present at the press conference.

From 1971 until 1987, Zofia Kulik together with Przemysław Kwiek, her life partner at the time, collaborated under the name KwieKulik. The pioneering work of KwieKulik, which reshaped the history of Polish art in the postwar era as well as that of the European avant-garde as a whole, is characterized by processes of upheaval and new departures. Works by KwieKulik are found in renowned collections such as the Tate Modern in London, the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw, the Ludwig Museum in Budapest, and the National Museum in Wrocław (Breslau). Although the duo has been represented in various international group exhibitions, the works of KwieKulik have never before received a comprehensive solo exhibition at an art institution outside of Poland. We are delighted to present this exhibition, the first major retrospective in Germany.

With their mixture of acute social critique and the humorous interpretation of conceptual practices, Kulik und Kwiek deploy art as a testing ground for political engagement, and hence represent the program of the Kunstverein in a paradigmatic fashion. The founding of the first *Kunstvereine* (Art Associations) in the early 19th century was the result of a bourgeois commitment to the creation of independent, representative spaces, and the establishment of equal rights for all, including in the arts!

This demand for equality and social participation is voiced in the art of KwieKulik as well. They rejected classical artistic practices and searched instead for a reinterpretation of the role of the artist in society. They devised new, radical forms, coined the term "Soc Art" for this artistic movement, and referred to their practices as "activities." Alongside sculpture and installation, they were committed primarily to performance, and finally to documentation. The primary material used by KwieKulik was daily life as they experienced it under Polish communism during the 1970s and 80s, which they meticulously investigated and documented. In their ephemeral, processual works and actions, their premise was that art could serve as the foundation for a new, better world, and that the boundary between art and life no longer existed.

Today, the private archive of KwieKulik encompasses comprehensive photographic and video materials that document their performances and actions. Zofia Kulik has restored and reproduced the original material, so that the exhibition at the Kunstverein makes numerous works accessible to the public for the first time. Two current video works by the artist document her early life with the archive, and will also be on view in the exhibition.

In order to showcase the multifaceted of the body of work produced by KwieKulik, the exhibition is divided into a number of chapters. Alongside early works produced separately by Zofia Kulik and Przemysław Kwiek, the presentation is devoted to various collaborative, integrative, and interdisciplinary works under the headings "Group Actions," "Visual Games," "Commentary Art," and "Parasitic Art," to their version of institutional critique in major works such as *Heavy Complaints Kill Life* and *Art on the Run*, as well as to their large-scale project *Open Form*.

Central to the exhibition is *Activities with Dobromierz*, probably their best-known work, and pivotal within the artistic achievement of KwieKulik as a whole. This photographic series shows the artist duo's newborn son in their apartment alongside various household objects, as well as on strolls. This deliberate "use of one's own son in art" introduces the complex of works which visualize an intimate connection between art and life in the praxis of KwieKulik. Inherent to the private or semi-public sphere for KwieKulik was a thoroughly political moment, one that consciously confronted the putative reality of institutionalized art. A series of works under the title "Earning Money and Making Art," for example, signals an attempt to bring commissioned works (public realm) and noncommissioned works (private realm) into contact with one another. Works bearing the collective title "Hackworks" refer to government commissions for which KwieKulik were obliged to produce in order to secure their livelihood, and which ought to have been creative acts, but remained markedly limited by predetermined stipulations. The exhibition concludes with a group of works which, under the heading "HE and SHE," consider the couple's activities, clarify the dissolution of their collaboration, but also pose questions from a somewhat distanced perspective concerning possible contemporary and future forms of stewardship involving this artist's archive and others like it.

We are delighted to present this very special exhibition, and to celebrate – together with all of you – the festive event that marks 200 years of the history of the Badischer Kunstverein!

As part of 24th European Culture Days Karlsruhe

**EKT:2018**  
EUROPÄISCHE KULTURTAGE KARLSRUHE

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