

26 June - 22 August 2010

HENRIK PLENGE JAKOBSEN

Mainframe

The Danish artist Henrik Plenge Jakobsen investigates how political, economic, and social structures affect our lives. For him, art and reality do not constitute separate areas that can be connected from time to time. Art represents rather one of those realities that make up our overall reality. Jakobsen has devised an exhibition for the Kunstverein that deals with the history of the computer manufacturer IBM. Different sculptural installations and graphics visualise stages from the history of the American company, which has restructured itself repeatedly in the course of time, as well as adapted its range of products and sales and marketing strategies to suit the respective prevailing conditions of the present. The individual elements of the exhibition can be interpreted both as an illustration of the firm's history, as well as abstract works in their own right. The computer manufacturer on the other hand, comes across as a striking example of the fundamental upheavals in twentieth century corporate culture that represent social change on a great variety of different levels. The title »Mainframe« refers, on the one hand, to a technical term from the 1970s for large, high-speed computers supporting smaller workstations, but on the other, the word also means framework and designates the institutional context in which IBM becomes something more abstract, something more representative.

Henrik Plenge Jakobsen's exhibition is taking place as part of the collaborative project DIE LETZTEN IHRER ART | LAST CHANCE TO SEE. For the first time, the Kunstvereine in Düsseldorf, Cologne, and Bonn have developed a joint event and catalogue project in which the institutional challenges facing the Kunstverein as an institution per se in the twenty-first century will be discussed. A Kunstverein is in essence a citizens' institution that developed during the Vormärz or pre March era during the nineteenth century as a committed response to the aristocratic salon culture. However, what happens when we ascertain that- in our "post-civil society"-the culture engendered by such associations, community involvement, and federal logistics experience a loss of currency and what effect does this have on the Kunstverein? Alluding to Douglas Adams' travel book *Last Chance To See*, we are featuring the Kunstverein as a potentially endangered species, but nonetheless one worth preserving, as well as taking a closer look at respective institutions Bonn, Cologne, and Düsseldorf in a series of events.