

26 AUGUST 2014

Project Space Festival Berlin

Jesi Khadivi

01 August – 31 August 2014

Like 2

Tweet 1



Søren Aagaard: Santopalato at Kinderhook & Caracas.
Courtesy Project Space Festival Berlin, photo: Markus Georg

A steaming tray of delicately braised ribs emerges from the vast kitchen behind the Kreuzberg project space [Kinderhook & Caracas](#). The convivial buzz that permeates the room as onlookers gather to watch video on computer monitors or examine an installation comprising drawings, photographs, and a slender column of baguettes swells when the food arrives. A choreography of chewing, chatting, and contemplating ensues – only to cease when the tray is emptied, save for stray bits of garnish. Fifteen minutes later the entire cycle begins again. Part-installation, part-performance by the Danish artist Søren Aagaard, *Santopalato* mines the rich intersection between art and life

that project spaces often cultivate.

With nearly 150 of such spaces throughout the city, Berlin is home to a variegated sub-culture of non-commercial exhibition venues. Conceived by Marie Graftieaux, Nora Mayr, Lauren Reid from [insitu](#) and realized in collaboration with thirty participating venues, the inaugural [Project Space Festival](#) aims to expose a cross-section of the independent spaces that enrich Berlin's cultural life with their experimental programming.

A subtle nod to the accelerated and at times provisional temporality of fledgling non-commercial spaces, the festival takes the form of a series of thirty one-night events—a lightening speed tour through spaces that extend from the inner city out to the fringes of Berlin's leafy suburbs. With no fixed program, the presentations range from group exhibitions to performances and concerts. A commonality of the festival's offerings is the emphasis on the role that intimacy might play in a project space's programming—which seems to me to be one of the defining factors of the relationship between project spaces and their audiences. Because of their small scale, project spaces have the capacity to share a directness and closeness with their audience that even the most progressive public institution could only dream of.

The myriad dinners and discussions that pepper the Project Space Festival's schedule reflect this tendency, such as [Apartment Projects' Lokanta](#), a dinner and conversation on mobility—a fitting topic considering the decidedly international flavor of Berlin's project space scene. Still other exhibitions emphasize intimate, quotidian details about the participating artists: the red thread in *Same Standing*, a group exhibition at [Kreuzberg Pavillon](#) curated by Mirá Minov, is the artists' height (exactly 166 cm) and a solo exhibition of Ignacio Uriarte's work at [Sonntag](#) in Schöneberg gives the artist's choice of tea and tart equal billing with the artwork on view.

Yet the intimate encounters that these spaces nurture tend to be built over time. The Project Space Festival offers an impressive view into a wide range of spaces and thus

welcomes the uninitiated, but a project space develops its identity, and therefore its reputation, as much through how it works with artists and ideas as what kind of work it shows: in other words, the rhythm and range of the formats that a project adopts is often what makes their approach distinctive, which is difficult to grasp in only an evening. This poses exciting challenges for the next iteration of the Project Space Festival and it's going to be interesting to seeing how they refine their scope next year.

For a full list of events, please click [here](#)