

## Media release

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### **Australia welcomes Berlin artists to Meeting Place 2018 as part of Australia-Berlin Arts Exchange**

Three artists from Berlin, Germany, are headed to Alice Springs for Australia's national forum on arts, culture and disability, as part of the Australia-Berlin Arts Exchange project.

Jovana Komnenić, Dirk Sorge and Imke Baumann will contribute on behalf of the German arts and disability sector at Meeting Place 2018, where they will host workshops and exhibitions that invite participants to reflect on artistic expression and networking, from diverse perspectives.

The visit follows last year's exchange, when a group of Australian artists with disability travelled to Berlin to take part in the first international Meeting Place, in an agreement brokered by Arts Access Australia (AAA) and German cultural institutions Kulturprojekte gGmbH, Berlinclusion and Förderband e.V.

Komnenić worked with AAA and Kulturprojekte gGmbH to curate last year's forum in Berlin, and described the Arts Exchange project as an incredible opportunity.

"From an artistic perspective, the exchange is an incredible opportunity to cross borders, collaborate in a myriad of new and exciting ways and to connect with other creative artists, activists and practitioners," Komnenić said. "Both our practice and our hearts were opened and expanded through Meeting Place Berlin. New friendships and potential collaborations were formed, and conversations about inclusive practice are continuing to take place all over Berlin as a result of last year's exchange."

Meeting Place is the signature event of AAA, and was established in 2012 to build stronger linkages between arts and disability stakeholders. Meeting Place 2018 will take place in Alice Springs from 24 to 26 September, and is hosted by local organisation Incite Arts.

The 2018 Australia-Berlin Arts Exchange visit is hosted and financially supported by AAA, the German Goethe-Institut and the German Embassy in Australia.

Following Meeting Place, Komnenić, Sorge and Baumann will fly to Perth to present their interactive exhibition Call and Response: Journeys through a multi-sensory landscape in partnership with DADAA - Western Australia's state body dedicated to providing access to arts and culture for people with disability.

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## **Artist interviews**

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## **About the Goethe-Institut**

The Goethe-Institut is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany, situated in Melbourne and Sydney.

“We promote knowledge of the German language abroad and foster international cultural cooperation. We convey a comprehensive image of Germany by providing information about cultural, social and political life in our nation. Our cultural and educational programmes encourage intercultural dialogue and enable cultural involvement. They strengthen the development of structures in civil society and foster worldwide mobility.

With our network of Goethe-Instituts, Goethe Centres, cultural societies, reading rooms and exam and language learning centres, we have been the first point of contact for many with Germany for over sixty years. Our long-lasting partnerships with leading institutions and individuals in over ninety countries create enduring trust in Germany. We are partners for all who actively engage with Germany and its culture, working independently and without political ties.”

<https://www.goethe.de/ins/au/en/ueb/auf.html>

## **The German Embassy**

The German Embassy and the various consulates in Australia have the task of representing the German state, protecting the interests of German citizens and protecting them in the host country. They also conduct important negotiations with the Australian Government and focus on promoting political relations between the two countries. In addition, they work closely together on economic, cultural and scientific issues.

» It is wonderful to be in Australia and to continuously deepen our bilateral cooperation – be it in global politics, the start-up sector or arts and culture. « Ambassador Dr. Anna Elisabeth Prinz

<https://australien.diplo.de/au-en>

## **Berlin Artist Bios**

Dirk Sorge (\*1984) works as artist and art educator in Berlin and Leipzig. He studied Visual Art at University of the Arts Berlin (Meisterschüler/MFA) and Culture and Technology Studies (B.A.) and Philosophy (M.A.) at Technical University Berlin.

In his arts practice Dirk Sorge inquires how technological artefacts and digital media shape the way we perceive ourselves and our surrounding. His works include videos, computer programs and mixed media installations. They reveal and deconstruct the aesthetics of pop culture, science and science-fiction. They also raise the question how the distinction between animated and inanimate objects is drawn. Many of his works involve the audience directly and challenge the notion of authorship. Dirk Sorge also conducts workshops and guided tours. He is Co-founder of Berlinklusion – Network for Accessibility in Arts and Culture.

Jovana Komnenić artist and art educator, born in 1981 in Pančevo, Serbia. Since 2009 lives and works in Berlin and Pančevo. She holds a MA Degree in Painting (University of Arts Belgrade) and Art in Context (University of Arts Berlin). During 2003/2004 she studied painting and multimedia arts at Academy of Fine Arts in Venice, Italy. She is enrolled in PhD program at University of Arts Berlin in the field of Aesthetic Theory.

She practices art in a variety of media, and her research focuses on the subject of the ‘invisible yet present’. She works on the translation between different media or different perceptual perspectives, individually or in groups with art professionals and amateurs, those of different backgrounds and diverse (perceptual) abilities esp. visually-impaired people, rethinking the ways of perceiving, exchanging, connecting and creating on a personal and social level. Her activities also include participatory art mediation and inclusion within the artistic field, having worked with museums, galleries, societies and educational centres, amongst others NGBK, Berlin Biennale, Akademie der Künste in Berlin.

Imke Baumann holds a university degree in German literature, theatre and art history. She started her professional life in 1993 working as dramaturge and theatre director for about ten years before starting another career as arts manager, consultant and developer/creator of culture projects. In doing this she has been involved for about 15 years in the arts and culture sector in Berlin, developing and fundraising for culture events, consulting and working with artists and teaching culture institutions how to develop more access in the arts sector. She is a networker and well connected in the Berlin culture sector (e.g. national museums, theatres, free art scene, culture administration). As leading manager of a culture project called Berlin for blind people ([www.berlinfuerblinde.de](http://www.berlinfuerblinde.de)) she is also in exchange with experts outside Germany, e.g. in the UK; Denmark, Spain and Austria. She also works as an author for audiodescription in the arts for blind people and is an expert for mobility problems blind people have to face in everyday life.