

PRESS RELEASE

SONYA SCHÖNBERGER

GOETHE@LUX ARTIST IN RESIDENCE 2019

1 MAY – 23 JULY 2019

The Goethe-Institut London and LUX are delighted to announce artist Sonya Schönberger as this year's *Goethe@LUX* artist in residence. The residency invites artists based in Germany who work with moving images to undertake a three-month residency at the international arts agency LUX in London and Glasgow. The key theme for the 2019 residency is ecologies and the increasingly fraught relationship between the natural world and human civilization.

17 April 2019

During her *Goethe@LUX* residency, Sonya Schönberger will work within an ecological framework and explore the role of exotic plants which were imported during and after the British Empire. Questioning the image of plants as the provider of solace to humans, she will trace the history of plants both as victims and tools of colonisation, as violated objects and instruments of replacing existing ecologies.

The key theme for the 2019 residency was determined by the Goethe-Institut's focus on ecology and sustainability as well as the location of LUX in the green environment of Waterlow Park. The site used to be the home of English metaphysical poet Andrew Marvell (1621 – 1678). An early proponent of ecological thinking, Marvell's poem *The Garden* (1681) and the lines "annihilating all that's made / To a green thought in a green shade" provided the reference for this year's *Goethe@LUX* residency. Schönberger's project takes up Marvell's idea of the garden as refuge and the practice of importing exotic plants to Britain as points of departure.



Sonya Schönberger
Photographer: Luci Lux



Clean Square, detail, performative intervention at the former Australian Embassy in the GDR in Berlin-Pankow, 2018.
Photographer: Christof Zwiener

Sonya Schönberger is a Berlin-based artist who combines her studies in social anthropology and experimental media design in her artistic practice. The tracing of historical themes in connection with memories marked by breaks is of particular interest to her. Many of her projects have developed out of different archives, which she either found or created. Over the past ten years, she has for instance built up an archive of interviews with witnesses to World War II from various countries. *Archive of Memories*, a long-term project, examines the effects of Germany's World War II traumas for future generations. Schönberger works across different media such as photography, theatre, film, installation and audio formats.



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Her works have been exhibited internationally, including in the USA, Iran, Pakistan, Israel and Canada. The artist has been awarded various scholarships, most recently from the Research Fund Fonds Darstellende Künste (2019), the GLOBAL Scholarship by the Senate of Berlin to cooperate with the National Drama Theatre of Lithuania (2017) and a working scholarship provided by the Senate of Berlin (2014). She has also taken part in numerous residency programmes such as the New York scholarship provided by Künstlerhaus Schloss Balmoral (2012) and the ARTPORT residency in Tel Aviv (2017).

Her book *Zingster Strasse 25* was published in the series *Berliner Hefte zu Geschichte und Gegenwart der Stadt* in 2017. It tells the personal stories of daily life in the GDR, but also bears witness to the regime change of 1989. To address the urgent need for living space in the 1950s, the GDR government introduced new housing projects based on prefabricated concrete slabs, the so-called "Plattenbau". Erected on the outskirts of East Berlin and completed in 1987, Zingster Strasse 25 was one of these apartment blocks. Three decades later, Sonya Schönberger visited some of the tenants who talked about the often challenging and still hardly debated aftermath of social change in a unified Germany. The interviews will be read at the [Goethe-Institut London on 3 July 2019 at 7 pm](#) in cooperation with the German Historical Institute London.

Please visit our [website](#) for further information.

Goethe@LUX Residency

Since 2017 the *Goethe@LUX* residency invites artists living in Germany who work with moving images to work on a particular theme in London for three months. The residency also includes developing events with LUX Scotland and the Goethe-Institut Glasgow. Visiting artists have been video and performance artist Liz Rosenfeld (2017) and new media artist Anahita Razmi (2018).

The **Goethe-Institut** is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany with a global reach. We promote knowledge of German abroad and encourage international cultural exchange. With our worldwide residency programmes, we offer artists and creatives the opportunity to live and work in other countries for a certain period of time. Freed from financial pressures, creatives can thereby develop new ideas, projects and relationships. The *Goethe@Lux* residency is part of the Goethe-Institut London's wide range of [residency programmes](#).

LUX is an international arts agency that supports and promotes artists' moving image practices and the ideas that surround them in London, UK.