

Article

THE 2010 PAUL KLEE ZENTRUM SOMMERAKADEMIE

South Africa in Switzerland



For the fifth year running, the Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern, Switzerland has hosted an annual summer academy/residency simply entitled Sommerakademie (Summer Academy). Structured in the tradition of a true academy-style gathering, the Zentrum creates a one-week intensive hub for artists and an invited curator to interact. Curated this year by an emotional and emphatic JanVerwoert who defined the time and space allocated for the interaction of participants as a performance intercepted by periods of intense work (out of necessity). A stance that he describes provided a place where emerging artists can be protected and be given the time to talk, interact and perform (and in this sense create a larger performance).

As an extension of this week, the Sommerakademie also invites all of its numerous nominators from all over the world to attend, and vicariously participate in, two days of feedback and interaction post the weeks-end activities. This influx of art professionals were treated to a live radio show and performance, and had the opportunity to hobnob with fellow artists, curators, professors and collectors over a number of refreshment breaks and scheduled activities. This year saw a large representation of South African participants including repeat attendees, artcritic Sean O Toole, artist Sue Williamson, curator Miriam Asmal-Dik and PUMA. Creative curator Claire Breukel as well as participating artist Bettina Malcomess who participated in the academy in 2009. This year twice nominated artist Kemang Wa Lehulere made up the sixth South African addition and was selected to participate in the weeks activities. This grouping was added to over dinner with guests Eloise Jones (aka: EJ von Lyrik) lead singer of the prolific all-girl rap group Godessa as well as bass guitarist Grenville Williams—in Bern participating in a music project exchange.



Although it was wonderful to see such a prolific representation from South Africa- as an annual conference that invites new nominations each year, as well as self-motivated proposals for participation—it would be nice to see a larger diversity of Africa-based participants applying to be part of future Sommerakademie's.

Due to the self-reflexive nature of the program it has grown from strength to strength, and an invaluable new component to the fifth year of the Akademie focused on collecting feedback and information. Information on each participant was collected and posted online and all attendees were invited for interviews on camera, creating an archive and reference for what is fast becoming a community of Paul Klee attendees.

For more information visit: www.sommerakademie.zpk.org

Images courtesy of Sean O Toole

