

Opening speech 20.06.2021 Berlin Schwanenwerder, Cordts Art Foundation

Dear Guests, Dear Art Lovers,

We established this project for women and art less than two years ago in order to provide female artists from different parts of the world with the opportunity to come and live here in Berlin, and to present their art to the public at the end of their stay.

Covid-19 has made things difficult in that it has blocked travel from Asia and other parts of the world, but we are used to overcome obstacles. Our close relationship with the Gesellschaft für Deutsch-Chinesischen kulturellen Austausch, and with Prof. Yu Zhang who is in the audience today, we were able to invite three Chinese female artists into our house in Schwanenwerder since November 2020. They currently all live in Germany or England, and I am delighted that for this reason we were able to make this exchange happen.

Two of these female artists are also here with us today; and I would like to welcome both painters, one the famous feminist painter Jiny Lan from Düsseldorf and two Lisa Chang Lee from London, who is focussing on landscapes, urban growth, and the relationship of humans and nature. Both women will present a small selection of their work.

We are looking forward to welcoming a new guest in our house from July 1st, Ms Anja Asche. Asche is born near Kassel and is now based in Berlin, and we are looking forward to her residency. We receive numerous applications from all over the world which tells us that we fill a gap with our project. Our house is already fully booked for the next two years and we expect to get to know new exciting women.

The struggle for recognition of female artists is real and it is unfortunately continuing to exist. There is a current exhibition on this topic here in the Berlin National Gallery, *"Kampf um Sichtbarkeit"*. Two organisations - the non-profit organisation "AWARE" (awarewomenartists.com), founded by Camille Morineau, and the Florence-based "AWA" (advancingwomenartists.org) - are supporting projects on a particular phenomenon.

Over the past 100 to 150 years, not only private people, but also museums and collections bought artwork from successful female artists - women who were as successful as their male colleagues. Hundreds of these artworks are currently stored in depots but were never shown to the public. They are forgotten, were never restored, and are not part of the discourse in art history.

AWARE and AWA intend to lift these treasures, restore the art, make it public, and foremost, increase the visibility of female artists in art history, which will be the most difficult part.

I would like to emphasise again that curators, gallery owners, publishers, publicists and collectors are predominantly male, resulting in a male point of view. We have a charged discourse ahead of us but there is also the opportunity for change.

Female art must be shown, seen, talked about, discussed, collected and conserved - but always with a keen heart and with full commitment.

This is what I wish most.

Yours, Franziska Cordts