

NARBEN/SCARS

Art Project © 2008 by Franz Wassermann in cooperation with the Association for the Protection of Children (Kinderschutz) Tyrol

Family as cell. My body does not belong to me

The family as a cell of society and presumed a protective space can mutate into a torture cell. Most cases of violence and abuse happen in the family and its closer surroundings. Children are beaten, emotionally blackmailed, raped, abused. Every one of us has contact with this or is affected by it. People who are loved, cause and suffer pain, betrayal, fear, mourning, anger, powerlessness, paralyzation. Scars are left.

Security Blanket. Cuddly Toy

Action in cooperation with the victims

Victims of violence and abuse in childhood and adolescence – children as well as those meanwhile grown up – are requested to bring a cuddly toy, a security blanket, a toy or another object of their choice that they want to give away – voluntarily and anonymously – to represent themselves and their fate, and give it as a gift to the art project. These objects make their fate visible and tangible. Their *representatives* become art. Artistic abstraction in the form of an art installation results in a new place of encounter.

Silence. The Black Room

Space/Sound Installation

A space in the form of a windowless cube the size of an average children's room (approx. 3m wide, 4 m long and 2.5 m high) is installed in public space. The outside walls are completely covered with reflective coating – the private space thus alternates between visible and invisible. The cuddly toys, security blankets, etc. are exhibited in the white interior on white shelves.

A sound installation is additionally integrated in the space. Visitors enter by opening the door, which switches on the light. During this time they have an opportunity to view the objects and take in their impact. When the visitors close the door themselves, the light is switched off again after a certain period by a timer switch and the space becomes absolutely dark. At this moment the sound installation starts in the *dark room*, consisting of noises – hitting hands, slamming doors, footsteps, breathing, fragments of words – and of *silence*.

For the participants, absolute darkness and the noises produce images that make voyeurism and distance impossible – they experience being touched by the victims directly inside themselves.

Powerlessness. Paralyzation

Performance/Video Installation

As a consequence of violence and abuse and the powerlessness they feel, many victims become paralyzed. This is symptomatic for what they have experienced and often accompanies those affected throughout their life. Paralyzation can occur again and again, when the victims tell of their experience, but also in situations of conflict or violence. Abuse and paralyzation are inseparably linked together.

During a performance, people of different generations are wrapped up from head to feet with adhesive tape. Paralyzation and the feeling of powerlessness are experienced by those participating and transferred to those present. The performance will be filmed and subsequently projected at night onto the closed cube. In this way, the feelings experienced inside are linked with paralyzation outside.

Further cooperation partners are: Gewaltschutzzentrum Tirol, Kriseninterventionszentrum für Kinder und Jugendliche (KIZ), Verein gegen Vergewaltigung, Tiroler Frauenhaus.

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