

KÜNSTLERHAUS BETHANIEN

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Berlin, 23rd February 2017

Dear Colleagues,

we are pleased to invite you to the opening of the following exhibition:

MATHEUS ROCHA PITTA

For the winners the potatoes

Opening: THURSDAY, 2ND MARCH 2017, 7 – 10 PM
Showroom at Kottbusser Straße 10

Exhibition: 3RD MARCH – 26TH MARCH 2017
Tuesday – Sunday, 2 – 7 pm

Showcases in U8 stations Hermannplatz and Gesundbrunnen
23RD FEBRUARY – 26TH MARCH 2017

ATELIERS UND BÜROS: Kohlfurter Straße 41-43 · 10999 Berlin · SCHAURAUM: Kottbusser Straße 10

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RECHTSFORM: Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH · SITZ: Berlin · AG Charlottenburg

GESCHÄFTSFÜHRUNG: Christoph Tannert · Andrea Boche · HANDELSREGISTER: HRG 8089

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MATHEUS ROCHA PITTA showcases his current project *For the winners the potatoes* in Berlin in March 2017. The expression "for the winners the potatoes" is taken from Joachim Maria Machado de Assis' 19th century highly influential but almost unknown in Europe Brazilian novel *Quincas Borba* (1891) At Künstlerhaus Bethanien as well as at two stations on the U8 track where an installation and a sculpture respectively announces and offers its potato prize to the public (Hermannplatz and Gesundbrunnen), Matheus Rocha Pitta presents a precarious gallery of trophies made of plastic bags, concrete and potatoes which are made available for the public day-to-day. An archaeological-like path frames the performative piece conceptually, questioning the meaning of holding a "trophy".

The word comes from the Greek *tropein*, which describes the twist movement made by an army that defeats the adversaries. Trophies were first and foremost monuments made with the booty from the defeated. In the Greek city-states of the archaic period, the *tropaion* would be set up directly on the battlefield, usually at the site of the "turning point" (*tropê*) at which the routed enemy's phalanx broke, turned and ran. "Trophy" describes a turning point; in the same way offering potatoes as a prize is a turning point, an inversion. By replacing glory for potatoes, Rocha Pitta aims to perform a 'twisted' gesture on the hierarchy of winners and losers. Not without a mocking sense of humour, the winners' cups are exchanged for potatoes. Newspaper clips of athletes lifting and kissing potatoes are encapsulated in concrete odd frozen gestures, as if inviting us to unearth another value for loss and victory.

The exhibition will be accompanied by a **catalogue**, published by Verlag Kettler (Dortmund). The publication series is edited by Nicola Müllerschön, KfW Stiftung, and Christoph Tannert, Künstlerhaus Bethanien.

MATHEUS ROCHA PITTA *1980 in Tiradentes, MG, Brazil, lives and works in Rio de Janeiro.

He uses photography, video and sculpture to identify and construct his own repertoire of gestures, which he activates in conjunction with the visitors and spectators of his works. He has created several series of works – *Primeira Pedra* (The First Stone, 2015), *no hay pan* (There Is No Bread, 2015), *Assalto* (Assault, 2014) and *Golpe de graça* (Blow of Grace, 2013).

He is currently receiving a grant from the **KfW Stiftung**, Frankfurt a. M., and is a guest at Künstlerhaus Bethanien in the context of our International Studio Programme. Grant-holders of the KfW Stiftung in Künstlerhaus Bethanien in 2017 also include Orawan Arunrak (Thailand), Ahmed Ghoneimy (Egypt) and Vartan Avakian (Lebanon).

The non-profit, independent foundation **KfW Stiftung** was founded in October 2012. One particular emphasis of the KfW Stiftung is a consolidation of cultural diversity. Aiming to advance intercultural dialogue, it enables artists from Latin America, Africa and Asia to spend twelve months working in Berlin by participating in the International Studio Programme of Künstlerhaus Bethanien.

Contact:

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