

28. - 30.03.2014 - BOILER ROOM

A project by Alice Woods.

Text by Joanna Turek

#### ON THE BEAUTY OF (POWER) STRUCTURES

On the last weekend, between the 28th and 30th of March anyone who walked down Sonnenallee, had an occasion to visit the 'Boiler Room' - Institute's residency space, Büro für Bestimmte Dinge - which once again was transformed into a living open studio. This time by British artist Alice Woods, working on the topic of power structures and the way how they affect the lives of ordinary people - as the artist describes herself. And this was a convincing way of how to grasp the topic of the effects of neoliberal mechanisms - through art.

The IAM's March resident proved to be an artist and a curator at once - by 'furnishing' the 'Boiler Room' for a whole month, and then revealing to the visitors the dark side of the objects presented at the exhibition. Juicy colours and symbols - as the triangle element 'woven' into the presented installations - were the repeating, distinctive elements of the Boiler Room. Bright and distinct colors were the element that shaped the whole exhibition into an aesthetic savoury package of unsavoury content. Also the language was one of the exhibition's focal point. One of the objects - a triangle hung from the ceiling, arranged with small beads of different colors, corresponded to the number of words most often uttered in all the speeches of successive U.S. presidents, which proved to be (surprisingly enough): POWER, GOD and FREEDOM. As the artists is also interested in the

logic of mathematics and economics, all the works had its own precisely built structures - as the open studio's dominant element, a new version of the American flag - banner braided with dozens of stars reflecting not the number of American states, but military operations conducted by the U.S. since the WWII. With a written proposal and a new version of the American flag (with samples of fabrics to choose from) Alice Woods turned to the White House but until today did not receive any feedback.

What triggered the IAM's resident to do research on the above mentioned issues was the most recent financial crash and its consequences in the global labor market, as well as its repercussions in the form of bottom-up, new social movements - as the Occupy Wall Street, which the artists had an occasion to observe during her recent stay in New York City. The inspiration also came from this visit - visible in the work referring to the financial game of global players in market and social economy.

The guests of the opening night had perfectly sensed the atmosphere of the exhibition ... and occupied the 'Boiler Room' space having pizza, drinks, and some (non)committal conversations lasting until late evening - leaving an open space for discussions for the next two days.