

PRESS INFORMATION, MARCH 28, 2019

## Sissel Tolaas: 22 – Molecular Communication

Schering Stiftung ■ Unter den Linden 32–34 ■ 10117 Berlin

In cooperation with Galerie Wedding ■ Müllerstrasse 146/147 ■ 13353 Berlin

Curated by Christina Landbrecht and Solvej Helweg Ovesen

**Exhibition Opening: April 10, 2019, 6–9 p.m.**

**Duration:** April 11–June 24, 2019

**Opening Hours:** Thu–Mon 1–7 p.m. Free admission.



How does Berlin smell? In the exhibition “22 – Molecular Communication,” the Berlin-based Norwegian smell researcher and artist Sissel Tolaas explores the smell landscape of Müllerstrasse in the Wedding neighborhood of Berlin. The project, which was developed specifically for the Schering Stiftung and Galerie Wedding, is based on intensive field research. Sissel Tolaas has looked into the history of Müllerstrasse and identified smells that define the neighborhood. In “22 – Molecular Communication,” she presents these smells by transforming the

Project Space of the Schering Stiftung into a kind of chemistry lab. Glass flasks emit vapors and encourage visitors to sniff and smell individual characteristic smell molecules or complex molecule compounds. At the same time, the visitors find themselves in a workspace that resembles Sissel Tolaas’ personal workplace. In her Smell Research Lab, which she founded in 2004, the artist uses synthetic molecules and her expertise in the field of chemistry to recreate real smells that she collects in metropolises around the world. So far, she has created 52 smell profiles of different cities and landscapes.

With support of the Deutsches Technikmuseum Berlin, it has been possible to assemble historical lab equipment from the 1920s until the 1960s from the former research labs of the pharmaceutical company Schering, which form the basis of the installation. The exhibition thus also recalls the history of Schering AG, whose flourishing research activities and administrative headquarters could be found in Müllerstrasse until 2006.

“22” has been developed in cooperation with Galerie Wedding, where a second exhibition by Sissel Tolaas, which opens on April 18, 2019, will allow visitors to directly experience the smellscape of Müllerstrasse: with the aid of sensors located at various points along the street, the smells are delivered into the gallery space from outside and are made tangible through ventilators in the room. Weather and wind determine what can be smelled.

Sissel Tolaas studied chemistry, art, linguistics, and mathematics in Oslo, Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Oxford. In the 1990s, she underwent a seven-year intensive smell training, which she

had developed herself. One of her first urban olfactory research projects was shown at the 3rd Berlin Biennale in 2004. For this exhibition, Tolaas systematically studied and recreated the smells of the Mitte, Kreuzberg, Neukölln, Reinickendorf, and Charlottenburg neighborhoods of Berlin. Shortly afterwards, she founded the Smell Research Lab, which is still located in Berlin-Wilmersdorf and is supported by the international company IFF (International Flavors and Fragrances). Tolaas is at home both in science and in art. She took part in the Art & Science project "Synthetic Aesthetics," collaborated with scientists of the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics to develop a vocabulary to give precise verbal expression to smells, and has exhibited her work worldwide in museums and biennials, including the Riga Biennale (2018), the Museum of Modern Art (2016/2010), and the Museum Tinguely (2015).

### **Related Events at the Schering Stiftung:**

#### **April 27, 2019, 2:30 p.m., Galerie Wedding & Schering Stiftung**

**"2 x 22" Curator-led Tour** with Solvej Ovesen and Christina Landbrecht

The tour starts at 2:30 p.m. at Galerie Wedding (Müllerstr. 146/147 | 13353 Berlin). It will continue at the Schering Stiftung, starting at 3:30 p.m. No registration required. | In German and English.

#### **May 6, 2019, 6 p.m., Schering Stiftung**

**"Smell in the Anthropocene" – Lecture and Conversation**

Prof. Dr. Bill Hansson, Director of the Department for Evolutionary Neuroethology at the Max Planck Institute for Chemical Ecology in Jena, in conversation with Sissel Tolaas (in English)  
Schering Stiftung | Unter den Linden 32-34 | 10117 Berlin

Please register at: [anmeldung@scheringstiftung.de](mailto:anmeldung@scheringstiftung.de)

For further information, visit:

[www.scheringstiftung.de](http://www.scheringstiftung.de)

*The exhibition is organized in cooperation with Galerie Wedding. We thank the Stiftung Deutsches Technikmuseum Berlin for making available to us many items on loan.*



The artist would like to thank Kathrin Pohlmann, Fritz Stempel, Richard Forster, Mickaël Wiesengrün, Rene Spierling, and the team of the first Riga Biennale.

Illustration: Sissel Tolaas in her lab, photo credit: Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg

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