

Public Statement, May 21, 2007

Critical answer to "Art goes Heiligendamm" by the international art project "HOLY DAMN IT: 50 000 posters against G8 – on the urgent need for radical answers"

Up to now, the public representation and perception of the project "Art goes Heiligendamm" has been articulated in all media reports under the same headlines "De-escalating art for the G8 summit" or "Art project wants to de-escalate at the G-8 summit". The German "Spiegel" magazine published online: "With 'Art goes Heiligendamm,' the participating artists want to mediate between politics and the critics of globalization." Adrienne Goehler, initiator of the project and former Berlin senator of culture, presented the project with the following words: "We want to contribute to de-escalation on site. Thus, we want to break with the logic of participants and opponents of the summit and create a discursive space of experience beyond good and evil."

In press release #1 Goehler said: "Art goes Heiligendamm" wants to achieve that in the future every G8 and WTO summit includes intercultural communication, aesthetic experience and a social space for reflection on the necessary themes of globalization which are in need of cultural translation."

We clearly oppose this instrumentalization of artistic works on the basis of a mediating legitimization of G8 politics. At the same time we are against the fact that the term "de-escalation" is attributed to functionalize art (as the project Art goes Heiligendamm suggests). The latter is even more relevant with regard to the recent escalation of police raids against the G-8 protest movements throughout Germany, the massive intimidation and defamation campaigns through police forces as well as the announcement of the authorities in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern to prohibit the rally to Heiligendamm on June 8. It is self-evident for the ten artists and artist collectives participating in the international art project "HOLY DAMN IT" to formulate an artistic intervention against the politics of G8 in the frame of the international protest and resistance movements (for further information see www.holy-damn-it.org).

Out of the abovementioned reasons we have decided to turn down the invitation to be presented in a special issue of the TAZ newspaper and to exhibit under the label "Art Goes Heiligendamm" in Rostock.

Moreover, we consider it necessary to contribute to a discourse about the motifs of artistic interventions in current social processes and their medial perception. We want to continue this discussion with our artist colleagues who have hitherto been working in the frame of "Art goes Heiligendamm," especially since we appreciate their work and do not think that they see their art as "mediating" or "de-escalating."

In such debates, artists should know where, for whom and under which conditions they present their works.

"Art goes Heiligendamm is 'imaginative, creative and visionary' and lives up to the practical slogan 'Germany – Land of Ideas', as stated in press release #1.

We do not want to contribute to such an identity-forming measure.

The international Artproject HOLY DAMN IT
www.holy-damn-it.org